9. English for Academic Research

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9.1. What is 'research'?

Research, taken in its broadest sense, is any activity which is undertaken to increase knowledge. More concretely, we gather information try to answer a question that solves a problem. When we think of research, we often come across a typical terminology, like information, enquiry, hypothesis, investigation, data, analysis, assessment, and the like, words that suggest what research really is: a process of gathering data or evidence, analyzing it, hypothesizing over some problem, or raising some important questions. Having this in mind, Nunan (1992: 3) defines research as "a systematic process of inquiry consisting of three elements or components: (1) a question, problem, or hypothesis, (2) data, (3) analysis and interpretation of data". These three elements must be present; otherwise our work will not constitute what is understood as research. Therefore, it is reasonable to find that in research the main difficulty lies on being able to clearly spell out the first of these components, that is, the problem we are intending to solve. And this should be our initial concern. It is often said that finding the gap in research is much more difficult than bridging it and this is particularly so with students and novel writers.

Our second concern is basically centered on language, especially with those who use English as their second (L2) or third language (L3). The Nancy Declaration (ELC, 2006: 7) clearly establishes the need for all students, both at the graduate and undergraduate level, to increase their use of English as medium of instruction in universities of non-English-speaking countries, with the final aim of introducing teaching and learning in that language. However, here we are presupposing we have transcended this L2 learning stage and aim at being able to produce what is understood as readable prose, including with the use of specialized language. An often quoted theorist used to say that the more time and energy you, as a reader, have to spend in figuring out a writer's language, the less time and energy you will have left to absorb meaning. But, we might ask ourselves, why study the language of business and economics? Is it because we believe it has a special status, or because we believe it can be treated similarly to other disciplines? Myers (1990) was asking similar questions in reference to biology texts. Using his arguments, we could say that the language of business and economics is "like other discourses in relying on rhetoric; it just uses a different kind of rhetoric"; and the difference between the language of business and economics and other discourses not only lies in the subject matter treated, but also in the proper form of the article used by the members of its disciplinary group and their own rhetoric (Myers, 1990: 4). According to Henderson and Dudley-Evans (1990: 2), in studying the language of economics, the purpose is to promote their readers become expert economists through English, but first they must become subject experts and then specific language experts using adequately that language at the level of the sentence in order to understand how an economics text works. This is the reason why we believe this chapter can be useful to students and novel writers, and professionals alike.

9.1.1. Research strategies

Research is not just any activity you simply carry out. It needs preparation (see also 8.6.3), a plan, and several steps that must be taken when undertaking it, but basically language and writing is the key. You write down information to remember, you write and paraphrase to understand, and you also write to test your thinking (Booth et al., 2003: 12), but you must work with a plan:

> Experienced researchers know that they most often produce a sound report when they have a plan, no matter how rough, even if only in their heads. In fact, they create two kinds of plans: One helps them prepare and conduct their research; the second helps them draft their report of it. (Ibid., p. 5)

The preparation and execution of this plan involves several steps, the first of which is to develop a research question, which derives from knowing what you want to investigate. This research question should generate several key words which will in turn indicate an area for your search. Reading and note-taking, followed by the evaluation of the information found, should fill an important part of the students' time in which possible modifications are being considered and incorporated into the plan. Finally, they should make sure they have taken all the important data necessary for an accurate bibliographical referencing of the specific material found. This sort of systemic investigation, if carefully undertaken, should lead to the study of materials and sources obtained in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions, a plan which will not only help the student or the researcher write, but also help readers read (Booth et al., 2003: 6). However, this does not mean that the researcher has to go through this sort of pre-planned stages, one after the other. As Saunders et al. (2007: 10) suggest the researcher will most likely revisit each stage more than once to select and refine ideas and to see and reflect on associated issues.

After this initial stage, as a young writer, you must then begin to think about connecting with your readers. Researching is not a solitary activity with scientists in the solitude of a library. As Booth et al. (2003: 16) remark, when reading a book in the library you are actually and silently conversing with its writer. You begin to establish an academic relationship with him or her. When writing your own paper, through the notes you have found in the library or elsewhere, you begin to create new roles for you and your readers. One good recommendations by Peter Elbow (1998: XXI), in *Writing Without Teachers*, is to read your own text out loud in an effort to discover your own writing mistakes as a first test of your own writing. By doing so, as a student you will be saving some of the teacher's time in correction, while at the same time you will learn to become critical of your own writing; as a professional, it is like listening "to the 'movies of the minds' of different readers who do *not* answer back, argue, or defend" (author's italics).

9.1.2. Aim of the research: defining your hypothesis

Once the problem has been tackled and its strengths and weaknesses encountered throughout the process of identifying it, it should lead to speculations and become the basis and proposal of the hypothesis. This analyzing stage should lead to the characteristics of the phenomenon under study and help formulate the research question/s, as the result of having clearly identified the gap to be bridged. The research question/s may then lead to formulate a hypothesis, which is your intended response to the research question/s. This is not, however, and easy process, but a well-devised question will lead to establishing a meaningful research hypothesis or thesis statement.

Researchers usually focus on a specific topic of investigation and based on it they formulate a question addressing an aspect of what they want to investigate. Some authors suggest different methodologies to arrive at a specific idea and to refine it. Saunders et al. (2007: 29), speaking of student research in business, would suggest the “Delphi technique” which is a sort of a group-brainstorming session; through it, after writing their thoughts down and share then with their peers, students, in groups, generate more specific research ideas. Also the “SWOT analysis” which, according to the literature (Jackson, 2003; Vonk, 2007), has proven to be a very useful tool for understanding and decision-making for different types of situations in business and organizations, by analyzing the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. In international dealings and transactions, the SWOT analysis may also be preceded by a “PEST analysis” (Healey, 1994) which measures the external impact on an organization through its external factors: Political, Economic, Social, and Technological. Drummond et al. (2001: 17-33) have a long section discussing this external analysis in which the PEST method is applied. Robinson and Gelder (2009: 75) further expands this analysis to PESTEL, adding Environmental and Legal issues in his analysis for operations management.

The different methods of analysis used should help in the generation of research questions and ultimately establish the hypothesis of the research. The following table shows four examples of research ideas and corresponding questions in a business setting (table 1):

Research idea	**General focus research questions**
Advertising and share prices	How does the running of a TV advertising campaign designed to boost the image of a company affect its share prices?
Job recruitment via the Internet	How effective is recruiting for new staff via the Internet in comparison with traditional methods?
The use of aromas as a marketing device	I what ways does the use of specific aromas in supermarkets affect buyer behaviour?
The use of Internet banking	What effect has the growth of Internet banking had upon the uses customers make of branch facilities?

Table 1: Research ideas and corresponding research questions (Saunders et al., 2007: 34)

A thesis statement or hypothesis is a very useful tool through which you convey the reader the main point you intend to make; thus, it should be:

- Limited: adjusting to one idea or topic, instead of trying to cover all sorts of topics;
- Specific: giving the reasons for the proposed hypothesis as well as an attitude about it;
- Unified: all aspects of the argumentation should relate and have connection to each other;
- Persuasive: demonstrating that your point is important and valid.

9.1.3. Quantitative and qualitative research

There are several issues that we should bear in mind when doing research. Our strategies will be different depending on whether our emphasis will be on qualitative or quantitative research. According to Nunan (1992), quantitative research is, by its definition, objective, factual, and generalizable, and of course, aimed towards an outcome based on the existence of "facts". Qualitative research, on the other hand, assumes that it is subjective, holistic and ungeneralizable. Quoting from the literature, Nunan establishes two research paradigms in the following table:

Qualitative research	*Quantitative research*
Advocates use of qualitative methods	Advocates use of quantitative methods
Concerned with understanding human behaviour from the actor's own frame of reference	Seeks facts or causes of social phenomena without regard to the subjective states of the individuals
Naturalistic and uncontrolled observation	Obtrusive and controlled measurement
Subjective	Objective
Close to the data: the 'insider' perspective	Removed from the data: the 'outsider' perspective
Grounded, discover-oriented, exploratory, expansionist, descriptive, and inductive	Ungrounded, verification-oriented, confirmatory, reductionist, inferential, and hypothetical-deductive
Process-oriented	Outcome-oriented
Valid: 'real', 'rich', and 'deep' data	Reliable: 'hard' and replicable data
Ungeneralisable: single case studies	Generalisable: multiple case studies
Assumes a dynamic reality	Assumes a stable reality

Table 2: Research paradigms (Nunan, 1992: 4)

In your initial research steps, it is a good idea to approach your investigation from two different points of view, one descriptive, drawing a possible answer to the question 'what is going on', and a second one should be explanatory, answering the question 'why is it going on' (De Vaus, 2001: 1). Although the descriptive approach is considered too simplistic and perhaps insufficient, an accurate description is also necessary to carry out a good research. We must indeed know the facts and what may have occurred before we can figure out why they occurred; they will also help eliciting inquisitive questions from which the hypothesis can be proposed.

Activity 1: Read the *Nancy Declaration*: is it a good starting point for introducing English in all Spanish university classrooms?
Activity 2: What do you understand by research?
Activity 3: Name what you think are the most important strategies to carry research out.
Activity 4: Analyze the following hypothesis (Himmelweit, 2007: 583)[1]: "The main thesis of this paper is that while caring is an economic activity, it has specific features that distinguish it from the economic activities involved in the provision of many other goods and services".

9.2. Searching for information: referencing research

Citing references is an essential part of papers and scientific articles, since they basically rely on empirical evidence. It also has a lot to do with ethics and it is our most reliable safeguard against plagiarism, a problem authors are very concerned with, because they believe it is on the rise (Park, 2003: 471). Authors from Anglo-Saxon areas seem to blame part of it on cultural differences; Leask (2006: 185), for instance, speaking of students in general and international students in particular, says that they are often thought of as being the problem; more than our inability to explain and define, the heart of the problem is their inability to understand. Even though Park is speaking in the context of the United States, he contends that it has become an important challenge to universities hoping to achieve academic integrity since it also reflects on the quality assurance of the institution (Park, 2003: 483). The Spanish university educators have also shown their concern for this academic problem. Comas and Sureda (2007), for example, are particularly centered on cyber-plagiarism, citing two major instances: intentional plagiarism, buying, copying texts *in toto* or in part, or translating them; and accidental plagiarism, such as inadequate paraphrasing, wrong citation of used resources or bibliography, while others may understand plagiarism as a problem related to ethics and the education students receive.

9.2.1. Information, the Internet, and plagiarism

We have already assumed indeed that we are in the middle of a new stage; for some, a “postindustrialism” age; for others, an era of “informationalism”. It actually represents, according to Warschauer (2003), a true third industrial revolution, as he describes it in table 3.

	First Industrial Revolution	Second Industrial Revolution	Third Industrial Revolution
Beginning	Late 18th century	Late 19th century	Mid-to-late 20th century
Key technologies	Printing press, steam engine, machinery	Electricity, internal combustion, telegraph, telephone	Transistor, personal computers, telecommunications, Internet
Archetypical workplace	Workshop	Factory	Office
Organization	Master-apprentice-serf	Large vertical hierarchies	Horizontal networks

Table 3: The Three Industrial Revolutions (from Warschauer, 2003: 13)

However, this new technological age of “informationalism” does not carry with it a specific teaching approach. What these new technologies have provided is the opportunity for more democratic and self-directed learning. In other words, change is a question of teachers enacting their own beliefs about learning and teaching, and students struggling for full participation in the classroom.

Authors claim that the easy access and use of digital resources have introduced a new concern, a new set of problems often referred as “cyberproblems”, particularly in the area of teaching writing; it is no surprise to see that undergraduate Internet citations have increased considerably, while book citations have decreased. In addition to the fact that one can download field-specific term papers from the Internet, even though of questionable origin, there still remain the obvious attribution problems detected in their papers. This has called for the adoption of electronic plagiarism checkers and faculty and administrators have already taken some steps to attend to Internet plagiarism; however, Scanlon (2003: 161) insists that we should perform as educators, rather than detectives. He would propose, as a good beginning, simply to broach this issue in the classroom, as well as in the course syllabi.

