

## **THE USE OF REPORTING VERBS IN L2 WRITING BY IRAQI POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS AT TIKRIT UNIVERSITY**

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### **Abstract**

*The current study describes the use of RVs in essays written by Iraqi MA students at Tikrit University (in Tikrit province, Iraq). The main aim of the present study is to discover how participants use RVs in essay writing to provide a detailed analysis that will assist them in improving their writing. 15 Iraqi MA students participated in this study. The participants wrote 30 essays; each participant wrote two essays on a different topic that was chosen. The theories from Biber, et al. (2002) equipped by Quirk (1985) are applied to analyze RVs. RVs used by the participants were classified into three categories: communication, activity, and mental verbs. The results of the current study show that the participants used Activity Verbs (55%), followed by Communication Verbs (27%) and Mental Verbs (18%). It was concluded that the students had overused the Activity Verbs, such as 'point', 'show', 'find', 'give', and 'focus'. The present study also concluded that students' ability in using RVs must be developed to reach the proper academic level in their writing.*

**Keywords:** Reporting Verbs, Essay writing, Qualitative

### **1. Introduction**

Several studies have examined the topic of employing Reporting Verbs (RVs) in academic writing, the use of RVs is acknowledged as an essential feature of academic writing, according

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to Jaroongkhongdach (2015). RVs mainly serve “to give credit to other researchers and to use their work in the cumulative construction of knowledge” (Charles, 2006, p.326). Additionally, RVs represent a primary rhetorical option (Hyland, 2002) since they enable authors to report on the source material and express their viewpoint or attitude regarding the referenced material. Scollon, Tsang, Li, Yung, and Jones (1997) demonstrate how direct and indirect quotes, denoted by reporting verbs, distinguish between the writer's and the original author's voices. According to Charles (2006), authors can communicate the concepts they want to convey via quotations or citations in their writing with the proper use of RVs. As a result, learners of academic writing need to become proficient in using RVs in the citation (Clugston, 2008). Consequently, the present study will explore and discuss Iraqi MA students' use of RVs to fill the gap that there are very limited studies focused on RVs among Iraqi students at Iraqi universities. Additionally, as Jomma and Bidin (2019) suggest, "The outputs of such studies can be employed pedagogically to equip students in higher education institutions with more knowledge and instructions on citations and academic writing.”

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Reporting Verbs**

Reporting verbs are essential features in academic writing and allow writers to link their reported research activities to the information they are reporting and provide them with a method of evaluating the message they are reporting on. The use of reporting verbs is a simple but effective method of identifying the original author of a piece of text (RVs). To be brief in communicating one's knowledge or the results of another person's effort, the use of reporting verbs is a necessary academic ability. But both teachers and administrators tend to disregard its significance and complexity in grammar and language textbooks because it is considered a highly common language that does not need more explanation (Zhang, 2008).

The goal of this study is to investigate the usage of reporting verbs in the writings of Iraqi MA students in order to illustrate that reporting verbs are essential and should be applied with caution in academic writings. To put it more simply, one of the most influential academic devices is reporting verbs, such as using the words "assert" or "claim," which a writer can utilize to accomplish his or her lofty goals of stating claims (Charles, 2006). In his introduction,

Hyland (2002) asserts that one of the distinguishing aspects of academic writing is the reporting of the work of others or the citation of previously conducted research. They offer an adequate environment for persuasion by illustrating how current work builds on and reworks past utterances to develop intertextual linkages to the larger discipline. This is the relevance of their role in academic discourse. Another assertion that Hyland makes which conveys the findings of this study is that reporting verbs are essential in academic discourse. This is due to the fact that they allow the writer to convey the type of action being reported as well as differentiate an attitude toward that information, indicating whether the claims should be accepted or rejected. Furthermore, a citation is a vital component of every research endeavor; hence, a suitable reporting verb must be used to represent the knowledge received from the work of others ( Hyland, 1999, p. 344).

