

## Writing from Sources in Second Language Contexts: A Systematic Review of a Decade (2013–2023) Literature

Cecilia Owusu Debrah\* 

University of Energy and Natural Resources, Ghana  
[cecilia.owusudebrah@uenr.edu.gh](mailto:cecilia.owusudebrah@uenr.edu.gh)

Received: 16/12/2024,

Accepted: 11/04/2025,

Published: 01/06/2025

**ABSTRACT:** *This review synthesises a decade (2013-2023) of research on non-transgressive intertextuality in a second language context. It examines the myriad manifestations of intertextuality in diverse contexts and the various strategies researchers employ to offer distinctive perspectives on the concept. The study categorises the findings into three thematic areas: sociocultural and ideological dimensions, which focus on issues of power, identity, and ideologies in discourses; cultural and disciplinary variations, which focus on power, identity and language ideologies in discourse; cultural and disciplinary variations highlighting cross-disciplinary and cultural influences; and cognitive and pedagogical dimensions, which explore the mental and instructional processes underpinning academic literacy development in second-language contexts. The review highlights the need for a working definition of non-transgressive intertextuality and proposes a layered typology that encompasses ethical, rhetorical, and strategic intertextual practices. While critical and cognitive influences are dominant in the literature, significant gaps remain in the developmental aspects, particularly for emerging writers. Furthermore, it underscores a lack of clarity in task expectations, minimal empirical focus on pedagogical design, teacher mediation, and the limited application of technology and multimodal tools in scaffolding intertextual competence. The findings have significant implications for L2 writing instruction, curriculum design, and policy, suggesting a shift toward culturally responsive, critically oriented, and cognitively supportive pedagogy in multilingual contexts.*

**KEYWORDS:** Intertextuality, Intertextual Practices, Review, Second-Language, L2 Writing

\* Corresponding author

ALTRALANG Journal / © 2025 The Authors. Published by the University of Oran 2 Mohamed Ben Ahmed, Algeria.  
This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

## Introduction

Intertextuality is a central concept in academic discourse, involving the integration of various knowledge elements to construct meanings within a text. It plays a crucial role in how second-language writers engage with and incorporate sources. This concept relates to the selection and integration of source materials and how they are woven into the fabric of the writer's ideas to produce a coherent piece acceptable in the academic community (Chandrasoma et al., 2004). In a second-language academic writing context, a writer's ability to demonstrate ownership of their ideas and those of other writers through intertextual links is one of the academy's important aspects of the reading and writing process (Holmes, 2004). As Farrelly (2019) notes, intertextuality encompasses all dimensions of language use in texts, discourse, and orders of discourse.

The scholarship on intertextuality in general has been extensive, especially regarding transgressive intertextuality (Mireku et al., 2023; Pecorari, 2003; Pecorari & Petric, 2014). However, the same cannot be said about research on non-transgressive intertextuality, which focuses on writers' engagement and rhetorical agency with prior texts. It includes practices such as quoting, paraphrasing, synthesising, reporting, evaluating, and referencing sources in alignment with genre and disciplinary norms.

While research on transgressive intertextuality has provided the basis for studies such as plagiarism, this review shifts attention toward the developmental, pedagogical, and other issues surrounding non-transgressive intertextuality. By synthesising studies over a decade, this review examines the development of intertextual ability in emerging writers and highlights the mostly overlooked pedagogical practices that can enhance such competence. It also identifies significant gaps in the literature, particularly regarding non-transgressive intertextuality in English as a Second Language (ESL) writers, offering a comprehensive analysis of these issues and their implications for instructional approaches.

The term's origin can be traced to twentieth-century literary theory and linguistics with notable contributions from Bakhtin, Barthes, Kristeva, and Ferdinand de Saussure's seminal work (Allen, 2000 & Allen, 2011). However, the term was coined by the literary scholar Kristeva, who drew inspiration from earlier scholars (Baron, 2019) who worked on the concept from various perspectives. Kristeva's framing of intertextuality as a "mosaic of quotations" (Kristeva, 1980, p. 66) affirms how meaning occurs through the layering between present texts and earlier works. Her work builds upon Bakhtin's ground-breaking ideas of dialogism and heteroglossia, which consider an utterance's meaning as partially owned by the writer (Bakhtin, 1981). Kristeva discusses the mental process that fosters the connection between writers and readers when a word is positioned in horizontal and vertical dimensions (Kristeva, 1980).

Writing requires an understanding of intertextuality, a central feature of academic discourse. However, intertextuality in a second language context presents both opportunities and challenges for writers, particularly emerging writers who must balance the difficulties of structuring texts with integrating existing knowledge into their writing (Mori, 2014 & Lai, 2022). Bazerman (2004) contends that intertextuality involves much more than simply citing other texts; it also encompasses how and when one utilizes them in a specific context and how one positions oneself as a writer to communicate effectively. This suggests that intertextuality extends beyond attributing concepts and techniques and citing earlier studies, aiming to convey a clear voice alongside rhetorical and contextual awareness (Groom, 2000).