While plagiarism by students may have increased (Sterngold, 2004: 18), it is also true that it has become easier to detect. Students should learn to be critical users of technology: reading Internet texts critically, actively, and interpretatively. The problem of Internet accuracy of sources has already been tackled by the literature, especially in regard to health. Basically aimed at commercial websites, Fogg et al. (2001: 62) have stressed two terms when judging the credibility of digital sources: trustworthiness and expertise. To these authors, the first key element for the source credibility is trustworthis which "is defined by the terms well-intentioned, truthful, unbiased, and so on", and the second is expertise, which "is defined by terms such as knowledgeable, experienced, competent, and so on" (ibid.). When all these elements put together we could say that a digital source is believable because it has a high level of reliability and knowledge. However, this conclusion is not easily reached and for this reason they developed the "Web Credibility Survey", with an initial 300-item questionnaire, which was finally reduced to 51 questions on credibility using a 7-point Likert-type scale. Although they recognize the shortcomings of their research, their contribution is significant "both in terms of research methods and increased understanding" (p. 68). Readers approaching the Internet should, therefore, try to evaluate the credibility of the source, and its timeliness, since they will have to make instant decisions as to use or discard the information found.

Thus, it is up to the university staff to clarify concepts, particularly in terms of showing students how to develop and use skills for the interpretation of the digital sources. It does not seem likely that a safe evaluation system will ever be developed to prevent cheating, given the complexity of the Internet environment. From secondary school and on to undergraduate university level, many students think that drawing indiscriminate information from the Internet is not cheating, but rather good research practice. The issue should be discussed openly with all those tempted by the "cut & paste" ploy about the academic and ethical issues involved and how the Internet has altered the concept of ownership of texts (Scanlon, 2003: 164). It is indeed very easy to cut and paste chunks of text from the Internet. We should all try to minimize this trend by, first of all, understanding that it is a dishonest academic practice and, second, by learning and executing properly the citation techniques. Sterngold (2004), assistant professor of business administration, wrote that the digital revolution made it easy indeed for students to plagiarize, but he also contends that conventional teaching invites cyber-cheating. He insists on the fact that most undergraduates "have weak research and writing skills, and if truth be told, so do many college professors, graduate students, and other well-educated adults" (p. 19). He then describes a series of learner-centered strategies drawn from his own experience, which require more hands-on, active, and collaborative learning methods (p. 21), through which he has been able to observe a noticeable reduction of student cheating.

The new Bologna curricula about to be implanted touch upon similar teaching concepts with the aim of devoting more time to students. However, many academics are concerned about its application complaining that with the challenges of designing new study plans and subsequent additional counseling time, they will have less time left for their research activities. The question is, then, how can individualized measures be successfully applied to reduce such "cut & paste" activities? Or are there other measures?[2]

9.2.2. Why should I cite?

When you use in your writing something you have read, something you do not consider general or encyclopedic knowledge, and you have the responsibility to give credit to its author for the text or idea. The citing underlying principle is that when a document cites another document, they both acquire a conceptual relationship. Rose (1996: 44) puts it this way: "In quoting to identify with another writer, one constructs a bond of mutual support by both speaking the others' words and allowing the other to speak for oneself". Through citations we acknowledge and accept that our publications are closely related to the referenced authors we have included in our research and, at the same time, in some way we negotiate our identification with the corresponding disciplinary community (p. 43). It is fundamental that we understand the meaning and use of citations, because we too try to identify ourselves with our own disciplinary and discourse community[3]. In her argumentation, Rose (1996: 34) discusses what she calls the "inadequacies of typical handbook advice" in the writing class. She believes it is too simplistic and troublesome for those involved in research projects and analyzes a series of typical statements from those handbooks; these statements claim that students should strive towards achieving a balance between their language and the sentences borrowed from other sources with special emphasis on the concept and meaning of plagiarism. According to her, the process of scholarly citation is

> a microcosm of the academic discipline understood as both scene and outcome of cooperative action, the act of citing—collaboration between the author and other authors and between author and reader—serves as a representative anecdote of all written discourse as collaboration. (Rose, 1996: 40)

This cooperation, however, does not mean to write carelessly without an accurate authorial attribution to make sure the readership can easily detect who wrote what. To avoid authorial ambiguity, a good referencing system will help us quote correctly and enable readers, not only better understand the cited author's work, but also verify our belonging to a specific discourse community. Rose (1996: 41) says that when writers incorporate ideas or words which have already appeared elsewhere, they introduce them in their own writing as a reminder to the colleague of knowledge they presumably have in common because they belong to the same discourse community, and not so much because they may think the reader is unfamiliar with those words or ideas. The citation then becomes a means of a fuller identification between writer and reader.

The reference to other published texts is ever present in today's research world, and prior writing constitutes a characteristic feature in RAs. Its importance, in modern academic papers, is obvious because it provides some sort of justification for one's own work; however, as Hyland (2000: 20) suggests, by recognizing and attributing merits to others, a writer also displays some sort of allegiance to a particular discourse community, and create a rhetorical gap for his or her research. Posner (1999: 5-6), writing for the areas of law and economics, advances several reasons for citing, some of them motivated by antiplagiarism norms:

(a) "informational citing" – through it we identify the source for the reader of our research;
(b) "locational citing" – also "informational", that is, where will the reader, if interested, be able to locate the cited material;
(c) "priority citing" – acknowledging the authorship of ideas, arguments, technology, etc.;
(d) "negative citing" – citing authors or their works with whom we may disagree;
(e) "authority citing" – very important in law in citing judicial decisions, although they may have an "informational rather than an authority-related role" (p. 7);
(f) "celebratory citing" – because of the work's prestige or reputation through which "the citer enhances the credibility of his work" (ibid.).

This author recommends the practice of what he calls a "responsible citation behavior" which arises from the *reason* for citing and the *motive* for citing. He also underscores one of its major drawbacks, what he calls "impure" motives for citing aimed at flattering the author of a cited work, or because the author of the cited work may favor and assist the citer's career or because the cited work may be authored by a possible journal referee, or perhaps because of piety or gratitude, or simply because the author wants to display erudition (Posner, 1999: 8). For this reason, Rose (1996: 41-42) speaks about the fact that citation choices, which are meant to foster "identification", also have the potential for creating division. In this sense, excessive citation can be misleading; on the one hand, because the author wants to identify with a large number and a variety of sources, making a claim for membership in a specific discourse community. However, a reader may also infer that the writer is not familiar enough with the community to discriminate what is relevant from what is not, in which case the writer may be simply showing off. Similarly, the same questions may be raised in reference to citations that are relatively recent, which may indicate both, that an author is aware of recent publications, or that he or she is not aware of the tradition or history of that discourse community; however, using citations that are too old, might also suggest the author's unfamiliarity with current publications and thus is unable to identify him/herself with a given discourse community. One might conclude, therefore, that a cited source that is widely shared will necessarily increase the authority of the citer's text.

To sum up, particularly inexperienced academic writers must strive to use a balanced amount of citations; the use of unnecessary citations may simply indicate that they do not recognize what is shared knowledge, thus revealing that they ignore what everyone knows in the discourse community he belongs to. Or, if lacking in necessary citations or providing incomplete citations "they create a division from the community because they do not know what everyone does *not* know, essentially failing to establish the context for their work that would identify it as a valuable contribution to community life" (Rose, 1996: 42; her italics).

9.2.3. Citing and referencing

Good academic referencing should be the first step towards improving and enhancing our research work, but there are certain conventions that govern good referencing practices. Students and professionals alike resort to RAs as a source of information and to substantiate their arguments as well. While there has been a vast amount of publications on all aspects of the genre of academic writing, not enough has been dedicated to bibliography, its content and form. Kourilova (1998: 111), in her paper on reviews of RAs written by nonnative speakers of English, already pointed out that one of the main omissions was in regard to referencing. Although she is speaking about medical articles, needless to say that the numerous systems employed by journals from different disciplines have compounded the problem of choosing the right quoting and referencing model.

Referencing guidelines are important tools for implementing our research and they can be found in research manuals or supplied by university writing instructors. However, our concern and attention should go beyond the mechanical system we are going to use for our references. It is obvious that when Harzing (2002: 144) says that breaking the guidelines for academic referencing is not good science and hinders its progress, she is referring to the difficulty of conducting good empirical research, particularly in some disciplines other than in natural sciences, as it may occur for example in the social sciences. Nonetheless, she points to the researchers' responsibility to make sure "this limited empirical base is actually *empirical*, *reliable* and *valid*, and not resort to careless and opportunistic second-source referencing" (ibid., author's italics). Harzing (2002) then gives twelve guidelines for good academic referencing to which we adhere completely:

1. Reproduce the correct reference
2. Refer to the correct publication
3. Do not use 'empty' references
4. Use reliable sources
5. Use generalizable sources for generalized statements
6. Do not misrepresent the content of the reference
7. Make clear which statement references support
8. Check out the original – do not copy someone else's references
9. Do not cite out-of-date references
10. Do not be unduly impressed by top journals
11. Do not try to reason away conflicting evidence
12. Actively search for counter-evidence. (Harzing, 2002: 128)

In his study of citation practices, Hyland (2000: 24-25) distinguishes two main attribution features: integral citations, where the name of the cited author occurs in the sentence, and non-integral citations, which make reference to the author in parenthesis or by superscript numbers. The reason to use one over the other reflects the importance or emphasis the author wants to attach to the reported author or message. Swales and Feak (2000: 128-129) report several options the author can choose from when citing previous literature:

[1] Within-sentence quotation (Byrne & Flood, 2004: 26)[4]:

> In fact, Gibbs (1995, p. 23) contends that the connection between conceptions of learning and approaches to learning is so strong that 'it is possible to predict the quality of the learning outcomes directly from students' conceptions of learning'.

[2] Block and indented quotations (usually more than 40 words) (Byrne & Flood, 2004: 26):

> Discipline specific research is also warranted given the influence of the educational context on the definition of learning. Indeed, Saljo (1979, p. 106) points out that
>
> > ... learning does not exist as a general phenomenon. To learn is to act within man-made institutions and to adapt to the particular definitions of learning that are valid in the educational environment in which one finds oneself.

[3] Paraphrase or summary (Byrne & Flood, 2004: 27):

> In a longitudinal study, involving distance education students, Marton et al. (1993) identified a sixth conception in which learning is conceived as personal transformation.

[4] Generalization (combination or several sources) (Byrne & Flood, 2004: 27):

> Other researchers have corroborated the appropriateness of these categories of description in different educational settings (Van Rossum and Schenk, 1984; Van Rossum et al., 1985; Martin and Ramsden, 1987; Vermunt and Van Rijswijk, 1988; Sharma, 1997; Flood and Wilson, 2002).

One can quote in text a phrase verbatim (direct quotation), using single or double quotation marks (sample [1]), or as an indented quotation when it is forty words or longer (sample [2]); in this case, use a smaller type text and no quotation marks. The quotation (samples [1] and [2]) and paraphrase (sample [3]), although basically performing the same function, must be exemplified differently. A paraphrase, according to Jordan (1990: 80), "is a summary of the author's words, often in a mixture of the author's words with the student's". The paraphrase is more often used than the direct quotation in most disciplines in the area of social sciences. We must, however, be able to handle both correctly.

A second difficulty is how quotations or paraphrases should be incorporated within the text. Jordan (1990: 80) provides several examples of how to carry this out when writing papers and RAs (see also examples [1] to [3] above):

To paraphrase Roberts (1973), the ...;
As noted by Roberts (1973), the local ...;
In his study, Roberts (1973) indicates that ...