According to Wray& Reid & Chin, and Yamazaki (2013): “Reporting verbs have different meanings and different levels of strength. It is important to choose a reporting verb that accurately matches the meaning of the source information and the strength of the author’s source position or attitude” (98). Literature reviews contain many citations and the opinions of scholars, which reveals, even more, the tendency of articles to repeatedly use the same reporting verbs. It is ironic because reporting verbs come in a variety of forms. However, according to the observations of Geeslin and Long (2014), users of a language are not always aware of the sociolinguistic variation decisions they make. They continue as: “the choices a speaker makes when selecting the forms necessary to convey a message that is appropriate in a given context” (p.3).

## ***2.2 Related studies***

There have been several studies on the topic of a citation from a variety of fields, including chemistry (Gooden, 2001), medicine (Thomas & Hawes, 1994), social sciences (Zhang, 2008), sociology of knowledge, EPA, and information science (Swales, 2014). This enormous number of research may be attributed to several factors. To begin, using citations can provide the statements and arguments presented in the text an additional boost of rhetorical force (Hyland, 2004). Besides, the presence of citations in a document is, due to the very nature of citations itself, an indicator that the material is scholarly. Commenting on the work of other academics

and researchers, also allows authors to participate in the academic community in which they are enrolled. It is also clear proof of the text's interaction and textuality (Swales, 2014).

The use of reporting verbs by diverse authors has been the subject of citation studies. An example of this type of research is the work of De Oliveira and Pagano (2006), who studied reporting verbs in two distinct forms of writing: Portuguese research papers and scientific articles published in Portuguese publications. Studies found that articles aimed at the general public used reporting verbs with the connotation of direct discourse representation more frequently than those aimed at scientists. Journalists in texts on the science used quotation voices to signal a discursive stance superior to their own, according to this study's findings. But in research papers, the use of verbs that conveyed direct engagement indicated a less discursive stance between the authors and the authors they quoted. In addition, the majority of verbs in scientific popularization pieces were written in the present tense, suggesting that the findings were relatively recent. On the other hand, the majority of verbs in research papers were written in the past tense.

Bloch (2010) planned to use the concordance technique to give educational resources concerning the importance of reporting verbs in academic writing. He made two very small corpora by copying an excerpt from a paper that was published in a scholarly journal. He next collected a sample of words to go along with each of the 27 reporting verbs that he had chosen at random. In light of this premise, he collected writing samples from students and compiled a second corpus with the intention of contrasting the reporting verbs used by students with those employed by well-known authors. He arrived to the idea that we could acquaint youngsters with the use of language by presenting them with examples from real-world situations and explaining how a writer chooses what to write about. In addition to this, he made use of the findings to compile an online database of terms that teachers of academic writing courses and those who build curricula can use to produce instructional materials (Bloch, 2009).

Using Swales' categorization of citations from 1990, Kim (2012) analyzed the usage of citations in the introductory sections of forty research publications in the field of educational psychology. Of these publications, half were written by authors from China, and the other half

were written by authors from the United Kingdom. His research showed that English authors cited their sources five times more frequently than Chinese writers did, leading him to the conclusion that teaching Chinese students how to use citations could improve their academic writing abilities. The citation practices of graduate and undergraduate students, as well as a corpus from the field of biology, were the focus of an investigation that was conducted by Swales (2014). Through the process of analyzing the corpus, he evaluated the prevalence of integral and parenthetical citations, the choice of reporting verbs, the impact of the citing system, and whether or not students included the city's initial name in their work. When citing one's own or others' claims, selecting the appropriate reporting verb to use in the citation has become widely recognized as a crucial component of academic writing. The findings did not disclose any substantial differences between the articles written by undergraduates and those written by graduate students.

In their research for their Master's Theses, Manan and Noor (2014) analyzed the reporting verbs that were used. The researchers wanted to determine the reporting verbs that Master's students used, the frequency with which these verbs were used, and the impact that these verbs had on the theses. To do this, they made use of the framework that Hyland (2000) had devised. The findings of six theses indicate that students' use of reporting verbs from the research acts category was much more prevalent than students' use of verbs from the cognition acts category and the discourse acts category, accordingly. They indicated, on the basis of their findings, that rather than instructing various parts of research in classes on research methods, it would be more useful for students to comprehend reporting verbs. This would be the case rather than teaching students various components of research.