Over the years, scholars have examined intertextuality from various angles, including citations (Li et al., 2023; Swales, 1990, 2014; Afful & Janks, 2013), intertextual practices (Thornton, 2019; Wang, 2016), patchwriting (Li & Casanave, 2012; Howard, 1995), plagiarism (Mireku et al., 2023; Pecorari, 2003; Pecorari & Petric, 2014), attribution, documentation, evaluation, and reporting structures (Thompson & Ye, 1999; Eckstein et al., 2022). Consequently, the concept has been applied in various contexts with different content, making its research a complex endeavour (Scollon, 2004; Wang, 2006; Thornton, 2019; Mori, 2014; Wiemeyer, 2020; Lai, 2022).

The fluidity of intertextuality stems from the various disciplinary fields that have shaped it, contributing both to its richness and multiplicity in how it is interpreted and taught. As Moroz and Velykoroda (2021, p.

58) claim, this diversity results in “vagueness and ambiguity,” underscoring its inherent “complexity.” In order to address this conceptual ambiguity, the review integrates various frameworks such as discourse, cognitive, and functional models to offer a unified understanding of intertextuality. The approach gives a clearer comparison across studies to highlight the interrelations and imbalances between cognitive and critical perspectives.

This conceptual ambiguity has implications for research approaches, influencing the areas researchers choose to investigate and the methodologies they adopt. For example, studies such as those by Wiemeyer (2021), Farrelly (2019), and Mori (2014) utilize discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, and textual analysis to examine how intertextuality is realized in texts. In contrast, research by Thornton (2019), Lai (2022), and Sun et al. (2022) emphasizes writers' perspectives through textual interviews or discussions around text methods to reveal the motivations behind intertextual choices, rhetorical functions, and patterns of engagement. Together, these studies do more than catalogue instances of intertextuality; they offer valuable pedagogical insights for better outcomes in writing instruction. Moreover, many of these studies do not sufficiently provide pedagogical strategies. This review also identifies instructional strategies and structured cognitive approaches that can be applied in the writing classroom.

Much of the existing scholarship, however, continues to focus on experienced writers and transgressive practices such as plagiarism and antiplagiarism in English as a Second Language contexts (ESL) (Flowerdew & Li, 2007; Mireku et al., 2023). Others have concentrated on the multiparty interaction between learners, instructors, and key issues in student writing in second language contexts (Pecorari, 2016; Cumming et al., 2016). While these are important research areas, relatively little attention has been given to other developmental aspects of writing in contexts where developing skills and the ethical use of sources are vital.

Previous reviews have primarily focused on expert writing and largely overlooked non-transgressive writing practices and the development of writers' competence over time. This review explores how non-transgressive intertextuality from ESL contexts manifests in empirical, pedagogical, and cognitive dimensions. It also seeks to examine how pedagogical support can be more effectively aligned with learners' needs. Additionally, it synthesizes a decade of research to offer insights for academic literacy development. It builds on Wang's (2006, 2016) perspectives on intertextuality as textual connectedness and investigates how writers cultivate and demonstrate intertextual competence across various settings. The study covers different manifestations of these concepts in diverse studies and the methodological approaches used to gather data to address the issues raised.

While the term ESL is used throughout the review for consistency, the studies analysed include both ESL and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts. Although these contexts differ in terms of exposure and use, both groups of users face similar challenges in second-language writing contexts. Therefore, the term ESL in this review broadly covers second-language writers from these contexts. The next section looks at the methodology for the review.

## **Methodology**

A systematic approach was adopted in identifying, analysing, and synthesising research on intertextuality in second-language contexts. It must be noted that the review focused on the thematic realisations of intertextuality across diverse L2 contexts. The aim was to explore how intertextuality has been studied and understood from cognitive, disciplinary, and academic literacy practices.

To achieve the purpose of this review, online databases such as Google Scholar and Scopus were thoroughly searched using the following search terms: (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Intertextuality" OR "Intertextual" OR "Intertextual referencing" OR "Intertextual analysis" OR "Intertextual practices") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Source use" OR "Source incorporation" OR "Source integration" OR "Source referencing" OR "Source attribution") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Citations" OR "Citing" OR "Citation practices" OR "Citation behaviour") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Empirical study" OR "Empirical research" OR "Empirical

investigation") AND (DOCTYPE("ar")) AND PUBYEAR > 2013 AND PUBYEAR < 2023). Keyword strings were also used. Titles and abstracts of works were examined, and those related to the themes of the review were then downloaded and read. Some of the materials for the review were discovered during the reading process; such materials were also downloaded and added to the review.

### **Inclusion criteria for studies**

The documents selected consisted of studies that focused on intertextuality from diverse contexts.

- Articles published from 2013 to 2023
- Articles that focused on non-transgressive intertextuality
- Articles that focus on source use in a second language context
- Articles written in English
- Studies that were written in English that could be retrieved

Publications with access issues were excluded from the analysis in this study. The set criteria were according to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and meta-analysis (PRISMA) procedures (Moher et al., 2009; Page et al., 2021). This protocol allows for a methodical identification, collection, analysis, and synthesis of published studies to showcase findings that allow replication or update in the research area.