The function of quotations is also underscored by Jordan (1990: 81) in order to make our text more meaningful and flow adequately. He distinguishes six different functions:

1. support (*... as X has remarked – '... '*)
2. exemplification (*Thus, for example, as '... '*)
3. introduction (*According to X, '... '*)
4. conclusion (*Thus X concludes: '... '*)
5. explanation (*X explains y as follows: '... '*)
6. definition (*y is defined by X as '... '*)

In his research of 80 RAs from eight disciplines, Hyland (2000: 24) speaks of the importance of citing in academic writing. He reports an average of almost 70 citations per RA, but with a certain degree of disciplinary variation. In Sociology, for instance, raking first, he reports 104 citations per RA, averaging 12.5 per 1,000 words; in second place, Marketing, with 94.4 citations per RA, with 10.1 per 1,000 words; finally, in the last place, Physics, with 7.4 per 1,000 words. These data confirm how much authors rely on previous research for their investigation, especially in Sociology and Marketing. He also underscored the importance and use of reporting verbs in the said corpus, in which a total of over 400 different reporting verbs were classified (p. 27). In Marketing, for instance, *suggest*, *argue*, *demonstrate*, *propose*, and *show*, are the five most frequently used with an average of 32.7 reporting structures per RA, compared to 57.1 in Philosophy at the top, and 6.6 in Physics, at the bottom of the list.

These guidelines should constitute an important norm for the novel writer; they are aimed at setting the ground work for quality research. They underscore several issues which young researchers usually do not consider the importance they undoubtedly have. Citing good and reliable sources will help them position their own writing; it helps them achieve adequate context for their own ideas, observations, and arguments, which in the end will smooth their way to the desired findings. Of particular importance we should stress the use of first hand material whenever possible. Choosing adequate literature to document the writers' text will also contribute to lend credibility to their own claims and argumentation. Rose (1996: 45) sums up the importance of a well-documented research as follows: "Credible citation practice is more than a matter of selective quotation, fluent paraphrase, accurate summary, avoidance of plagiarism, and precise punctuation. It is an act of building community, collaboratively constructing shared knowledge".

9.2.4. Referencing styles

In the last few decades different systems have appeared. In the 1960's, mostly everybody used Turabian (1961 [2007]) for university papers, theses, dissertations and also in articles and books, and now we can choose from several: Vancouver, APA, and MLA, which will be briefly explained below; and also the Harvard and Chicago manuals, with a few variations from the APA, CBE for scientists, etc. Each discipline will tend to use its own referencing style. Most of these style manuals provide free, user-friendly information online. Here we have the three most widely used style models:

(a) Vancouver (2008) writing style, also called AMA (American Medical Association). Its name comes from a 1978 meeting in Canada of biomedical journal editors during which the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) was established. This group, to which 300 journals adhered initially (ICMJE, 1988: 265), agreed not only upon the unification of their publication practices but also upon the structure and content of their journals. This format, used in medicine, health, and biological sciences, presents a numerical system, either in brackets or as a superscript, for each bibliographical entry that is added in the order they appear in text in the list of references at the end of the article.

In-text citations and items listed in the references list (from Kalra et al., 2004: 1099)[5]:

> Researchers undertook baseline assessments before randomisation. Patients' assessments included demographics, stroke subtype,[19] Barthel index,[20] and estimations of premorbid function and quality of life; we used the Frenchay activity index[20] and the EuroQol visual analogue scale.[21]

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(b) The Modern Language Association (MLA, 2009) also produced its own writing manual initially designed for undergraduate students, mostly in literature, arts, and humanities. This style manual is probably the most important means of documentation in the North American educational and literary world, but it is not widely used elsewhere. It is also used by many writers when they are not required to use a specific writing style.

In-text citation and items listed in the references list (from Gladhart, 2005: 105)[6]:

Rosa's attempt to cement his triumph through the seduction of Isabel backfires. Balderston notes that Isabel shatters the general's orderly world because

> [h]er (present) body erases from his memory the (absent) body of Julia.[Thus] she erases Julia's images but at the same time exacerbates her absence. The repetition of the same body, in slightly different forms, is intolerable: one or another of them, or both, must turn out to be simulacrum. (44)

[…]
It is not clear if she turns back out of desire, rage, a sense of betrayal, or some combination. Kaminsky contends that Isabel's need to see the general again "has less to do with the desire to return to a lover's bed than it does with a desire to confront a murderer" ("Residual" 106). Duncan concludes that it is "fear of the loss of memory" that prompts Isabel's return (50).

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Balderston, Daniel "The new historical novel: history and fantasy in *Los recuerdos del porvenir*". *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 66 (1989): 41-46.
Kaminsky, Amy K. *Reading the Body Politic: Feminist Criticism and Latin American Women Writers*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1993.
________. "Residual authority and gendered resistance". *Critical Theory, Cultural Politics, and Latin American Narrative*. Ed. Steven M. Bell, Albert H. Le May, and Leonard Orr. Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame P, 1993. 103-21.

(c) The American Psychological Association (APA, 2010) also proposed a style guide; except for some minor details, it is almost identical to the Harvard referencing system. It is an author-date style for citing and referencing information in different sorts of publications. It is most widely used in psychology, education, social sciences and related disciplines. In-text citations will include the name of the author(s), the year of publication and a page number in direct quotes, paraphrases or specific ideas you want the reader to address.

In-text citation and items listed in the references list (from Gerlowski et al., 1994: 287 and 292)[7]:

Existing work on foreign direct investment (FDI) in the U.S. can be grouped into three categories: studies that explain the level of FDI (c.f., Dunning 1988; Caves 1971); studies that analyze its geographical disposition (c.f., Friedman, Gerlowski, Silberman 1992; [...]).

REFERENCES
Caves, Rich E. 1971. "International corporations: The industrial economics of foreign investment." *Economica* 38 (149):1-27.
Dunning, John H. 1988. "The eclectic paradigm of international production." *Journal of International Business Studies* 19 (1):1-31.
Friedman, Joseph, Dan Gerlowski, and Jon Silberman. 1992. "What attracts foreign multinational corporations?" *Journal of Regional Science* 32 (4):403-18.

Besides the differences we have pointed out in regard to referencing the bibliography, one important difference is the fact that both, MLA and APA styles, more than others, focus on giving information about the author of a bibliographical source, i.e. it is “author prominent”, while the Vancouver style focuses on facts and prefers to underline achievements rather than their authors, i.e. it is “information prominent” (Weissberg & Buker, 1990: 51-52). Whether you use one style guide or another, always check and see the variations introduced by individual journals. In the following section we will describe the details of our referencing system, closely related to the APA with minor variations, which is basically used in our academic surroundings.

9.2.5. Endnotes and footnotes

In a university paper, as well as in some journals (particularly in the humanities and in business and economics journals), the use of either footnotes or endnotes is permitted and often recommended. Nowadays, your software provides this endnote or footnote feature. Nevertheless, these notes should not replace the reference list at the end of the RA. In addition, they should be purely informative and as a support to the text or to clarify a concept not central to the main text. The journals’ “Guidelines for authors” provide information for their use and format; the following example illustrates a typical footnote in which the author further complements the information of the main text (Miller & Woods, 2000: 223)[8]:

> Whilst taxation as a career option in its own right is becoming increasingly popular and is taught at undergraduate level in many UK universities, it is, with one or two exceptions,[1] not offered as a degree subject in its own right.
>
> ---
>
> [1] Bournemouth, Guildhall and Abertay universities all offer either a full degree in taxation or operate a modular system which allows a high level of specialization in taxation.

Or, as in the following, the author complements information with bibliography (Burgess & Rees, 1997: 309-310)[9]:

> We conclude that the labour market is still capable of offering ‘lifetime jobs’[1] to large numbers of workers, but that some are stuck in transient jobs.
>
> ---
>
> [1] Hall (1982) termed jobs lasting at least 20 years as lifetime jobs.

In some cases, authors also use a footnote to include some additional information, such as a personal communication on a given issue, a definition of uncommon concepts, and also an entry from a newspaper column with its bibliographical information, which is then excluded from the list of references at the end of the RA.

9.2.6. The style guide we propose

The style we are proposing draws from APA with minor variations; it is the style we have been using in our publications and the style we have been recommending to our students. In-text citations in this system, just as in Harvard, Turabian, or Chicago styles, are very much author oriented and provide in text who wrote what you are citing, where to find it and when was it published.

(1) Citing and referencing books and authored chapters and articles from anthologies and encyclopedias:

(a) Typical format of a book	Author/s of book, initial/s (Year of publication). *Title of book – italicized*. Place of publication: Publisher.
(b) Typical format of an authored book chapter	Author/s of article, initial/s (Year of publication). "Title of book chapter" in (ed./s.), *Title of book – italicized* pp. page numbers. Place of publication: Publisher.
(c) Typical format of an authored encyclopedia or dictionary article	Author/s of article, initial/s (Year of publication). "Title of article". *Title of encyclopedia – italicized*. Place of publication: Publisher.

Examples of in-text referencing and reference list:

Books	**In-text citation**	**Reference list**
Single author	[...] an intellectual and wide-ranging approach is taken by Sontag (1971: 3), who examines [...]	Sontag, S. (1971). *On Photography*. London: Penguin.
Two authors	As Coates and Topham (1974: 110) put it, "appetite grows with the eating". See also Arnold and Hammond (1994) on […].	Coates, K. & T. Topham (1974). *The New Unionism*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
Three or more authors	[...] which in its turn will have negative effects on the employability of the unemployed (Layard et al., 1994).	Layard, R., S. Nickell, & R. Jackman (1994). *The Unemployment Crises*. London: Oxford University Press.
Edited book	A brief look at the subject of economics discourse will help to illustrate some of the differences referred to (McCloskey, 1985).	McCloskey, D. (1985). *The Rhetoric of Economics*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.
Chapter in an edited book	The lecture genre itself (discussed in Benson, 1994a) brings its own particular and potential areas of difficulty.	Benson, M. J. (1994a). "Lecture listening in an ethnographic perspective" in J. Flowerdew (ed.), *Academic Listening*, 181-198. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Article in an encyclopedia	[...] a similar approach can be observed in written medical genres, especially in medical research articles (Piqué-Angordans & Posteguillo, 2006).	Piqué-Angordans J. & S. Posteguillo (2006). "Medical discourse and academic genres". *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, 2nd ed. London: Elsevier.

Books offer sometimes a difficulty in regard to the year of publication and whether they are editions or reprints, often derived from the library cataloguing system of books. When in doubt, the researcher must get the information from the book itself. The doubt comes when the words "reprint" and "edition" appear. In book publishing, when a book has been revised from an earlier version, it is usually referred to as a new edition, not as a reprint. As a general rule, disregard reprints and only refer to the edition you are using, preferably the latest, indicating it right after the title of the book, as in the last entry of the examples above.

(2) Citing and referencing journal articles, printed and digital:

(a) Typical format of a printed article (and electronic equivalent)	Author/s of article, initial/s (Year of publication). "Title of journal article". *Journal name – italicized* volume,issue number: page range.
(b) Typical format of a digital article with no printed equivalent	Author/s of article, initial/s (Year of publication). "Title of journal article". *Journal name – italicized* volume,issue number. Retrieved (retrieval date) from http://www... /or/ DOI …

Examples of in-text referencing and reference list:

Journals	**In-text citation**	**Reference list**
Single author	It is useful to recall Feldstein's (1976) distinction between 'tax design' and 'tax reform'. According to	Feldstein, M. (1976). "On the theory of tax reform". *Journal of Public Economics* 6: 77–104.

	this classification, "*design* is a guide for ... policy ... in the original position'' (ibid., p. 77, original italics).	
Two authors	As explained by Cooper and Kaplan (1992), the cost of unused capacity should not be allocated to individual products or customers.	Cooper, R. & R. S. Kaplan (1992). "Activity-based costing: Measuring costs of resource usage". *Accounting Horizons* 6,3: 1–13.
Three or more authors	Cohen et al. (2000) showed that auditors primarily responsible for performing the planning phases of the engagement [...]	Cohen, J., G. & A. Wright (2000). "Evidence on the effect of financial and non-financial trends on analytical review". *Auditing: A Journal of Practice & Theory* 19,1: 27–48.
Electronic journals (no printed equivalent)	There have been several publications in regard to the different referencing styles available (see Camaño-Puig & Piqué-Noguera, 2009).	Camaño-Puig, R. & C. Piqué-Noguera (2009). "Referencing styles and research". *Nurse Author & Editor* 19,3. Retrieved January 17 2009. http://www.nurseauthoreditor.com/.