Charles (2006) evaluated reporting verbs from a variety of different fields. In this study, the language patterns that are employed to refer to research through making use of reporting clauses are investigated. The collection of these texts was written in native English by people working in a variety of domains: There are a total of 190,000 words in the section devoted to politics and foreign affairs. There are around 300,000 terms in all that are used in the discipline of materials science. According to the findings, these reporting verbs are used by a significant number of researchers across both fields, and quotes from human subjects are used as integrated quotations the vast majority of the time. He provides evidence to support the claim that a

particular verb group argues most frequently in both regions, as well as the assertion that the reporting phrase appears frequently in both corpora. Find and display groups, on the other hand, come up quite frequently in material science. 34 The fact that the frequency of research reports is comparable between the two different corpora lends credence to the notion that this pattern is common in the reporting literature. Having said that, it is essential to keep in mind that this does not necessarily suggest that the two businesses typically provide the same quotations. Both the political sciences and the material sciences make use of this complement to a comparable degree in their reporting provisions. The previous study studied dissertations in two disciplines, namely ideological affairs and materials sciences, but the current study investigates journal articles from four disciplines.

L2 authors in a North American first-year writing program were examined by Kwon (2017) for their use of reporting verbs, which she found to be common. An assignment from the Corpus and Repository of Writing was chosen to study how first-year L2 writers employ reporting verbs in academic writing (Crow). These semantic categories' frequency and mode of use among writers are being scrutinized. Verb forms and semantic categories are documented by the writers, who show how they utilize verbs in various contexts. The rhetorical functions of reporting from the text (R), self-reference (S), and unsourced generalization (U) are examples of this type of evidence-based rhetoric. Researchers found no difference in verb reporting between second- and third-year authors. L2 authors' usage of reporting verbs is examined in this study. A literature review assignment from a larger corpus is used and written. The corpus of the current study focuses on assessing reporting verbs in published journals by comparing the use of reporting verbs in hard and soft domains.

Mar (2020) analyzed reporting verb use in scholarly writings. This research seeks to determine which reporting verbs are used most often. Moreover, the rarest form of verbs in academic writing is explored, as the use of reporting verbs in academic writings. This analysis seeks to explore the reporting verbs used in scholarly articles. This study analyses fourteen articles from English departments in Myanmar to identify which reporting verbs are employed most frequently and infrequently in scholarly works. Under Hyland's taxonomy, the reporting verbs are classified as research, cognition, and speaking actions. The data indicate that speaking actions are the most prevalent, whereas cognitive acts seen in articles are the least frequent. The taxonomy of reporting verbs by Hyland comprises the verb forms and voices of a number

of subclasses. It is advised to do further analyses of a subset of research publications from diverse fields. In this report, data were gathered and evaluated using a checklist. Ten 2019-published research articles are selected at random from the Banmaw University Library. The papers were written by 22 instructors from the English divisions of Myanmar's Ministry of Education.

Applied linguistics, engineering, medicine, and accounting were all included in Uba's (2020) study on research papers' use of reporting verbs. Each of the study's 120 papers has 30 components, making for a massive archive. In this study, two stages of research were carried out. It begins by selecting five articles from each topic area and reading and rereading any item that describes verbs, their meaning and the rationale behind their application. This method aids the author in defining reporting verbs' semantic groups. A second application of the list was for the author to create concordance findings for quantitative textual analysis of the four fields' sub-corpora, based on the established semantic kinds of reporting verbs included in the general corpus. Authors in the soft domain use more reporting verbs than those in the harsh realm. In addition, it demonstrates that there are differences and parallels between fields. There are similarities and differences between this research and this one. Both of these studies focus on reporting verbs in a variety of fields, which is a resemblance. The author utilizes two soft domain disciplines and two hard domain disciplines in this study. As this research is quantitative, the technique and conceptual framework vary from those of the present study, which is qualitative.