### **Features of the studies reviewed**

The review looked at research on intertextuality within the period under study. The focus areas in this analysis cover the interplay between ideologies, power, and identities in social, cultural, academic, multimodal, and digital contexts and the cognitive dimensions of intertextuality. This review covers some current studies regarding non-transgressive intertextuality (Pecorari, 2006). Additionally, limitations of the review may include research that addresses the focus of this review but may not appear in the search due to the absence of the key search words. The thoroughness of the process was to ensure that relevant insights on intertextuality were revealed for the benefit of scholars and novice writers. Braun and Clark's (2006) thematic analysis was used to identify, analyse, and record patterns to aid coding and theme development. Studies were grouped under three categories: sociocultural and ideological, cultural and disciplinary, and cognitive and pedagogical. Each study was assessed for its methodological orientation, population dynamics, pedagogical implications, and theoretical alignment. For example, research on language use (spoken, written, and multimodal) in communicative and social contexts addresses issues of power, identity, and ideology (Johnson & McLean, 2020). Others focus on cognitive and psychological processes in reading and writing development. Such studies mostly employ empirical or experimental research methods to enhance instructional or educational outcomes (Thornton, 2019). Some of these studies also concentrate on large datasets, using computational and statistical techniques to uncover patterns in language that may not be visible with other methods of data analysis (Evison, 2010; Flowerdew, 1998). The various themes are discussed in the following section of the study.

### **Sociocultural and Ideological Dimensions**

The scholarship within this theme examines the issues of power, identity, and ideology in intertextuality. The studies in this area have been quite extensive (Farrelly, 2019; Ali & Aslam, 2016; Vahdani & Mir Saeed, 2015; Maclean et al., 2018; Gervasio et al., 2021; Al-abbasi et al., 2022; Ronan, 2015; Alramadan, 2023). Many of these studies examine the interplay between social, professional, educational, economic, and political contexts in relation to power, ideology, and identities (Ronan, 2015; Ali & Aslam, 2016; Gervasio et al., 2021; Maclean et al., 2018). Some of these works (Al-abbasi et al., 2022; Farrelly, 2019; Vahdani & Mir Saeed, 2015) use intertextuality to demonstrate authority, ideologies, and identity formation. Authors incorporate intertextual references to establish their authority and credibility within the discourse.

This is evident when they employ specific voices to reiterate more powerful discourses while marginalizing the less powerful ones. Specifically, some studies (Farrelly, 2019; Moloi & Bojabotseha, 2014) utilize the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, which investigates the interplay between language and society, focusing on how ideology, identity, and inequality are (re) enacted through texts produced in social and political contexts (van Dijk, 2001).

For instance, Farrelly (2019) employs CDA to critique the social relations of power and solidarity in addressing the operational gap at the level of discourse and orders of discourse. This study analyses a press release and a political speech to demonstrate how intertextuality functions within power relations, highlighting the apparent obscurities in Kristeva's (1980) and Fairclough's (1992) frameworks to identify three concepts (inter-text, network of intertext, and network of social formation, practice, and typicality) that disambiguate intertextuality in political discourse. Ali and Aslam's (2016) exploration of how intertextuality influences consumer behaviour. The study, which used a critical discourse framework, examines advertising discourse in Pakistan, reveals that intertextual alignment with shared cultural identity enhances readers' and viewers' engagement levels. The participants were readers and viewers who interacted with media advertisements, and the study used a CDA framework to analyse the impact of cultural references on participants' behaviour. Studies such as Farrelly (2019) and Ali and Aslam (2016) reveal that intertextual references are instrumental in asserting authority, aligning with dominant discourses, and constructing identity in texts.

There is also a focus on representing intertextuality in reinforcing the norms and values of society through language, which shapes writers' cultural identity (Vahdani & Mir Saeed, 2015). Although these are important areas in critical discourse studies, there is a need for more insight into the concept, specifically from a cultural and contextual perspective. Intertextuality is seen as enhancing identity representation through shared knowledge and value at both personal and institutional levels (Al-Abbasi et al., 2022; Maclean et al., 2018), as well as fostering a clear connection between language and social engagements (Hodge, 2015). Furthermore, the practical application of intertextuality in advertising media is perceived to create a lasting impression that impacts individuals' social identities and ideologies (Ali and Aslam, 2016). Also, in comparing Farrelly (2019) and Gervasio et al. (2021), there is a divergence in modality and context, yet both reinforce the critical role of intertextual references in sustaining or challenging dominant ideologies. Gervasio et al. (2021), for instance, used a semiotic approach in examining how social media discourse among students reflects a creative use of language and social interaction in collaborative online spaces. The findings reveal the role of intertextuality in facilitating deeper engagement and promoting collaborative learning through dynamic multimodal communication. Also, there is the suggestion of the role of cultural knowledge and context, influencing intertextual preferences, thereby enhancing the writing experience. This is because validation of theoretical insights on texts promotes diverse forms of communication that invariably depend on one's cultural knowledge and context (Velykorada & Moro, 2021).

