Skillful citation can demonstrate an author’s knowledge of the research’s topic and, if done well, can deftly transmit his or her stance towards the academic literature relevant to this topic. This helps boost the writer’s academic identity:

“Citation is central to the social context of persuasion, as it helps provide justification for arguments and demonstrates the novelty of the writer’s position, but it also allows [authors] to display an allegiance to a particular community and establish a credible writer identity, displaying familiarity with the texts and with an ethos that values a disciplinary research tradition” (Hyland and Tse 2004).

**Integral and Non-integral Citations**

One of the most evident features of citation is the form it takes within the text. Swales mentions that there are two basic kinds of citations, **integral** and **non-integral**. **Integral citations** mention the author within the syntax of the sentence. This type of citing is researcher-focused. His examples are the following:

- Brie (1988) showed that the moon is made of cheese.
- The moon’s cheesy composition was established by Brie (1988).
- Brie’s theory (1988) claims that the moon is made of cheese.
- Brie’s (1988) theory of lunar composition has general support.
- According to Brie (1988), the moon is made of cheese.

In **non-integral citations**, the author is mentioned in a parenthesis or in superscripted notation (foot- or endnotes). This type of citation is idea-focused. Examples of **non-integral** citations are the following:
Previous research has shown that the moon is made of cheese (Brie, 1988).

It has been shown that the moon is made of cheese (Brie, 1988).

It has been established that the moon is made of cheese.\(^1\)

The moon is probably made of cheese (Brie, 1988).

The moon may be made of cheese.\(^1\)

The moon may be made of cheese (but cf. Rock, 1989).

If both the researcher and the date are integrated into the text, without parentheses, we can say that this type of citation is chronology-focused (the focus is both on the researcher and when he/she did the research):

Brie, in his landmark 1999 study, established that the moon is made of cheese.

Choice of Reporting Verbs

Compare the following sentences:

- Brie (1988) shows that the moon is made of cheese.
- Brie (1988) suggests that the moon is made of cheese.

In these examples, as in all academic texts, it is interesting to notice the use of reporting verbs. In the first sentence, by using the verb “show” the author might be implying her trust and belief in Brie’s findings. This verb shows the author’s commitment to another’s proposition. Other verbs of this kind are: demonstrate, report, establish. These verbs indicate strong stances and imply the author’s claims are strong.

As you can see in the second sentence, other verb choices do not show as much commitment to the ideas being cited, such as: suggest, propose, examine. These verbs suggest the claims may be tentative or still inconclusive. The choice of reporting verb, therefore, has a rhetorical place in the creation of a research space and serves to signal how much the author supports others’ claims. This, in
turn, is a way of evaluating the references that contributes to the author’s academic identity.

Verb Tense

Related to the use of reporting verbs is the use of verb tense, which can also indicate how much the author supports the claims of others. Swales arrives at the conclusion that – generally speaking – tenses further in the past indicate more distance between the author’s stance and the work being cited, whereas tenses in the present indicate proximity not only in time but also in terms of stance or position.

Examples (from Swales):

a) Malcolm pointed out that there is both constraint and choice in tense usage.
   b) Malcolm has pointed out that...
   c) Malcolm points out that...

That is, the author indicates more support for Malcolm’s claim by using the present tense (in c) than in (a) where the past tense is used. This is because the present tense, among other things, suggests universality, (and thus suggests that the claim still holds true). Using the past tense suggests an event situated in a particular point in past time (that may or may not still be entirely valid).

Conclusion: Citation Practices and Rhetorical Stance

Citing at the appropriate times and in a way that evaluates the works cited can help boost the writer’s academic authority. The way citations are integrated into a text can place emphasis on different aspects of the ideas under discussion. The choice of reporting verbs and the verb tense can be used for rhetorical effect, to distance oneself from, or show more support for, other authors’ ideas.

Sources


[http://www.wisc.edu/writetest/index.html](http://www.wisc.edu/writetest/index.html)