According to Yeganeh and Boghayeri (2015), writing is a vital learning tool and a way of evaluating and adding authors to communities of punishing speech. Students are aware of its essential components when writing academic genres, including form and purpose. The use of quotations in scholarly discourse demonstrates an admiration for the authors' past works. This research examines the frequency and function of the most used reporting verbs. This approach integrates the findings of sixty journal articles, of which half were written by native speakers and the other half were written by non-native speakers. These articles were published in both international and national journals. The findings suggest that reporting verbs are used in a distinct manner by the two separate corpora. The findings may be put to use in the development



of projects and the teaching of compositions that place an emphasis on grammatical, rhetorical, and various other types of writing.

When it came to legal arguments, Yu (2021) found that reporting verbs were used a much. The study places a particular emphasis on the frequency of reporting verbs as well as their distribution throughout judicial decisions. According to the research, the verbs that are utilised to report events in judicial decisions are distinct from one another. An investigation into the judicial and educational systems can throw some light on the situation. A written sampler from the British National Corpus is used as a reference corpus, and the decisions from other courts are compared to this corpus to look for reporting verbs that are frequently employed in those courts. Court judgments, in general, use more reporting verbs than other forms of writing. The self-created court decision corpus has far more speech act verbs than the original corpus. Mental verbs, on the other hand, show how people get to their own legal conclusions without relying on the authority of others. (four) Verbal reporting tendencies differ dramatically between court rulings and ordinary texts. According to the data, reference verbs play a significant part in court decisions, which may shed light on legal and educational operations.

Swear and Kalajahi's (2019) paper emphasized vital issues highlighted by technological universities. This study's participants are Postgraduate students. They are inexperienced with the proper usage of reporting verbs and often overuse or misuse certain reporting verbs. Thus, their task becomes monotonous and repetitious. The research was conducted using only a small corpus, which consisted of three master's theses authored by students who attended the University of Technology and got their master's degrees in engineering there. The master's student who recalls knowledge and ideas from 38 past studies on the same issue is referred to as the "author," while the individual who has been credited with this work is referred to as the "source", thus this article was written by the master's student. The research revealed that students prefer factive to non-fictional verbs, although they cannot employ the opposite verb in the language. This analysis demonstrates that they cannot challenge the current circumstance. The acquired data were evaluated numerically in terms of the frequency of these reporting verbs and qualitatively to understand the function of each reporting verb type. The examination included Factual, Non-Factual, and Counter-Factual verbs.



Yilmaz and Ertür (2017) undertook an analysis to determine the prevalence of reporting verbs in scholarly publications. One hundred sixty research publications written by native and quasi authors and published in international journals that are reviewed by peers were chosen for this study. The researcher chooses to focus on papers published by native authors and articles produced by non-native authors and selects a total of 160 for analysis. The research indicated that non-native authors are more likely to use reporting verbs like observed, notice, suggest, and reveal than native writers are. The researcher observed that the findings might help non-native researchers in picking appropriate reporting verbs and avoiding selecting reporting verbs at random in an academic setting. Verbs that fall within the reporting category include observed, noticed, indicated, and revealed.

Luzon (2018) analyzed the RV trends in RAs written by Anglophone and Spanish-speaking researchers in English. The findings demonstrated that the frequency of RVs in both corpora was comparable, but the kinds of verbs varied. Researchers who speak Spanish make use of a significantly higher percentage of speech act RVs than researchers who speak English do. The author contends that Spanish authors were "less register sensitive" than Anglophone writers and that they may have overlooked valid semantic distinctions while utilising "falsified cognates" or evaluating with RVs. In addition, the author suggests that Anglophone writers may have been "more register sensitive" than Spanish authors (Luzon, 2018, p.188).

There were 40 original manuscripts prepared by experienced French academics, 40 published research papers written in English in Engineering, Science, and Computational Linguistics, and 40 published RAs written in French by French scholars appraised by Rowley-Jolivet and Carter-Thomas (2014). According to the data, English-speaking researchers used considerably more "reporting-that" clauses. According to the authors, the French academic sector employs a variety of reporting systems, which may be to fault.

### **2.3 Research Questions**

- 1- What kinds of RVs do Iraqi students use in their papers?
- 2- How much do Iraqi MA students overuse RVs in their essays?