### **Cultural and disciplinary variations**

This thematic cluster explores how disciplinary and cultural affiliations shape intertextual choices. Cross variations are evident in writers' intertextual preferences from different cultures and disciplines (Alramadan, 2023; Bahadorfor & Ghoami, 2017; Twumasi & Afful, 2022). These variations significantly impact our understanding of writing and the construction of meaning. Variations in the research approach within the discourse analytic paradigm are highlighted in some multimodality studies (Gervasio et al., 2021; Ronan, 2015). Variations in approach through multimodality promote students' dialogic engagement (Xing et al., 2023). Some of these studies (e.g., Ketabi & Rehavard, 2013; Alramadan, 2023, and Twumasi & Afful, 2022) show that while discipline often overrides culture in determining rhetorical choices, cultural values still mediate citation strategies and source integration practices. Comparatively, some of these studies examine how intertextual preferences and identities in Arabic and English texts differ across cultures and disciplines. Alramadan's (2023) cross-cultural study examined how audience influenced intertextual



preference and author identities in Arabic and English texts. The study focused on 10 Arabic and English texts and found that culture played a crucial role in determining rhetorical choices. The study explored the impact of cultural and audience expectations on the intertextual choices of authors. It also recommends a slight modification of the arguing style to meet the expectations of the target audience and minimal language-specific identity distinction. The study pinpoints areas that require more investigation into culturally influenced intertextual practices to enhance academic English training, particularly for emerging learners. Although this study demonstrates how cultural expectations influence intertextual preferences, much of this research remains under-theorised about how power asymmetries shape access to dominant intertextual practices in multilingual classrooms.

Cultural variations in academic genres among disciplinary lines were investigated by Ketabi and Rehavard (2013), who analysed master's theses introductions written by Iranian and American students. Eight theses from each discipline were analysed to compare intertextual patterns in introductions. The study found that both groups of students followed similar disciplinary intertextual patterns. Such studies clarify how crucial disciplinary variations may be a stronger determinant of rhetorical choices than cultural influences in some contexts. Attention to areas of research that are influenced culturally could enhance students' academic writing experiences.

Additionally, cross-disciplinary variations in diverse segments of theses and journal articles have also attracted attention where there are marked variances among the disciplines (Bahdofar & Gholami, 2017; Dobakhti & Zohrabi, 2018; Twumasi & Afful, 2022). For example, Twumasi and Afful (2022) looked at the functions of citations in the literature review of master's theses and revealed that the rhetorical functions of theses appeared to differ among the disciplines in their study. The study analysed 30 theses from English and Curriculum Studies. The findings suggest that the functions of citations were mostly influenced by disciplinary norms. This study sheds light on the complexities involved in citation use by writers to exhibit scholarly awareness and place their writing in current discussions. The study also highlights other areas that need research attention, such as the graduate level writing, specifically, the input of lecturers in helping students acclimatise to their academic communities' practices.

Furthermore, Dobakhti and Zohrabi (2018) examined the forms and functions of citations in the discussion sections of 45 research articles in Applied Linguistics. They highlighted four basic rhetorical functions of citations and emphasized a critical application of non-integral citations, such as contrasting results, strengthening interpretations, supporting explanations, and suggestions. The study underscored the crucial role of non-integral citations in research articles, as applied linguists used citations to support their research claims and suggestions. Additionally, Wette's (2018) mixed-method study highlights some disciplinary variations in students' intertextual practices. This study, which focused on undergraduate writers in a health science-related course, employed a questionnaire, interviews, and citation analysis to examine how students use citations in their essays. Wette found that students' inadequate preparation for more complex aspects of source-based writing might be a significant issue, with students displaying reasonable accuracy in paraphrasing sources but struggling to establish a clear authorial stance. The study revealed inconsistencies in students' perceived knowledge of source use, including their superficial understanding of citation practices. An important contrast arises between Wette (2018), who identifies gaps in undergraduate students' authorial stance, and Dobakhti and Zohrabi (2018), who focus on rhetorical citation functions among experienced writers. Collectively, these studies suggest a developmental progression in intertextual competence, shaped by processes of disciplinary enculturation and increasing rhetorical awareness.

These studies reveal variations in intertextual linkages and citation conventions. Also, the complexities involved in writers' use of citations to support claims and exhibit scholarly awareness are revealed in the studies. However, there seems to be minimal data in identifying writers' intentions for the citations used and any potential disciplinary influences. Also, the specific tactics or suggestions for lecturers to help students acclimatise to their academic communities' practices are not evident in the studies. One area which further research is how learners are socialised into the norms of writing and the strategies that are most

effective. As it stands, studies that examine feedback and explicit teaching of intertextual strategies remain underexplored.

### **Cognitive and Pedagogical Dimensions**

This theme focuses on the mental and instructional processes underlying intertextual engagement. Recent scholarship has demonstrated the importance of the cognitive and pedagogical dimensions of intertextuality in literacy development within academic contexts. There is a growing interest in the cognitive foundations of intertextuality, particularly regarding how readers cognitively process intertextual references and integrate them into the meaning-making process. Drawing on Schank's (1999) dynamic memory theory, researchers have examined how readers organise and retrieve information from their memory when processing intertextual content. The theoretical model emphasises the significance of prior knowledge and memory structures in influencing comprehension, especially when such texts invoke external connections. Schank's theory is influential in understanding the mental processes involved in reading and writing knowledge structures.