(3) Citing and referencing conference papers, theses and dissertations, as well as newspaper, Internet articles[10], and institutional web pages:

(a) Typical format of a published/unpublished conference paper	Author/s of paper, initial/s (Year of publication). "Title of paper". *Title of published proceedings – italicized*. In Place of publication: Publisher, page range. (OR: vol. no., page range).
(b) Typical format for a thesis or dissertation	Author of thesis, initial/s (Year of publication). "Title of thesis". City: University. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.
(c) Typical format of a newspaper item	Author/s of paper, initial/s (Year of publication month and day). "Title of paper". *Title of newspaper – italicized*, page range. [if online, add digital address and retrieval date]

Typical format of theses and dissertations:

Document	**In-text citation**	**Reference list**
Published conference paper	A description of the collective nature of representations can be found in Farr (1989).	Farr, R. (1989). "The social and collective nature of representations" in J. P. Forgas & J. M. Innes (eds.), *Proceedings of the XXIV International Congress of Psychology, Sydney, August 28-September 2, 1988*. Amsterdam: Elsevier, vol. 1, pp. 157-166.
Unpublished conference paper	Drawing from existing literature on needs analysis, Bonet and Piqué (1993) presented their case for the University of Valencia campus.	Bonet, P. & J. Piqué (1993). "Teaching foreign languages for specific purposes: University of Valencia Project". Paper presented at the 10th World Congress AILA '93. Amsterdam, August 9-13.
Digital newspaper article	As Tang's (2007) paper so adequately describes, the early stages of the Chinese modern drama [...]	Tang Y. (2007, July 10). "The dramatic story of drama". *Beijing Review*. Retrieved January 8, 2009, from http://www.bjreview.com.cn.
Institutional web page[11]	[…] there is a link back to a page that identifies the author and his institution, as well as the fact that this was a paper presented in 1997 by Robin Lock.	Lock, R. (1997). "Internet resources for teaching statistics". St. Lawrence University, Mathematics Department. Retrieved February 4 2010 from http://it.stlawu.edu/~rlock/iasc97/index.html.
Thesis or dissertation	[...] it is uncommon to find research on the structure of conference papers; however, Hopkins (1985) describes their structure and main features.	Hopkins, A. (1985). "An investigation into the organizing and organizational features of published conference papers". Birmingham: University of Birmingham. Unpublished MA thesis.

Activity 5: What is the difference between the skills of summarizing and paraphrasing?
Activity 6: Name the different types of quotations
Activity 7: Discuss the following statement: to search the Internet for information and then cut and paste some section to be added to your paper is not plagiarism.
Activity 8: Endnotes and footnotes in a paper perform the same function. Do you agree with this statement?
Activity 9: Direct and indirect quotations play a similar role in a text; name their similarities and differences.

9.3. Writing academic and scientific research articles (RAs)

Since the mid 1970's, most scientific journals began to change the structure and content of their publications. A new model began to emerge and was being adopted by mostly in biomedical publications. According to Bazerman (1988: 157), this newly adopted composition model constituted a sort of a "web of common theory" and part of this web is attributed to the adoption by a large sector of scientists of the IMRAD (Introduction, Methods, Results, And Discussion) as a common structure for RAs.

Swales, with his seminal *Genre Analysis* (1990), is perhaps one of the most frequently quoted authors in applied linguistics. He defined the structure of the RA in terms of moves and steps[12] which perform the communicative functions in scientific texts. Since Swales's publication on genre, the literature has proposed his text-based theory of moves for the description of the structure of RAs, a theory which is central to ESP genre analysis. However, our target audience comes from different disciplines and, for the most part, made up of nonnative speakers of English. To safeguard possible cultural and semantic differences, we have introduced a change in the terminology: Swales' (1990: 141) 'moves' will be called 'sequences' (S), and instead of 'steps,' we will use the expression 'information units' (IU), but mainly rewording each of these sequences and information units for better comprehension.

9.3.1. Reading and writing RAs: the hourglass diagram

The hourglass diagram (figure 1) was introduced by Hill et al. (1982) to explain the macrostructure of the RA and to show their students how a scientific RA should be read. Compared to other proposals, which lacked textual evidence to justify the RA structure, Swales (1990: 133) believes the hourglass diagram provides a more manageable starting-point for a discussion of shape of macrostructure. Thus Swales (1990), Weissberg and Buker (1990), and others, adopted this model which illustrates the internal movement of the author's discourse in a RA and its external structure as well. It is, therefore, recommended, both to students and academics alike, to study published articles in business and economics to see where the information is located and organized, and finally see what structure is most applicable to their planned RA and how to fit the information they have collected in its appropriate section.

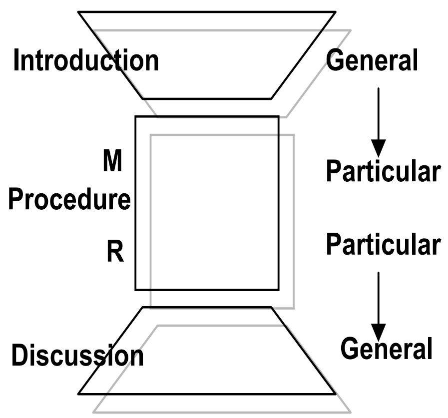

Figure 1: The hourglass diagram (adapted from Hill et al., 1982: 335).

The Introduction begins with the general information, providing background information, a brief review of the literature and expression of the aim of the article. The

Procedure includes the Methods (M) section, which introduces the details of the materials used, such as questionnaires, texts, sample description, statistics, variables studied, etc.; the M constitutes part of the procedure, together with the Results (R), where the author presents and analyzes the findings obtained. Finally, the comparison with the authors' own and previous research will constitute the Discussion; based on the results obtained, the authors explain and draw applications and implications from them, and bring the RA to a close relating these findings with the generalizations brought up at the beginning. The RA then becomes a reflection of cyclic or recursive configuration of the different moves, as pointed out by Swales (1990: 158-159). Genres, however, are not fixed; they evolve in response to changes in the different disciplines and in the collective perception of each discipline. The area of Business and Economics is no exception.

9.3.2. The research article: title and abstract

The first impression writing instructors or journal editors will get comes directly from the title of the RA and from the abstract. Both are going to be read by thousands of students, researchers, and professionals; therefore, they should be informative and descriptive since in them the essence of the research submitted for publication is concentrated. Additionally, authors should read carefully the journal's instructions before writing any part of the manuscript and editors will appreciate properly formatted manuscripts. The title should be characterized by its simplicity, while the abstract by the important information it should provide.

(a) The title

Thirty or forty years ago, RA titles used to be almost strictly topical and with little elaboration. Today, they are more informative and the full-sentence type title is quite common, especially in scientific journals (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995: 33). In spite of the little attention titles have received from the literature, they have become an important part of the RA; for many, they are like gatekeepers of the article itself and often read no further. For this reason, the title should give sufficient and accurate information about the general content of the RA.

Swales (1990: 222) already remarked that composing a few words for a title can take time, discussion, and mental effort. To be most effective, we should follow certain conventions when composing it, like indicating the topic and the scope of the study; i.e. a good title should be self-explanatory. Hartley (2005) brings to the attention of readers the real aim of titles: should they attract or inform the reader? In the first place, they should inform, but there is nothing wrong in also making them attractive. Editors will always remind us to be economical in the use of words, and we should start with the title avoiding the so-called waste words ("More on …", "A few notes on…", and including "Studies on ...", or "Observations on ...".), making sure that the reader will understand what you are proposing in your RA. For example, a title in the form of a question: "Why are older pensioners poorer?"; or presenting the point with a verb: "The nature and role of monetary policy when money is endogenous", or without an action verb: "The puzzle of jobless growth in Indian manufacturing"; some authors prefer a long title, like "Transfer of marketing know-how in international strategic alliances: an empirical investigation of the role and antecedents of knowledge ambiguity" (19 words), or very short "Persuasive devices" (2 words). We can also divide the title with a colon, as suggested by Hartley (2005), and you can have different solutions through the use of the colon. For example, through the use of the colon you can indicate a problem and its solution, or go from general to specific, or indicate the topic of the research and the method employed, and also major and minor. See, for instance, the following examples: "The location of foreign direct investment for U.S. real estate: an empirical analysis" (topic: method), "High school students' punctuation: an analysis of errors in placement period" (problem: solution), "Business fixed investment: evidence of a financial accelerator in Europe" (general: specific).

(b) The abstract

The abstract is the second element students and writers are asked to prepare. Today the debate is on whether we should propose a structured abstract (Hartley, 1997: 316), or an unstructured one. While in some disciplines a structured abstract is required, for example, in medicine and some related disciplines, in others it is not.

Whether one decides to use one model or the other, the important thing is the information you are going to include in them, since our reading of the RA will often depend on the information obtained through its abstract; abstracts should help outline key findings and convince the reader to keep on reading. Thus their structure, whether internal, as in the example below, or external, by way of subheadings, is of great help to researchers. In figure 2, Weissberg and Buker (1990: 186; authors' italics) suggest a five element abstract.

B	=	some *background information*
P	=	the *principal activity* (or purpose) of the study and its *scope*
M	=	some information about the *methodology* used in the study
R	=	the most important *results* of the study
C	=	a statement of *conclusion* or *recommendation*

Figure 2: Abstract structure, according to Weissberg & Buker (1990)

Abstracts should be understood as an associated text to the RA (Hyland, 2000: 64); thus, it should reflect the structure of the RA. However, it should not be taken as a summarized replica of the article itself, but a rhetorical tool "to persuade readers that the article is worth reading" (Hyland, 2000: 64). Hyland (p. 67) also proposes a five-item structure –Introduction (I), Purpose (P), Method (M), Product (Pr), Conclusion (C)–, resembling Weissberg and Buker's (1990) model, although he found important disciplinary variations from his analysis of 800 abstracts of eight different disciplines. Marketing, which was one of the disciplines studied, yielded different structures with their percentages, which are shown in table 3:

Discipline	I-P-M-Pr	[C]	P-M-Pr	[C]	I-P-Pr	[C]	P-Pr	[C]	I-Pr	Others

Marketing (%)	15%	6%	17%	4%	20%	8%	9%	1%	0	20%
Overall (%)	10%	4%	25%	5%	15%	5%	14%	4%	7%	11%

Table 3: Most frequent move sequences in Marketing abstracts (Hyland, 2000: 70)

The following abstract (Miller & Woods, 2000: 223), from an economics journal, fully complies with Weissberg's and Buker's (1990) five-step model:

B *Taxation is emerging as a profession in its own right in the UK. Professions require academic underpinning both in terms of research and university study but little is known about the relationship of tax teaching to the requirements of the profession.*
P *◆ The study examines whether or not an 'expectations gap' (exists between the knowledge of taxation acquired at university and the knowledge which employers*
M *expect and would prefer graduates to have. ◆ Parallel postal questionnaires were sent to educators teaching taxation within accounting programmes at UK universities and to accounting firms likely to recruit graduates who had studied*
R *taxation at university for taxation work. ◆ The results indicate that differences exist not only between the 'old' (pre-1992) and 'new' (post-1992) university sectors but also between employers' current expectations of graduates' tax abilities and*
C *employers' preferences for graduates' tax abilities. ◆ This leads on to question the future direction of taxation teaching within UK undergraduate programmes.*

In business and economics, the unstructured abstract is usually preferred, as in this 152-word example from the journal *Accounting Education*, in which, with no external structure, one can perfectly distinguish the five information items (BPMRC) contained therein (see figure 2). In the 124 articles in our corpus of business and economics RAs, 26 of them (from *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*) do not include an abstract, while in the rest, unstructured abstracts are included. In many of them, at least four of the typical information units of an abstract (BPRC) can be identified, and in some of them, at least three of them (BPR) were present. Their average size is 136.18 words per abstract.