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

In the present research, a qualitative technique was used to investigate reporting verbs in the essays submitted by Iraqi MA students at Tikrit University. RVs were categorized according to the theories of Biber et al. (2002) equipped by Quirk (1985) in classifying the RVs. RVs are divided into three groups as follows:

- **Communication verbs:** *say, claim, tell, quote, report, confirm, refuse, announce, advise, decline, sentence, deny, explain, add, agree, speak, suggest, accuse, conclude, vow, warn, offer, echo, impose, insist, argue, interject, acknowledge, complain, call, pledge, ask, criticize, describe, doubt, respond*
- **Activity verbs:** *reveal, list, give, prove, find, demonstrate, reach, show, point, issue, bristle, focus, feature, capture, post, back up, release*
- **Mental verbs:** *estimate, expect, decide, believe, note, think, assume, hope, weigh, consider*

#### **3.2 Sampling**

Fifteen Iraqi students participated in this study; each participant submitted two essays. There are ten essays on each subject. Each essay exceeds 1000 words. The soft application (AntConc) was used to analyse the writing of Iraqi master's students.

### **4. Findings**

According to the order of the research questions, below are the findings:

- **Research question one:** What are the RVs used by Iraqi students in their essays?

The first question is answered by using accurate computerized reading of Iraqi MA students' essays.

Table 1. *RVs Used by Iraqi MA Students*

<b>Reporting Verbs Categories</b>	<b>Reporting Verbs used by the Participants</b>
Activity Verbs	Reveal, Give, Find, Demonstrate, Reach, Show, Point, Issue, Focus, Feature, Post
Communication Verbs	Say, Claim, Tell, Quote, Report, Confirm, Refuse, Sentence, Deny, Explain, Add, Agree, Speak, Suggest, Conclude, Offer, Argue, Call, Ask, Criticize, Doubt, Respond
Mental Verbs	Estimate, Expect, Decide, Believe, Think, Hope, Consider, Assume

Table 1 displays the overall usage of RVs by students. In accordance with the Biber, et al. (2002) and Quirk (1985) classification of RVs, the participants' RVs were divided into three categories: This section includes verbs for communication, activity, and mental expression. There were total of 41 RVs, including 11 activity verbs, 22 communication verbs, and 8 mental verbs, as shown in Table 1.

Table 2. *RVs used according to categories*

<b>Reporting Verbs</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<i>Activity Verbs</i>	154
<i>Communication Verbs</i>	76
<i>Mental Verbs</i>	50

According to the types of Rvs, table (2) provides a summary of the number of each type used by Iraqi MA students. Participants used Activity Verbs (f=154), Communication Verbs (f=76), and Mental Verbs (f=50).

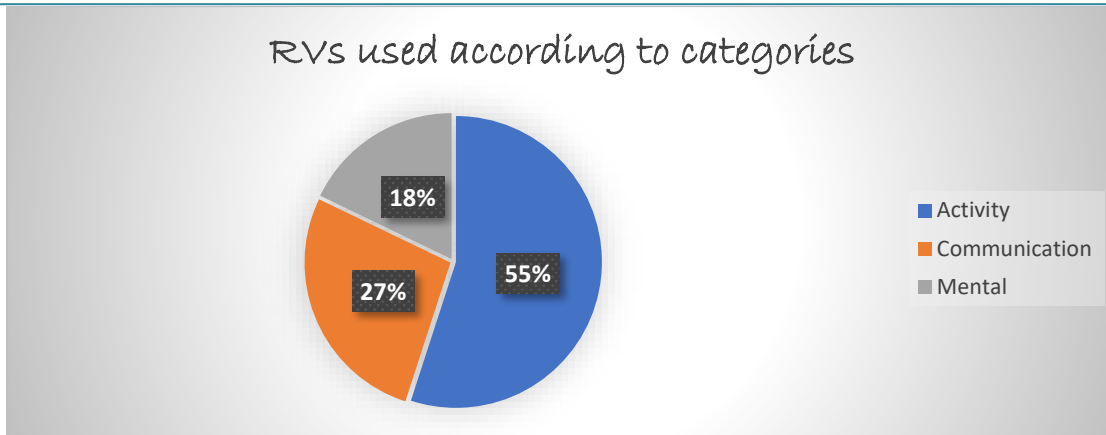


Figure 1. *Percentage of the RVs used by Iraqi MA students*

The percentage of each category that was utilised by the participants is displayed in Figure 1. According to the conclusions of the data analysis that was carried out using AntConc, the participants utilised Activity Verbs at a rate of 55 percent, Communication Verbs at a rate of 27 percent, and Mental Verbs at a rate of 18 percent. Activity Verbs have the greatest rate of Recurring Verbs.