Karpenko-Seccombe (2016) builds on this cognitive framework to investigate the relationship between intertextuality and cognitive modelling. The study suggests a three-tier model of text engagement: "loose association, soft model, and hard model" to describe the varying levels of cognitive complexity in text engagement. It also revealed that viewing intertextuality through the prism of cognitive processes is one of the most practical and efficient ways to understand the concept. The study emphasised that cognitive methods help in analysing how texts are processed based on readers' memory structures and engagement levels. Additionally, Schank's approach captures the wide range of knowledge structures involved in the cognitive analysis of intertextual resources. This finding emphasises the need to conceptualise intertextuality as a layered cognitive operation, with implications for literacy development in academic contexts.

Bullo (2017) extends this into the multimodal domain, showing how meaning is dynamically constructed through Martin and White's (2005) appraisal theory and the conceptual blending theory of Fauconnier and Turner (2002). The aim was to understand how intertextuality aids in conceptual integration and meaning-making processes. The findings reveal how participants actively negotiate and integrate meanings from multiple sources, showing the discursive and cognitive nature of intertextuality. This highlights the importance of cognitive processes in interpreting texts. These findings reveal the necessity of implementing cognitive methods in teaching approaches to improve students' ability to infer and analyse intertextual content. The usefulness of these cognitive frameworks in broader educational contexts and with various textual media could be the focus of further research. The findings of these studies highlight the pedagogical importance of cognitive methods in the teaching of intertextuality. By highlighting how readers mentally model and evaluate intertextual cues, these studies reiterate the need for instructional practices that make these cognitive processes clear.

Nonetheless, cognitive capacity alone may not suffice in understanding the intertextual processes. Instructional design and literacy development are critical components of the intertextual process. However, most of the studies conducted across various L2 contexts reveal the challenges in writers' intertextual practices, particularly regarding their ability to utilise source materials both critically and rhetorically. For example, Lee et al. (2018) conducted an analysis of the intertextual practices of first-year undergraduate L2 students and reveal their limited application of reporting structures and their neutral disposition toward cited sources. The study highlights students' predominance in employing citations for attribution to demonstrate familiarity rather than to generate new insights. This restricted usage indicates a deficiency in students' critical engagement, thereby requiring a targeted approach to sourcing practices and research scope across different contexts and proficiency levels. Additionally, students' noncritical approach is evidenced by their use of neutral verbs and indirect quotations in their writing, a concern also reflected in Ramoroka (2014) and Wang (2016) studies.

Wang (2016) uses academic literacy approach to draw from three scholars (Devitt, 1991; Bazerman, 2004; White, 2005) to analyse how Chinese graduate students used external sources while writing for academic purposes through an intertextual lens. The findings highlight students' frequent alignment with lecturers' preferred practices, sometimes at the expense of authorial voice development. Similarly, Nguyen and Buckingham (2019) investigated three facets of students' interaction with the source material. This was done to determine how the students supported their academic literacy abilities and improved their authorial voice using source-based content. The results showed that students prioritised choosing and crediting sources they thought were appropriate for their lecturer. They tended to interpret and assess their assignments primarily based on how well they used sources.

Subsequently, a comprehensive analysis of the relative contributions of students' literacy abilities in the production of integrated essays was conducted by McCarthy et al. (2022). Their findings demonstrate that generic knowledge and reading comprehension influence integrated essay performance; nonetheless, general writing skill was the most potent predictor of integrated writing scores. Prioritising writing above reading highlights the need for focused instruction on writing development. This also indicates the importance of a better working knowledge of the complexity of multiple-text integrated reading and writing assignments. Several focal areas have been identified for further investigation. Among these is the necessity to research the effect of prepared response prompts on essay quality and offer comprehensive instruction on explaining oneself and evaluating sources.

In addition, Petric and Harwood's (2013) study investigated how students' views of assignment tasks related to their behaviour in citing sources in academic writing. The study looked at the citation habits of a successful L2 postgraduate student in two different types of writing assignments from management courses. Based on a thorough investigation of the students' citation practices and their self-reported analyses with their citations, the results illustrate that some citation functions are task-specific. In contrast, others were consistently used across tasks. This shows a sophisticated level of task representation since students modify their citation practices according to the perceived requirements of each assignment. This means that whilst some functions are constantly present in students' writing, others are tailored to specific task expectations, demonstrating a nuanced comprehension of the rhetorical demands. However, the study revealed variations between students' assumptions and instructors' expectations, pointing to a critical gap in task interpretations and instructional clarity. The pedagogical implications are important, specifically, the emphasis on citation mechanics against rhetorical positioning, evaluation, and strategic integration.