9.3.3. The section of the Introduction

The literature basically accepts Swales's (1990) general structure of the RA Introduction. However, disciplinary variations occur if one tries to typecast texts into one structured category. Business and economics RAs, for example, offer a few of these variations. They differ mainly in reference to Swales's CARS (create a research space) model (Swales, 1990: 141), since some authors prefer adding another section between the Introduction and the Methods, with material related either to the theoretical framework or to the review of the literature.

Given the fact that this volume is intended for nonnative speakers of English, we first want to introduce Swales (1990) model, although, following Nwogu's (1997: 135) terminological adaptation in order to minimize interpretation barriers of nonnative speakers of English, a slightly different nomenclature was proposed first in Spanish (Piqué-Angordans, 2002), and now in English. Figure 3 shows the adapted structure for the Introduction with its three sequences (S) and information units (IU) for each sequence.

Section 1. INTRODUCTION

Sequence 1. Presenting background information
IU 1-1. Reference to established knowledge in the field
IU 1-2. Reference to main research problems
Sequence 2. Reviewing related research
IU 2-1. Reference to previous research
IU 2-2. Reference to limitations of previous research
IU 2-3. Reference to advantages of present investigation
IU 2-4. Reference to continuing previous investigation
Sequence 3. Presenting new research
IU 3-1. Reference to research purpose
IU 3-2. Reference to main research procedure
IU 3-3. Reverence to main results
IU 3-4. Reference to RA structure

Figure 3: Proposed structure for the Introduction (Piqué Angordans, 2002: 58)

We looked for and analyzed several published articles in business and economics in which we could see a structure that would depart from this model. As an example, we chose Gerlowski et al.'s (1994) RA from our corpus. In it we found that the information usually placed under S2 most of it was now relocated right after the Introduction, and separated from it, preceded by IU 3-4 (Reference to RA structure). In addition, the purpose of the article appears in S3, IU 3-1, and it is somehow reformulated at the end of the added "Previous studies" section, a distribution already noticed by Palmer and Ripollés (2004). In Gerlowski et al. (1994), the sequences would be organized as follows:

S1 (Presenting background information)
S2 (Reviewing related research), highly reduced information
S3 (Presenting new research),
IU 3-4 (Structure of the RA)
S2 (Reviewing related research), fully developed, entitled "Previous Research"
IU 2-1, IU 2-2, and IU 2-3, included in this new section.

In this modified structure, while maintaining the Introduction with the three basic sequences, sequence 2 almost devoid of content, authors introduce the new sequence, called "Previous studies", "Review of the literature", or similar, immediately after sequence 3, that is, outside and following the typical Introduction. See a partial example of Gerlowski et al.'s (1994: 286) Introduction:

> While a number of studies have been conducted on foreign investment in manufacturing in the U.S. (cf., Friedman, Gerlowski, and Silberman 1992; Woodward 1992; Coughlin, Terza, and Arromdee 1991), little research on foreign investment in real property has been conducted.

Then, from the section called "Previous studies", the authors practically repeat and amplify the information with new bibliography, as in the following sentence in which the main research problem (IU 1-2) or the limitations of previous research (IU 2-2) are expressed (Gerlowski et al., p. 287):

> Although many studies have discussed various issues relating to foreign investments in the U.S. real estate markets (c.f., McMahan 1990; DeWitt 1987; Sears 1987), only one study has attempted to systematically analyze the location preferences of foreigners acquiring real estate related investments.

The literature review is considered to be a fundamental part of the RA since it leads to the gap of the research that is to be explored: "Reference to prior literature is a defining feature of scholarly and research writing. Such references enable you to demonstrate how your current work—and that of your colleagues, if any—builds upon or deviates from earlier publications" (Swales & Feak, 2000: 114). It also provides the reader with an overview of the state of knowledge in an area of investigation, and it is also "a means of demonstrating an author's knowledge about a particular field of study, including vocabulary, theories, key variables and phenomena, and its methods and history" (Randolph, 2009: 2).

The second area in which most variation occurs in business and economics RAs is in regard to the exposition of theory, as noted by Palmer and Ripollés (2004) in their analysis of ten business organization RAs; as they observed, both areas are directly linked occupying similar space within the RA. While the four constituent sections, I, M, R, and D, "tend to appear in all research articles" (p. 95), they also distinguish as a different section "Theory Research/Literature Review", which is added after the introduction and occupies an important part of the RA. On average, the ten articles yielded the following percentages:

Title	Abstract	Introduction	Theory Research / Literature Review	Method	Results	Discussion / Conclusion
0.18%	1.62%	8.73%	36.49%	17.76%	17.97%	17.25%

Table 4: Overall percentage distribution of sections in Palmer and Ripollés (2004: 98)

This reportedly additional section, in table 4 called "Theory Research / Literature Review", makes us realize, first of all, that the Introduction is reduced considerably in favor of the added section; we should understand it as an important disciplinary variation in business and economics articles. In addition, the percentage allowed to the added section is often significantly greater than the rest of the sections. This, however, cannot be generalized across social sciences disciplines, some of which strictly follow the IMRAD model, for instance, Miller and Woods's (2000) RA, in the journal *Accounting Education*. We should keep in mind, however, that the following information should always be present in the Introduction (Swales & Feak, 1994: 175): first, to show that the area of research "is important, interesting, problematic, or relevant in some way"; second, a good and evaluative review of the previous literature through which the author should find a limitation, a problem, or gap, and once established, raise questions about it; and third, a clear indication of the aim or purpose of the research.

Structuring the introduction is perhaps the most important section of the RA; as suggested by former journal editor Malcolm Benson (1994b), one should be able to answer simple questions such as whether you can outline in a few sentences what you are proposing to write, or whether it fits or not within the background you have presented, and including whether you could tell a nonspecialist what your RA is all about. Questions such as these will lead to clearer thinking and, therefore, to clearer exposition.

9.3.4. The section of Methods

The Methods section, often referred to with different names (Procedures, Materials and Methods, Experimental Details, Experimental Design, etc.), is characterized by its variability, both in content and the sequencing of the information units. Historically this section has suffered from the idiosyncrasy of journals and journal editors which caused it to be "increasingly de-emphasized" and often "relocated towards the end of the paper" (Swales, 1990: 169); in most experimental RAs, this section is totally separate from the introduction or results; in some science journals, *Cell* for instance, the methods section appears in small print and in others it has been placed at the end of the RA (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995: 37). In business and economics RAs, this section is sometimes substituted by an extended theoretical section. In the articles we have examined from our corpus, there is an ample variability in size of the different sections. In the investigation by Palmer and Ripollés (2004), this section occupies and average of 17.76% in the ten RAs analyzed.

In Gerlowski et al.'s (1994) article, there is no section of Methods as such; however, under "Empirical Analysis" (pp. 289-290), they included a sub-section called "Measurement of variables" which actually could stand for the Methods section; it occupies no less than 35% of the whole text. Similarly, in an article by Darbha (2002)[13], from *Applied Economics Letters*, the Methods section occupied 19.88% of the text, while the Introduction doubled the percentage (38.15%); the rest, 24.87% for the Results section and 12.11% for the Discussion; 4.99% the abstract. It is also significant that the RA structure adheres totally to the IMRAD model. In business and economics journals, many of its RAs are non-experimental and, therefore, their so-called methods section, even if it is included with that name, is usually descriptive of situations and quite short.

As a general rule, this section should describe materials used, variables studied, and the sample, but it should also explain the steps authors took when conducting their research. See figure 4 above for a possible structure of Methods. Although not all the details are necessary of the methodology used, since they can be avoided by citing previous research, sufficient information should be provided so that the reader will understand what has been done. It is also important to observe that non-experimental business and economics RAs will practically overlook most of the IUs contained in the model presented (figure 4). In Darbha's (2002) article, for example, the Methods section, called "Econometric methodology" occupies close to 20% of the article, but avoids most of the details included in the Methods structure in figure 4. One characteristic of the Methods sections, pointed out by Swales (1990: 168), is that they show certain "inferential bridging"; in other words, authors often rely on the readers' background knowledge or experience more than any other section in the article, and this is why Swales (ibid.) believes this is "further evidence for the 'inconsiderate' nature of Methods texts".

Section 2. METHODS

Sequence 4. Describing data-collection procedure:
- IU 4-1. Indicating source of data
- IU 4-2. Indicating data size
- IU 4-3. Indicating criteria for data collection

Sequence 5. Describing experimental procedures:
- IU 5-1. Identification of main research apparatus
- IU 5-2. Recounting experimental process
- IU 5-3. Indicating criteria for success

Sequence 6. Describing data-analysis procedures:
- IU 6-1. Defining terminologies
- IU 6-2. Indicating process of data classification
- IU 6-3. Identifying analytical instrument/procedure
- IU 6-4. Indicating modification to instrument/procedure

Figure 4: Sequences (S) and Information Units (IU) in the Methods section

9.3.5. The sections of Results and Discussion

In the Results section, particular attention is given to tables and graphs, especially if they are derived from an experimental investigation. In such case, this section is practically reduced to the exposition of the results as such. However, in some journals, an analysis of the results is also included, avoiding explanations, applications, recommendations, which are left for the final section. However, this distinction between Results and Discussion is not as clear as it is commonly believed (Swales & Feak, 1994: 170). It is interesting to point out that in some disciplines the Results section occupies a large percentage of the RA. For instance, Brett (1994: 50) reports that in sociology the Results section represents 40% of the RA, while in the analysis by Palmer and Ripollés (2004: 98), the average amount occupied by this section is close to 20%.

Section 3. RESULTS

Sequence 7. Indicating consistent observation:
IU 7-1. Highlighting overall observation
IU 7-2. Indicating specific observations
IU 7-3. Accounting for observations made
Sequence 8. Indicating non-consistent observations

Figure 5: Structure of the Results section

In the Results section one will most likely find a combination of written text and figures, usually graphs, tables, and diagrams. These data can be distributed according to the two-sequence structure (figure 5) in which the most important findings of the research are highlighted and discussed (Nwogu, 1997: 135). In his study of the Results section, Palmer (2002: 125) suggests adding two IUs at the beginning of the section: "Reference to the aims of the study" and "Reference to methods used". He also mentions (p. 126), as we do below in reference to Miller & Woods's (2000) article, that in some RAs, the material usually included in the sections of Results and Discussion often appears together, called "Data and Results", as in Darbha's (2002) RA; "Findings and Discussion" in Byrne & Flood (2004), and the like, followed by a shorter section called Conclusions.

We already mentioned that recent research has pointed out the inadequacy of using the IMRAD structure to describe some RAs, since it is not applicable to some Economics papers and, except for the section of Introduction and Conclusions, the rest of sections vary not only in name but also in purpose. Economics authors seem to prefer a long standing rhetorical tradition for the distribution of their moves (McCloskey, 1985; Dudley-Evans & Henderson, 1990a). However, RAs like Gerlowski et al.'s (1994) or Miller and Woods's (2000), seem to contradict, at least in part, this claim. A more didactically-oriented structure for this section is presented by Weissberg and Buker (1990), with a three-element structure, as shown in figure 6.

ELEMENT 1: a statement that locates the *figure(s)* where the results can be found
ELEMENT 2: statements that *present the most important findings*
ELEMENT 3: statements that *comment* on the results

Figure 6: Three information elements of the Results section (Weissberg & Buker, 1990: 138; their italics)

The variability of the Discussion, often called Conclusion, is also obvious, and in many excellent RAs the section is completed in no more than twenty lines, but then only a "conclusion" is contained therein and no Discussion whatsoever. As Brett (1994) has already mentioned, the division between these two sections is not very rigid, and we can often observe that both sections appear combined in the Results, followed by a final smaller section called Conclusion (see, for instance, Miller & Woods', 2000), in which a general summary of the article is provided, and perhaps an added comment for further research. In his research of twenty sociology articles, Brett (1994: 51) found the Results occupying more space than the rest: Introduction (24%), Methods (20%), Results (40%), and Discussion (16%).