These studies collectively suggest a nuanced understanding of how students interpret, evaluate, and employ sources in their writing, revealing variations influenced by specific academic tasks and instructions. Future studies could explore the evolution of intertextual practices from the various levels of higher education by focusing on the critical transition phases. Also, comparative research on the different aspects of intertextuality could be beneficial in identifying the peculiar issues and strategies among students at various levels. Additionally, scrutinising instructional methodologies and the application of technology-assisted tools could provide the needed insights into best practices. The review advocates for the integration of cognitive apprenticeship models, genre-based pedagogy, and technology to scaffold writers' intertextual engagement.

### **Gaps and Future Research Directions**

While the review identifies several productive avenues for research, significant gaps persist in the following areas:

- Absence of a unified framework for non-transgressive intertextuality, resulting in inconsistent pedagogical interpretations.
- Insufficient exploration of research areas relevant to L2 writers, particularly those from Global South contexts.
- Inadequate representation of instructor mediation roles.



- Limited exploration of multimodal and digital intertextuality, notwithstanding its increasing relevance.

Future investigations may adopt longitudinal, cross-contextual, and comparative frameworks to examine the development of intertextual competence over time. Researchers should also concentrate on writers originating from multilingual L2 contexts.

## **Conclusion**

The review offers a critical move on research in intertextuality by highlighting non-transgressive practices and developmental trajectories in ESL academic writing, by synthesising a decade of empirical studies (2013-2023) to highlight the conceptual complexities and pedagogical importance of intertextuality from various dimensions. It asserts that intertextuality in L2 contexts is not merely about the mechanical act but an intricately embedded process of critical engagement, rhetorical positioning, and negotiating the writer's voice and authority.

A key finding from this review is the methodological and thematic diversity in intertextual research, ranging from cognitive models and the literacy dimensions to discourse analytic frameworks and corpus-based studies. This diversity reflects the depth of the field and underscores continuing obscurities in the conceptual definitions and instructional applications. While significant strides have been made in understanding intertextual practices among experienced and postgraduate writers, there remains a notable research gap in non-transgressive intertextuality, particularly among novice ESL writers.

Furthermore, while issues of plagiarism and citation norms have received extensive scholarly attention, the ethical and rhetorical dimensions of source use among emerging academic writers remain underexplored. The findings suggest a pressing need for pedagogical interventions that foster students' critical literacy, authorial voice, and strategic source engagement. Instructional models must better integrate cognitive and contextual awareness of the concept to equip writers with the needed skills in navigating disciplinary conventions and academic expectations.

Additionally, this review also reveals that intertextual practices are shaped by intersecting factors such as power, culture, language ideologies, and educational systems, particularly in multilingual and postcolonial contexts. Future research could explore how these sociocultural and ideological forces shape the ways ESL writers are positioned in knowledge production and how they resist, adapt to, or reproduce dominant academic norms.

Finally, this review offers a comprehensive basis for understanding intertextuality in second language contexts while charting a path for research and pedagogy. Future studies could pursue longitudinal designs, comparative cross-contextual analyses, and technology-assisted investigations that capture the evolving nature of intertextuality in digital and multimodal contexts. Such efforts will clarify the conceptual boundaries to enhance instructional frameworks that support ethical, critical, and culturally responsive writing development in second language academic settings.

## References

- Afful, J., & Janks, H. (2013). The politics of citation: An analysis of doctoral theses Across Disciplines. *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis Across Disciplines*, 6(2), 193-210. <http://cadaad.net/journal>
- Allen, G. (2000). *Intertextuality*. Routledge.
- Allen, G. (2011). *Intertextuality*. Routledge.
- Al-Abbasi, Z. H. K., Alkhafaji, H. A. H., & Farhan, H. (2022). The pragmatic Reflection of Intertextuality in Dover Beach. *Texas Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 7, 40-51. <https://zienjournals.com>
- Ali, A., & Aslam, A. (2016). Intertextuality: An effective tool in selling products Through Advertisements. *PUTAJ – Humanities and Social Sciences*, 23(2), 141-150.
- Alramadan, M. M. (2023). Citation behaviour, audience awareness, and identity construction in Arabic and EFL research. *Heliyon*, 9(2), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e1312>
- Bahadorfar, R., & Gholami, J. (2017). Types and functions of citations in a master's thesis theses across Disciplines and languages. *Discourse and Interaction*, 10(2), 27-45. <https://doi.org/10.5817/DI2017-2-27>
- Bakhtin, M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays*. University of Texas Press.
- Baron, S. (2019). *The birth of intertextuality: The riddle of creativity*. Routledge.
- Bazerman, C. (2004). Intertextuality: How texts rely on other texts. In C. Bazerman & P. Prior (Eds.), *What writing does and how it does it* (pp. 83-96). Erlbaum.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Bullo, S. (2017). Investigating intertextuality and interdiscursivity in evaluation: The case of conceptual blending. *Language and Cognition*, 9(4), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1017/langcog.2017.5>
- Chandrasoma, R., Thompson, C., & Pennycook, A. (2004). Beyond plagiarism: Transgressive and nontransgressive intertextuality. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 3, 171-193. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327701jlie0303\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327701jlie0303_1)
- Cumming, A., Lai, C., & Cho, H. (2016). Students' writing from sources for academic purposes purposes: A synthesis of recent research. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 23, 47-58.
- Dobakhti, L., & Zohrabi, M. (2018). Citation behaviours of applied linguists in discussion sections of research articles. *Applied Research on English Language*, 7(2), 215-236. <https://doi.org/10.22108/are.2018.108465.1209>
- Eckstein, G., Rawlins, J. D., Taylor, H., Briggs, H., Candland, A., Hanks, E., & Hill, S. (2022). Reporting verb variation across disciplines. *Journal of Academic Language and Learning*, 16(1), 59-75. <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/facpub/6373>
- Evison, J. (2010). What are the basics of analysing a corpus? In *The Routledge Handbook of Corpus Linguistics* (pp. 122-135). Routledge.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). Intertextuality in critical discourse analysis. *Linguistics and education*, pp. 4, 269–293.
- Fauconnier, G., & Turner, M. (2002). *The way we think: Conceptual blending and the mind's hidden complexities*. Basic Books.
- Farrelly, M. (2019). Rethinking intertextuality in CDA. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 17(4), 359-376. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904-2019.1609538>
- Flowerdew, J., & Li, Y. (2007). Plagiarism and second language writing in an electronic age. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 27, 161-183.
- Flowerdew, L. (1998). Corpus linguistic techniques applied to text linguistics. *System*, 26(4), 541-552.