Swales and Feak (1994: 195) recognize that it is not easy to give useful guidelines for writing these two sections. The Discussion should be used to discuss and compare your results with other researchers. Hopkins and Dudley-Evans (1988: 118) actually provide, without trying to be exhaustive, eleven different options open to authors when writing their Discussion section, allowing them to make reference to the results, show relationship with other research, or explain unsatisfactory ones, exemplify, compare, justify and recommend future research, all of which in a kind of cyclical patterning of moves and often only one move with a statement of result. If at the end of the RA the author has decided that a Conclusion or Conclusions should be included, results should not just be restated; simply reiterate your objectives providing an account on the extent to which you have accomplished them, and finally briefly enumerate the conclusions. The following (Figure 7) would be a suggested structure for the Discussion (Nwogu, 1997: 135):

Section 4. DISCUSSION

Sequence 9. Highlighting overall research outcome
Sequence 10. Explaining specific research outcomes:
- IU 10-1. Stating a specific outcome
- IU 10-2. Interpreting the outcome
- IU 10-3. Indicating significance of the outcome
- IU 10-4. Contrasting present and previous outcomes
- IU 10-5. Indicating limitations of outcomes

Sequence 11. Stating research conclusions:
- IU 11-1. Indicating research implications
- IU 11-2. Promoting further research

Figure 7: Structure of the Discussion section

The Discussion, if we recall the central idea conveyed by the hourglass diagram (see figure 1) and the interpretations that followed (Swales, 1990; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995), should be written in such a way that it would take the reader "from the *specific information* reported in the methods and the results sections to a more *general view* of how the findings should be interpreted" (Weissberg & Buker, 1990: 161; authors' italics). Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995: 40-41), commenting on Swales' (1990) CARS model, further adds that in the Discussion, if properly written, we should be able to find the answer to the question or questions raised in the Introduction, which would in fact complete the cycle of the research. For example, taking Gerlowski et al.'s (1994) article, compare the following two extracts, the first one (p. 287), from the Introduction, the second one (p. 291), from the Discussion/Conclusion:

INTRODUCTION	CONCLUSION
Although many studies have discussed various issues relating to foreign investments in the U.S. real estate markets, only one study has attempted to systematically analyze <u>the location preferences of foreigners acquiring real estate related investments</u>.	This study advances <u>our understanding of the location decisions made by foreign firms</u> in real estate in the United States. The location preferences of foreign investors were empirically determined using a random effects model.

As we observe the structural variability of RAs in business and economics, our advice to young researchers would be to analyze RAs with similar content to theirs and outline a sample structure around which construct their RA, or simply try to adjust their material to one of the schemes we have analyzed.

9.3.6. Writing the literature review for theses and dissertations

Writing a thesis or a dissertation represents to most students the culmination of a long struggle to finally achieve their desired graduation from university. The literature production has increased considerably in recent years with studies related to thesis and dissertation writing. To name just a few, it is worth recalling the work of Paltridge (1997) discussing the analysis and teaching of different aspects of theses and dissertations across disciplines, and including on specific details, such as the literature review of dissertations (Baker, 2000; Kwan, 2006; Randolph, 2009), and including with an emphasis on speakers of other languages. Paltridge (1997: 62), with foreign students in mind, complaints that there is a significant gap in regard to teaching programs for ESL students focusing on writing thesis and dissertation proposals. In this section we want to bring up some issues related to the review of the literature within theses and dissertations. Documentation and citing skills have indeed provided an essential element in writing this review, but there are several other issues which should be further underscored.

Michael Baker (2000), who has written extensively in the area of Marketing, provides an extensive and detailed RA on writing the literature review, including details on citation and references. He says that the "purpose of a literature review is to avoid the calamities of ignorance and the reinvention of what is already known" (p. 220). He suggests that the decision of what topic we want to develop is also related to an initial scanning of the literature in search of possible topics. Writing a thesis or a dissertation is not an orderly process in which one step follows the other. Knowing that deciding on the topic is most important, but once the topic has been chosen, "the scope of the literature review will be determined by the extent of the literature itself, the scope and nature of the assignment to be attempted, and the resources available to the researcher" (Baker, 2000: 221-222). Then and only then we can attempt at complying with the purpose of the review, which is to familiarize ourselves with the literature related to the topic chosen, and be able to evaluate it critically.

Kwan (2006: 32) considers the literature review "both an argument for one's research and a part of the process in which the students learn about their topic and the field". She goes on to suggest that this review should help us identify work already done and the relevancy of our own; it is also an aid to prevent duplications and avoid making mistakes of previous studies, and most importantly, it helps us to locate a gap in existing research.

The literature review is an essential part and first important step prior to writing the dissertation. It is also the basis on which the discussion of the results will be formulated. Thus, it should provide the necessary arguments for the evidence on a specific topic through which the author will generate a convincing answer to the research question. In the thesis or dissertation, the review of the literature usually constitutes a separate section, either as part of a chapter or an entire chapter, although that does not mean that it cannot be integrated throughout the whole text on several subjects, or if there is need for comparison or evaluation (Swales & Feak, 2000: 115).

9.3.7. Some grammatical afterthoughts

Besides the general structure and content of each section, an area which most nonnative students and novel writers are concerned with, when preparing the RA, is language appropriacy, whether referred to the specificity of the discipline in question or, what is more complicated, the use of verb tenses in each section of the article. Day and Gastel (2006: 191) refer to a special convention of writing scientific RAs in regard to verb tense use; they claim that its "proper usage derives from scientific ethics". According to them, when referring to established knowledge, that is, previously published findings already sanctioned by the readership, the present tense should be used. However, when referring to your own present work, the part tense should be used, since it "is not presumed to be established knowledge until *after* it has been published" (p. 192; their italics).

Jordan (1997: 307) brings up the results of Thompson's 1993 study in which she classified not only verb tense use but also, based on the different purposes and characteristics of each RA section, where we should be looking for comments, references, or qualifications (see table 6).

	Introduction	Methods	Results	Discussion
Present tense	high	Low	low	High
Past tense	mid	high	high	mid
Passive voice	low	high	variable	variable
Citations/references	high	low	variable	high
Qualification	mid	low	mid	high
Commentary	high	low	variable	high

Table 6: Frequencies of selected items in RA sections (Jordan, 1997: 307)

Such generalization, however, deserves some further explanation, especially in regard to verb tense use in the Introduction. This section, which should be understood as the most important one for manuscript construction, should be given special attention, especially the section where authors review the literature. In this section, which according to Swales and Feak (1994: 182), "is subtle and somewhat flexible", we must be accurate in giving the information using the adequate tense in accordance with different situations. Given this flexibility, Swales and Feak (p. 183) propose three different patterns:

(a) The *simple past tense* in sentences where the activity is the agent; what Weissberg and Buker (1990: 45) qualifies as an "author prominent citation", usually with reference to single studies (Byrne & Flood, 2004: 27):

> Marton et al. (1993) identified a sixth conception in which learning is conceived as personal transformation.

(b) The *present perfect tense* in sentences where the activity of the researcher is not the agent, with reference to different areas of study (Burgess & Rees, 1997: 309):

> There is a view that 'jobs for life' have gone for good [...]

(c) The *simple present tense* where there is no reference to the researcher's activity, usually referring to current knowledge, that is, as Weissberg and Buker (1990: 44) put it, an "information prominent citation" (Burgess & Rees, 1997: 309):

> [...] there is very little evidence for the UK on job tenure.

According to Swales and Feak (1994: 183), "these three patterns cover about two-thirds of the cases", as far as verb tense use is concerned.

Weissberg and Buker (1990) summarize the progression of verb tenses in the literature review in the following diagram (figure 8):

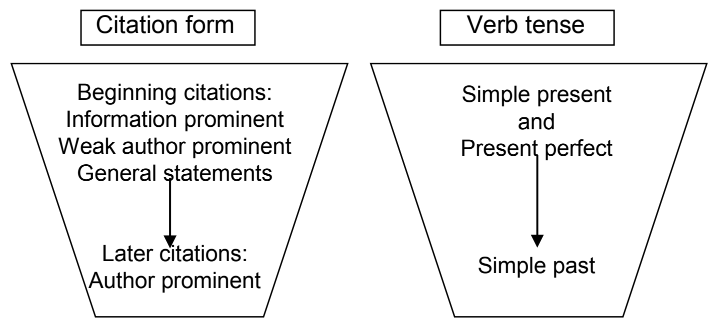

Figure 8: Verbal tense progression in the literature review (adapted from Weissberg & Buker, 1990: 53)

Malcolm (1987) explains this interplay of verb tense use in the Introduction; he summarizes it by saying that the majority of generalizations are expressed in the present tense, while citations reporting one author or several authors would basically resort to the past tense or the present perfect.

The statement of purpose also shows certain variability in verb tense use. Weissberg and Buker (1990: 70) distinguish between a statement of purpose oriented towards the report, usually using the present tense, and statement of purpose oriented towards the research, in which case the past tense is preferred. Swales and Feak (1994: 191) also identify this double option. Surprisingly enough, however, the majority of RAs we have examined (124 business and economics articles) would favor the present tense, as in example [a] below (Byrne & Flood, 2004: 29), and only one used the simple past (example [b]) (Miller & Woods, 2000: 223):

[a] The objective of this study is to examine the conceptions of learning of accounting students at an Irish university.

[b] This study aimed to contribute towards clarifying the position regarding the study of taxation by comparing expected learning outcomes [...]

In the Methods section there is also a distinguishable variability, although when dealing with what was done with the data collected or studied –specific details and procedures–, most authors will resort to the past passive tense. However, it is difficult to find in the 128 articles we examined to contain a Methods section similar in structure to the model we can find in biology, or chemistry, much less in medicine, and many of them show a constant transgression in the use of verb tenses. First of all, when dealing with procedural descriptions usually involving a human agent, authors resort to a specific tense and voice, simple past and past passive. Comparing the following two excerpts from the Methods section –the first one (Kalra, 2004: 1099), from a medical journal; the second (Miller & Woods, 2000: 225), from an accounting journal–, we can observe that the data is treated similarly by using the past passive:

Methods section from the *British Medical Journal*	Methods section from *Accounting Education*
We undertook the study in stroke patients admitted to a stroke rehabilitation unit and their care givers. […] Patients were included if they were independent in daily living activities before the stroke […]. Care givers were required to have no notable disability […]	Learning outcomes were chosen as the central focus for this study because they represent the objectives which educators seek to achieve […]. A number of key relationships involving learning outcomes were identified and were surveyed by means of parallel postal questionnaires.

It is also significant to notice how authors choose their verb tenses when dealing and describing populations, whether people or entities: on one hand, the population that conforms the sample used in the study (past tense, active or passive, e.g. “were chosen”, etc.) and, on the other, the general population, in this case, educators (present tense, e.g. “represent”) in Miller and Woods’s quotation above.

The literature usually reports high percentages of past tenses in Methods, especially in the passive voice (Swales, 1990: 167), which is also reflected in most of the RAs we have examined. Particularly in the Methods section, the use of the past tense is a generalized characteristic, as it can be seen in the majority of the papers. Taking Miller and Woods’s (2000) article as an example, we found an almost exact replica of the verb tense distribution shown in table 6 above; in this paper, the only discrepancy would appear in the Results section with an almost even use of present (48.05%) and past (51.95%) tenses, while in the table we see a predominance of the past tense (high). See the distribution of present and past tenses in Miller and Wood’s (2000) paper in figure 9:

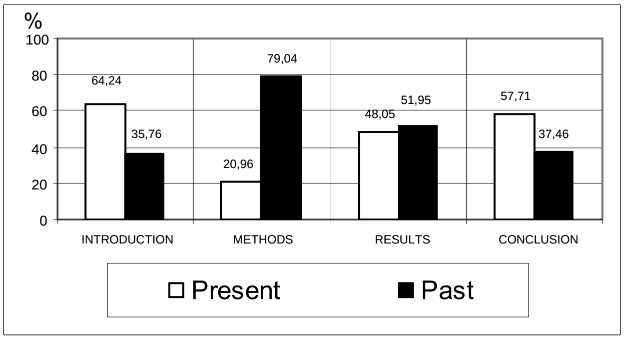

Figure 9: Verb tense count (in %) in Miller and Woods's (2000) RA

In keeping with what was said earlier, the choice of verb tense and mood in the Results section, which refers to the authors' own research, is basically between present and past simple, both active and passive (see table 3 above); however, when authors combine results with discussion, and especially with locational statements, they use the present tense, either in the active ("Table 1 shows…") or passive voice ("The χ^2 test results are shown in Table 2 …") (Weissberg & Buker, 1990: 147). See for instance, the following example from the *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics* (Burgess & Rees, 1997: 314):

> Figure 1 plots these distributions for men and women, and Table 1 gives some information averaged over the years 1985 and 1990. […] To be able to estimate the completed tenure distribution, we need to calculate pseudo-job continuation rates. This is done as described above, separately for men and women …

When commenting the results in the Discussion section the fluctuation between the present and the past tense is frequent. In figure 8 above, the use of both tenses is almost even (48.05% for the present and 51.95% for the past). Authors tend to say that the Discussion section is one of the most difficult to produce since they "have to show relationships between their and other people's results and to postulate tentative reasons for the observed behavior" (St John, 1987: 118). This is the reason why they usually proceed with caution by using modal verb forms and hedging.

The linguistic strategy of hedging has received a lot of attention from the literature since Lakoff (1972: 194) first made use of this term to describe "words whose job it is to make things more or less fuzzy", but it was in the decade of the '90s when authors began to deal with this device as applied to scientific articles. Hyland (1996: 251) says that a hedge is "any linguistic means used to indicate either (a) a lack of complete commitment to the truth of a proposition, or (b) a desire not to express that commitment categorically". Thus hedging makes some expressions in language somehow vague and indeterminate and it usually signals when writer anticipate the possibility of an opposing opinion from other writers. As the expression of tentativeness and possibility, hedging becomes a crucial device in all scientific writing; it is therefore a means to express uncertain claims cautiously.

In his research, Hyland (1996) points to lexical markers as constituting the basis of all hedging, specifically lexical verbs like *indicate*, *suggest*, *appear* and *propose*, in addition to modal forms used epistemically, such as *would*, *may* and *could*, as the most frequently used. Also the most frequent modal adjectives found were *likely*, *possible*, *most* and *consistent with*, in addition to adverbial forms, like *quite*, *almost* and *usually*, called 'downtoners', used to lower the force of the verb; in addition to some attitudinal adverbs, like *probably*, *generally*, *evidently*, and modal nouns, as *possibility*, *assumption*, *estimate* and *tendency*, with which authors show their inclination towards the truth of one statement over another. And including some discourse-based hedges, such as "We do not know whether...", "If correct, this prediction...", "So it is difficult to conclude..."

Taking one of the RAs from the corpus we have used for this investigation, we analyzed the use of modality in the last section of that article (Results and Conclusion), compared to the rest of the RA. We are referring to Miller and Woods's (2000) article from *Accounting Education*. This RA, with 7,402 words, has a total of 115 expressions with modal verbs. In the Results section alone (in this particular RA, containing what usually is included in the Discussion section), the authors used 74 modal verbs (64.34%), and 28 in the Conclusion (24.345%). In contrast, in the Introduction we found 3 modal verbs (2.61%) and 10 (8.7%) in the Methods section.

These results are consistent with the literature in the use of hedging devices and modality in scientific discourse. Similarly, in medical RAs, Salager-Meyer (1994: 155-156) not only reports a heavy use of hedges in the Discussion section with 13% of hedges of the total number of words, while the Methods section shows 0.8% of hedges, but also with the distribution of different types of hedges, like shields (all modals expressing possibility, *to appear*, *to seem*, *probably*, *likely*, etc.) and approximators (*approximately*, *roughly*, *somewhat*, *quite*, *often*, etc.) being the most frequently used hedges.

Activity 10: In what section of the RA would you include background information?
Activity 11: In the Results section you only introduce the findings of your research (tables, graphs, and the like), but no commentary; do you agree with this statement?
Activity 12: Writing a research article verb tenses are used indiscriminately according to each author. Discuss this statement.

9.4. Poster sessions and paper presentations at conferences

The emphasis of the poster presentation is especially visual; in oral presentations (OPs) the emphasis is mainly placed on the oral ability of the presenter. The literature, however, has been scarce in producing RAs related to posters and more abundant in oral presentations, especially their mechanics and skills (see section 8.7.1). Genres are continually changing and the poster is one of them, and in the last few decades it has been present in most scientific conferences and symposia. The poster usually takes two forms, the first, its timetabled presentation usually in a large display room, and the second, the poster session discussion itself. In all these genres, in which orality is involved, it would be a good advice to recall what John Wayne used to say: "Talk low, talk slow, and don't say too much" (quoted by Day and Gastel, 2006: 167).

9.4.1. Submitting your abstract

Most conferences and symposia will provide room for submitting abstracts both for oral and poster presentations, usually with some bibliography attached; the peer review process will then decide which ones are going to be accepted for presentation. However, it may also happen that the reviewing committee may accept the best abstracts for oral presentations and, at the same time, suggest that those abstracts presenting good work of lower quality be accepted only as poster presentations; their decision will be based on the abstract you have submitted. This means that authors should follow closely the instructions given by the conference committee for the abstract preparation, for submitting it to the appropriate conference panel, and hope to have it accepted. It would thus be advisable to write an abstract that is convincing and persuasive enough to the reviewing committee, as suggested by Hyland (2000: 64).

The conference abstract and the presentation itself also raise the question of attribution. While the literature has been explicit in investigating different written academic genres, such as dissertations, RAs, or academic textbooks; in the spoken domain, however, little has been published and almost exclusively related to conferences (Ädel, 2008). Ädel (p. 91), in her research on lectures based on the University of Michigan MICASE lecture material, wrote that it is possible to find frequencies of expert attribution comparable to academic writing in some sub-disciplines, and especially in Business Administration lectures with 15 citations per 10,000 words. Although it is true that in oral presentations the same respect should be shown towards other researchers' work, it is nonetheless more difficult to include attribution given the reduced spaced provided when using transparencies and software packages; however, more research is necessary to see the frequency and type of attribution used in oral presentations.

9.4.2. The poster

The poster is essentially a summary of research findings, and it is often the previous stage to the publication of those findings. This is why some prefer it to papers since it is presented first, in addition to have an opportunity to exchange professional ideas. However, in spite of the fact that it is recognized as a good tool to disseminate science and to provide the opportunity to meet other members of the scientific community, few studies have addressed details of poster presentations, such as design or the technique for making them more attractive to viewers, much less to the influence of the presenter's attire. Nevertheless, more recent publications have also addressed the issue of poster design and techniques, in addition to academic writing manuals that also devote sections to posters and oral presentations, for instance, Day and Gastel (2006).

The poster is present in most academic conferences and meetings, even though for years it has been considered "the poor country cousin of papers" (Swales & Feak, 2000: 81). Nonetheless, posters have a definite function, since they are a source of information of one's research and its summary, it contributes as a conversation starter, but especially you allow you work to be known to the professionals participating in the event. Posters should also help engaging in conversation with colleagues and get your ideas across different people. Your poster session will also give its author academic discipline. It is actually used with this purpose in mind in some departments, or it can also be used as a final project in some business classes, especially because it has proved very positive in its long-term impact on students, and including as an alternative to written examinations. Gosling (1999), in his guide to posters, claims that traditional oral presentations in most large scientific meetings have much to be desired, in addition to the fact that they must follow a set timetable and have little chance to offer all they have prepared in only 10 or 15 minutes, besides many other factors that hinder effective communication. For this reason, Gosling concludes, comparing oral with poster presentations, showing his preferences for poster presentations:

> [...] poster sessions consist of many display boards shown simultaneously so viewers may either wander through all of the displays or go directly to the ones that interest them. Participants remain with the display for a set period, generally 1 to 2 hours, to expand on the material and answer questions. Many authors and delegates are more comfortable in the smaller groups that at a formal paper presentation. (Gosling, 1999: 6)

Since the poster session is less formal than a paper presentation, and it is one method of sharing results and ideas on an informal and relaxed setting, we also have a chance to get together with old friends and colleagues and make contact with new ones. However, it is always better to follow the advice of experienced authors when preparing the session. Especially thinking of students and young presenters, authors advise to "leave experimentation to the laboratory and stick with tried-and-true methods for your poster presentation" (Block, 1996: 3527). This advice should make reference to both contents and layout, for this reason, this author's advice is summed up in the following sentence: "Remember that when it comes to poster, style, format, color, readability, attractiveness, and showmanship *all count*" (ibid.).

(a) Poster layout and format

The layout should be planned before you start gathering the data and must adjust to the space assigned, especially when a large number of posters must be fitted into a given room. The first element we must take into account is that the poster is a visual communication tool and as such it should be attractively designed in order to attract the audience. A well-designed poster is usually understood as containing little text with most of the space used for illustrations. However, aside from allowing for lots of white space in the poster, it should be self-explanatory so that attendants to the presentation can proceed at their own pace. As noted by Day and Gastel (2006: 175), if the author of the poster "has to spend most of his or her time merely explaining the poster rather than responding to scientific questions, the poster is largely a failure". There are several ways of structuring a poster; some of most often may take the typical IMRAD structure (see figure 10), a flow-chart structure (figure 11), etc., but always depending on the type of research you have conducted.

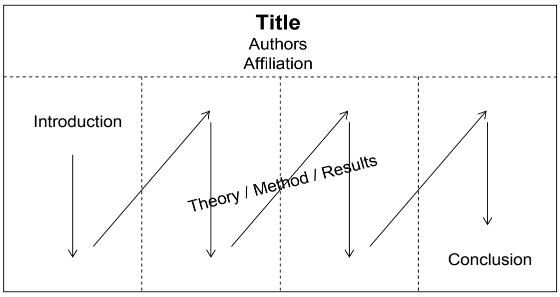

Figure 10: Sample poster layout 1

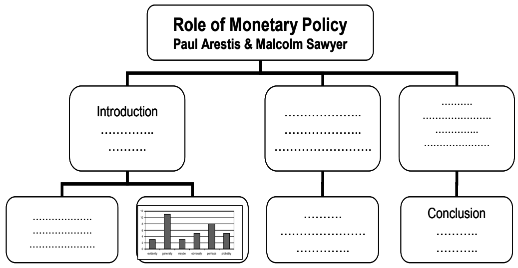

Figure 11: Sample poster layout 2

Since posters primarily are visual presentations, a combination of text with graphics is most effective; thus, space could be distributed as follows: one third text, one third graphics, and one third empty space. Block (1996: 3528) gives several hints for layout and format which can be summarized as follows:

- The poster should occupy a number of separate sections, all of them of comparable size.
- Keep titles short and on target highlighting your subject matter in no more than two lines, but large enough to be read easily from a considerable distance, from about 7 to 15 meters.
- Put the names of all authors and their institutional affiliations, but in different (smaller) type size as you used for the title, but do not get too creative with typeface selection.
- Your type size for the fine print should be no less than 14-point type and up to 20-point type for text. Shorten your text if it does not fit in the space you have assigned it.

Gosling (1999) also suggests that the different sections and elements contained in the poster should be harmoniously presented, avoiding whatever elements that may distract the reader; according to him, posters should be designed so:

- they communicate your research finding with immediacy and clarity;
- text, illustrations, and other graphic elements are organized into a cohesive whole for easy comprehension;
- visual elements predominate;
- the scientific messages are not masked;
- information flows smoothly and logically from one section to another;
- emphasis is put on those things that are of greater importance; and
- they contain no nonessential visual elements. Gosling (1999: 57)

(b) Poster content

The poster should be divided into sections, resembling a research article, and label each section with a title. Depending on the space provided, a clear statement of purpose should be included, followed by other sections in which you describe the strategy, methods, and results, with your tables, graphs, or illustrations in context, with a caption for each of these. It should be concluded with a Conclusions section, sometimes in the form of a bulleted list. Since usually the data is presented with graphs and tables, it is important to present them as neatly as possible, with appropriate labels so that they will be self-explanatory.