- Gervasio, M. A., Aono, A. O., & Kisala, N. (2021). An analysis of the intertextuality of social Media: The discourse of Chuka University students on WhatsApp platforms. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, 4(2), 11-26 <https://doi.org/10.32996/jeltal.2022.4.2.2>
- Groom, N. (2000). Attribution and averral revisited: Three perspectives on manifest intertextuality in academic writing. In P. Thompson (Ed.), *Patterns and perspectives: Insights into EAP writing practice* (pp. 14–25). The University of Reading.
- Hodges, A. (2015). Intertextuality in discourse: The Handbook of discourse analysis (2nd ed., Vol. 1). Wiley Blackwell. <http://works.bepress.com/adamhodges/53/>
- Holmes, J. (2004). Intertextuality in EAP: An African context. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 3, 73-88. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2003.12.001>
- Howard, R. M. (1995). Plagiarisms, authorships, and the academic death penalty. *College English*, 57(7), 788–806.
- Johnson, N. P., & McLean, E. (2020). Discourse analysis. *International Encyclopedia of human Geography (second edition)*. Elsevier.
- Ketabi, S., & Rahavard, S. (2013). Cultural variations across academic genres: A generic analysis of intertextuality in master's theses introductions. *English Language Teaching*, 6(11), 148-159. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n11p148>
- Karpenko-Seccombe, T. (2016). Intertextuality as cognitive modelling: English text construction. *Text Construction*, 9(2), 244-267. <https://doi.org/10.1075/text.9.2.07kar>
- Kristeva, J. (1980). *Desire in language: A semiotic approach to literature and art* (T. Gora, A. Jardin, & L. S. Roudiez, Trans.; L. S. Roudiez, Ed.). Columbia University Press.
- Lai, M. W. C. (2022). *Uncovering the complexities in writing from sources from an activity theory perspective: A cross-case analysis of Chinese international graduate students in Education* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto, Canada).
- Lee, J. J., Hitchcock, C., & Casal, J. E. (2018). Citation practices of L2 University students in first-year writing: Form, function, and stance. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 33, 1-11.
- Li, Z., Makarova, V., & Wang, Z. (2023). Developing literature review writing and Citation practices through an online writing tutorial series: Corpus-based evidence. *Frontiers in Communication*, 8, 1035394. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2023.1035394>
- Li, Y., & Casanave, C. P. (2012). Two first-year students' strategies for writing from sources: Patchwriting or plagiarism? *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 21(2), 165-180.
- Maclean, M., Harvey, C., Sillince, J. A. A., & Golant, B. D. (2018). Intertextuality, Rhetorical history and the uses of the past in organisational transition. *Organization Studies*, 39(12), 1733-1755. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840618789206>
- Martin, J. R., & White, P. R. R. (2005). *Language of evaluation*. Palgrave MacMillan.
- McCarthy, K. S., Yan, E. F., Allen, L. K., Sonia, A. N., Magliano, J. P., & McNamara, D. S. (2022). On the basis of source: Impacts of individual differences on document integrated reading and writing tasks. *Learning and Instruction*, 79, 101599.
- Mireku, D. O., Dzamesi, P. D., & Bervell, B. (2023). Plagiarism in Higher Education (PLAGiHE) within Sub-Saharan Africa: A systematic review of a decade (2012–2022) literature. *Research Ethics*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17470161231139218>
- Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J., Altman, D. G., & The PRISMA Group. (2009). Preferred Reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: The PRISMA statement. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 151(4), 264-269. <https://doi.org/10.7326/0003-4819-151-4-200908180-00135>
- Moloi, A. C., & Bojabotseha, T. P. (2014). A Critical Discourse Analysis of Intertextuality and Interdiscursivity in the African National Congress Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies, MCSER Publishing, Rome-Italy Vol 3 No 4 July 2014