It is important to present graphs as neatly designed as possible. Avoid shaded or too elaborate graphs, like using 3D; although more artistic, they tend to loose in clarity and accuracy. Do similarly in RAs, where one must decide what is more important for communicating your research and for the understanding of the reader (Day & Gastel, 2006: 93).

9.4.3. Oral presentations

In today's business world, oral business presentations are very common; firms presenting their annual reports, or future planning. Thus, a good OP preparation will enhance students' chances of not only convincing future employers in their personnel selection, but also increasing their career advancement possibilities. The literature is explicit reporting how important OPs are in the presentation of information because of their dynamism in the transfer of information. Carney (1992: 73) sums this up with these words: "Speakers who can use this genre with facility are perceived in the business world as better prepared, more professional, and more in control of their material than speakers who rely on words alone".

Haber and Lingard (2001) concentrate on how presentation skills are learned in medical OPs, especially how to teach young presenters, and how difficult it is to communicate the teachers' experiences. From their point of view as experienced presenters, they explain that the discussion of their findings "reflects the rhetorician's attention to the relationship between what we say to our students, what we teach our students to say, and what our students come to value, believe and practice" (Haber & Lingard, 2001: 311). Their final advice is addressed to teachers: "we need to be aware that the language we use—what we say and not say, and what we encourage students to say and not say—can have powerful effects on student learning" (p. 313).

The literature on oral presentations has been much diversified, some concentrating on the role of self and peer assessment in the area of business (Campbell et al., 2001), on how anxiety may affect OPs (De Grez et al., 2009: 112). The concern for basic speech instruction has always been present in the literature, especially in Anglo-Saxon school settings, known for their school debates and contests in which students are taught to develop their critical thinking through group debates. As early as the 1400s, collegiate debates were carried out between Oxford and Cambridge University students (Combs & Bourne, 1989: 21). Success will often depend on conveying controlled enthusiasm for the subject you are going to present. Whetten et al. (2000: 559) report on a survey to 1,200 people to identify the characteristics of effective presentations which yielded terms and expressions such as 'flexible', 'co-operative', 'audience empathy', 'pleasant', and 'interesting', while the percentage of results for 'content' was relegated to the last item of influence, which means that while content is necessary, it is not sufficient to guarantee the success of the presentation. This ties in with Albert Mehrabian's much cited and surprising research in which he claimed that successful communication depended on three different elements: the visual impact of the presenter on the audience, which represents 55% of the total impact; the vocal rendering, which represents 38%; and, finally, only 7% related to the actual words uttered by the presenter. According to Decker (1992: 83-85), Mehrabian's research is a summary of the components necessary to endow a message with impact. In addition, the credibility of the message becomes then crucial to persuade listeners and attain their attention. Bert Decker (1992: 16), an expert in communication, combines the sales technique with persuasion:

> […] the idea of selling can be used interchangeably with the idea of persuasion and reaching agreement. Once we see communication as a form of selling, it suddenly hits home that we had better get serious about communicating effectively if we want to be successful, to have some influence—or simply to have others hear and understand us.

One aspect affecting us considerably is the fact that, up to the present, OPs do not seem to be the primary concern in the curricula of Spanish universities, except for the few fortunate students who have been able to include one of the few optional courses offered in English for Specific Purposes in which practice on OP skills is included. Therefore, only to these few fortunate would De Grez et al.'s (2009) social cognitive perspective be applicable. According to these authors, learning is achieved first through observation and then through repeated performance, thus "people form expectations on the basis of earlier experiences, and by observing others" (p. 113). Students, therefore, must have the opportunity to see, first, how an OP is performed following a series of instructions and then have the opportunity to rehearse it. However, this is a problem affecting not only students, but also professionals whose native language is not English who need to prepare presentations at international conferences. Combs and Bourne (1989) suggested that class debates in marketing would be an excellent preparation to improve oral communication skills. Students should be given the opportunity to enhance their oral communication skills by designing, preparing and rehearsing OPs as part of their class activities.

Activity 13: In an oral presentation at a conference, your words are essentially what counts, not your gestures. Say whether this statement is true or false. Reason and justify your answer.
Activity 14: Collegiate debates are only related to the twentieth century?
Activity 15: Research shows that what you say in a paper presented at a conference is its most and only important aspect. Discuss this statement.

9.5. Recommended bibliography and web links

Publications

Fortanet, I. (coord.) (2002). *Cómo escribir un artículo de investigación en inglés*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.

This text is basically aimed at researchers whose native language is Spanish. While they have a fairly good level of English they find it difficult to elaborate their RAs in English. In addition, it provides special features of areas such as business and economy, computer science, engineering, etc.

Gustafsson, B., G. Hermerén & B. Petersson (2006). *Good Research Practice – What is it? Views, Guidelines and Examples*. Stockholm: The Swedish Research Council. This report can be requested from www.vr.se.

This 90-page manual is recommended especially for young researchers. It provides the details of research methodology and practice, how to carry out and document and publish your research, as well as details on teacher's supervision of postgraduate student's work; it also includes guidelines to prevent research misconduct.

Lester, J. D. (2000). *Citing Cyberspace: A quick-reference guide to citing electronic sources in MLA and APA style*, 2nd ed. New York: Longman.

A companion to Lester's (1999) *Writing Research Papers*, 9th ed.; it solves all possible queries about citing from the Internet.

Swales, J. M. & C. B. Feak (1994). *Academic Writing for Graduate Students. A Course for Nonnative Speakers of English*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

As subtitle reads, this text is aimed at nonnative speakers of English in order to improve their academic writing in English. This genre-based approach focuses on the purpose, structure, and style of different kinds of texts. It concludes with advice on RA construction.

Weissberg, R. & S. Buker (1990). *Writing Up Research. Experimental Research Report Writing for Students of English*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.

This is a very manageable and user-friendly text aimed at writing experimental RAs, theses, and dissertations. It provides ample room to model texts and exercises interspersed throughout each chapter, including how to make correct choices about rhetorical form, grammatical structure, and key vocabulary.

Web links

www.calstatela.edu/library/styleman.htm. State University (2009). "Style Manuals & Writing Guides"

It provides PowerPoint presentations and PDF files for the different style formats (AAA, APA, ASA, CSE, Chicago, MLA, Turabian

www.liu.edu/CWIS/CWP/library/workshop/citation.htm. Delaney, R. (2006-2010) "Citation Style for Research Papers". New York: Long Island University.

Tutorial for the following citation styles: APA, Turabian, MLA, Chicago, and AMA.

http://tippie.uiowa.edu/accounting/writing/. University of Iowa (2009) "Accounting Writing Program".

Writing tips for accounting students and accountants.

9.6. Test your knowledge

1. What does the Nancy Declaration (2006) basically promote?
2. The research question is the same as the thesis statement. Do you agree?
3. Name the two main research paradigms.
4. What is the third industrial revolution? What does it entail?
5. Should your thesis statement cover as much ground as possible? Why or why not?
6. What is the Delphi technique and what is it for?
7. What do you understand by 'cyberproblems'?
8. What do they mean when authors talk about the age of 'informationalism'?

9. Indiscrimate 'cut&paste' from the Internet contributes to plagiarism. Why or why not?
10. In the Results section you discuss in depth the findings. Do you agree?
11. What do you understand by 'discourse community'?
12. What is the difference between summarizing and paraphrasing? Define them.
13. What is meant by practicing a 'responsible citation behaviour'?
14. Describe de difference between Vancouver and APA referencing styles.
15. Who are the main users of the MLA style manual?
16. What does Posner mean when he speaks of 'negative citing'?
17. Discuss with what referencing style you can best attribute authorship and reason why.
18. What is significant about the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)?
19. Discuss the difference between first and second/third source citing.
20. The footnotes or endnotes should always contain all the bibliographical information, do you agree?
21. There are two main ways to locate material in the Internet. Can you name them?
22. What is the DOI? What is it for?
23. The IMRAD structure is followed by most business and economics RAs. Discuss.
24. What is the purpose of using the 'hourglass diagram' to explain a research article?
25. What genre does the structure BPMRC represent?
26. Article titles should always have two parts, separated by a colon. Discuss the statement.
27. Reason why you would prefer a structured abstract or an unstructured abstract.
28. Where would you suggest the purpose of the article should go and why?
29. Two of the main verb tenses used in research articles are the simple present and simple past; reason when you should one or the other?
30. The past tense in the passive is never used in research articles; do you agree? Reason your answer.
31. What is meant by the CARS model of Introductions?
32. What do you understand by 'hedging'?
33. Hedging is hardly used in business and economics RAs. Discuss the statement.
34. Can you think of different ways to express hedging?
35. Verbal tenses are used quite freely in research articles and there are no written laws about their use. Do you agree with the statement? Discuss pros and cons.
36. What is the predominant verb tense and voice in the Methods section? Is there a reason why?
37. Discuss how you would structure a poster and elements you would include.
38. Discuss the importance of your gestures in oral presentations.
39. Name some basic reporting verbs used in paper presentations.
40. To what genre do the following expressions refer to: "tell them, show them, remind them, and ask them"?

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[1] Full reference: Himmelweit, S. (2007). "The prospects for caring: economic theory and policy analysis". *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 31: 581-599.

[2] Several programs have been produced for the detection of plagiarism: for instance, *iThenticate*, created in 2003 for texts published in English (www.ithenticate.com). Also *Antiplagio*, produced by *Educared* (www.educared.net) for texts published in Spanish.

[3] We understand 'discourse community' as a group having common goals and purposes and using communication to achieve these goals (see Swales, 1990: 9).

[4] Full reference: Byrne, M. & B. Flood (2004). "Exploring the conceptions of learning of accounting students". *Accounting Education* 13 (suppl. 1): 25-37.

[5] Full reference: Kalra, L., A. Evans, I. Perez, A. Melbourn, A. Patel, M. Knapp et al. (2004). "Training carers of stroke patients: randomised controlled trial". *British Medical Journal* 328: 1099-1104.

[6] Full reference: Gladhart, A. (2005). "Present absence: memory and narrative in *Los recuerdos del porvenir*". *Hispanic Review* 73: 91-111.

[7] Full reference: Gerlowski, D. A., H.-G. Fung y D. Ford (1994), "The location of foreign direct investment for U.S. Real Estate: An Empirical Analysis". *Land Economics* 70: 286-293.

[8] Full reference: Miller, A. M. & C. M. Woods (2000). "Undergraduate tax education: a comparison of educators' and employers' perceptions in the UK". *Accounting Education* 9: 223-241.

[9] Full reference: Burgess, S. & H. Rees (1997). "Transient job and lifetime jobs: dualism in the British labour market". *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics* 59: 309-328.

[10] The mechanics of searching through the Internet has evolved considerably in recent years. From the typical URL (Uniform Resource Locator) http://www followed by specific words and/or digits, plus .com, .es, .edu, etc., through which we can locate documents and images, now we can also use the Digital Object Identifier (DOI), developed by the International DOI Foundation (IDF), to locate research articles in academic journals. The difference is that the URL may change over time, but the DOI will not. To use DOI, follow these steps: (a) create a DOI link in your browser (http://dx.doi.org); (b) copy the DOI of the document you want to open; (c) enter the entire DOI citation in the text box provided and, finally, (d) click "Go".

[11] Even if it is an institutional page, try to select one indicating who created it and when.

[12] "Move is a functional term that refers to a defined and bounded communicative act that is designed to achieve one main communicative objective. Because it is a functional category, the length of a move can range from a single finite clause to several paragraphs" (Swales & Feak, 2000: 35). Swales work, however, may be closely related to the Sydney School's concept of "stages" (Johns, 2002: 7). The term "stage" is also used by Weissberg and Buker (1990) who also divide each "stage" into minimal items of information called "information elements".

[13] Full reference: Darbha, G. (2002). "Testing for long-run stability – an application to money multiplier in India". *Applied Economics Letters* 9: 33-37.

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