- Mori, M. S. (2014). *Negotiating ownership when incorporating outside sources: A qualitative study with multilingual undergraduate students* (Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Davis). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database.
- Nguyen, Q., & Buckingham, L. (2019). Source-use expectations in assignments: The Perceptions And practices of Vietnamese master's students. *English for Specific Purposes*, 53, 90-103. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2018.10.001>
- Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., ... & Moher, D. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: An updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ*, p. 372, n71. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71>
- Petrić, B., & Harwood, N. (2013). Task requirements, task representation, and self-reported citation functions: An exploratory study of a successful L2 student's writing. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 12(2), 110-124.
- Pecorari, D. (2003). Good and original: Plagiarism and patchwriting in academic second-language writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 12(4), 317–345.
- Pecorari, D. (2006). Visible and occluded citation features in postgraduate second-language writing. *English for Specific Purposes*, 25(1), 4–29.
- Pecorari, D. (2016). Writing from sources, plagiarism, and textual borrowing. In R. M. Manchón & P. K. Matsuda (Eds.), *Handbook of second and foreign writing* (pp. 329-346). De Gruyter Mouton. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781614511335-016>
- Pecorari, D., & Petrić, B. (2014). Plagiarism in second-language writing. *Language Teaching*, 47(3), 269-302. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444813000113>
- Ramoroka, B. T. (2014). Integration of sources in academic writing: A corpus-based study of citation practices in essay writing in two departments at the University of Botswana. *Reading & Writing - Journal of the Reading Association of South Africa*, 5(1), 1-7.
- Ronan, B. (2015). Intertextuality and dialogic interaction in students' online text construction. *Literacy Research: Theory, Method, and Practice*, 64, 379-397. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2381336915617613>
- Schank, R. C. (1999). *Dynamic memory revisited*. Cambridge University Press.
- Scollon, S. W. (2004). *Nexus analysis: Discourse and the emerging internet*. Routledge.
- Sun, Q., Kuzborska, I., & Soden, B. (2022). Learning to construct authorial voice through citations: A longitudinal case study of L2 postgraduate novice writers. *System*, 106, Article 102765. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2022.102765>
- Sun, Q., & Soden, B. (2022). The representation of source use in academic writing textbooks, *ELT Journal*, 76(4), 497–507, <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccab058>
- Swales, J. M. (1990). *Genre analysis*. Cambridge University Press.
- Swales, J. M. (2014). Variation in citational practice in a corpus of student biology papers: From parenthetical plonking to intertextual storytelling. *Written Communication*, 31(2), 118–141. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0741088313515166>
- Thompson, G., & Ye, Y. (1991). Evaluation of the reporting verbs used in academic papers. *Applied Linguistics*, 12(4), 365-382.
- Thornton, L. (2019). "That's the way I did it": A mixed methods study of the intertextual practices of first-year undergraduate health sciences students (Doctoral dissertation, University of Sydney). Retrieved from <https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/21684>
- Twumasi, R. A., & Afful, J. B. A. (2022). Functions of citation in the literature review section of MPhil theses. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 4(2), 11–26. <https://doi.org/10.32996/jeltal.2022.4.2.2>
- Vahdani, F., & Mir Saeed, S. M. G. (2015). An investigation into the representation of Intertextuality in the ELT series Four Corners. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 5(4), 875-882. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0504.26>



- 
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2001). Discourse, ideology, and context.
  - Velykoroda, Y., & Moroz, O. (2021). Intertextuality in media discourse: A reader's Perspective. *Explorations in English Language and Linguistics*, 9(1), 56-79. <https://doi.org/10.2478/exell-2022-0003>
  - Wang, W. (2006). Newspaper commentaries on terrorism in China and Australia: A Contrastive genre study. <http://hdl.handle.net/2123/1701>
  - Wang, W. (2016). Intertextual practices in academic writing by Chinese ESL students. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 7, 53-72. <https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2016-0003>
  - Wiemeyer, L. (2021). Intertextuality in foreign-language academic writing in English: A mixed-methods study of university students' writing products and processes in source-based disciplinary assignments (Doctoral thesis, University of Bremen).
  - Wette, R. (2018). Source-based writing in a health sciences essay: Year 1 students' perceptions, abilities, and strategies. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 36, 61-75.
  - White, P. (2005). *Appraisal website*. Retrieved from <http://www.grammatics.com/appraisal/>
  - Xing, C., & Feng, D. (2023). Multimodal intertextuality and persuasion in advertising discourse. *Discourse and Communication*, 17(5), 613-629. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17504813231170579>

### Author's biography

**Cecilia Owusu Debrah** (Agyeiwah Agyemang) is a Lecturer in Writing Studies at the Department of Languages and General Studies, School of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Energy and Natural Resources, Ghana. She is currently pursuing her PhD in English Education at the University of Education, Winneba. Her research interests span intertextuality, second-language writing, cognitive approaches to language studies, writing analytics, and genre studies. This research paper forms an integral part of her PhD research, contributing to broader scholarly work on writing in second-language contexts.