- **Research question two:** To what extent do Iraqi MA students in their essays overuse RVs?

Table 3. *The Frequency of Reporting Verbs*

Reporting Verbs	Frequency
<i>Say</i>	4
<i>Tell</i>	3
<i>Add</i>	3
<i>Quote</i>	4
<i>Show</i>	26
<i>Report</i>	1
<i>Claim</i>	2
<i>Decline</i>	0
<i>Warn</i>	0
<i>Speak</i>	2
<i>Suggest</i>	2
<i>Believe</i>	12
<i>Announce</i>	0
<i>Deny</i>	2
<i>Give</i>	19
<i>Expect</i>	4
<i>Find</i>	25
<i>List</i>	0

<i>Accuse</i>	0
<i>Argue</i>	2
<i>Confirm</i>	1
<i>Respond</i>	4
<i>Sentence</i>	8
<i>Decide</i>	3
<i>Doubt</i>	2
<i>Note</i>	0
<i>Call</i>	3
<i>Capture</i>	0
<i>Demonstrate</i>	10
<i>Issue</i>	13
<i>Offer</i>	10
<i>Post</i>	2
<i>Prove</i>	0
<i>Ask</i>	3
<i>Assume</i>	2
<i>Back Up</i>	0
<i>Complain</i>	0
<i>Conclude</i>	5
<i>Reveal</i>	2
<i>Reach</i>	4
<i>Point</i>	28
<i>Bristle</i>	0
<i>Focus</i>	16
<i>Feature</i>	9
<i>Refuse</i>	2
<i>Advise</i>	0
<i>Explain</i>	7
<i>Agree</i>	5
<i>Vow</i>	0
<i>Echo</i>	0
<i>Impose</i>	0
<i>Insist</i>	0
<i>Interject</i>	0
<i>Acknowledge</i>	0
<i>Pledge</i>	0
<i>Describe</i>	0
<i>Criticize</i>	1
<i>Estimate</i>	1
<i>Think</i>	11
<i>Hope</i>	11
<i>Weigh</i>	0
<i>Consider</i>	6
<i>Release</i>	0

The results of the students' use of reporting verbs are shown in Table (3). The RVs that were used the most frequently by the students were point (f=28), show (f=26), find (f=25), and provide (f=19). As can be seen, the students' usage of RVs such as release (f=0) and describe (f=0) was nonexistent.

In addition, RVs such as Confirm and Criticize had a relatively low usage rate among the student population.

Table 4. *The Frequency of Activity Verbs*

Activity Verbs	Frequency
<i>Reveal</i>	2
<i>List</i>	0
<i>Give</i>	19
<i>Prove</i>	0
<i>Find</i>	25
<i>Demonstrate</i>	10
<i>Reach</i>	4
<i>Show</i>	26
<i>Point</i>	28
<i>Issue</i>	13
<i>Bristle</i>	0
<i>Focus</i>	16
<i>Feature</i>	9
<i>Capture</i>	0
<i>Post</i>	2
<i>back up</i>	0
<i>Release</i>	0

Table (4). shows the results of the use of Activity Verbs by the students, the most used Activity Verbs are *point* (f=28), *show* (f=26), and *find* (f=25). In this category, students did not use RVs like *List* (f=0), *Prove* (f=0), and *Bristle* (f=0). Furthermore, RVs like *Reveal* and *Post* were very rarely used by the students.

Table 5. *The Frequency of Communication Verbs*

Communication Verbs	Frequency
<i>Say</i>	4
<i>Claim</i>	2
<i>Tell</i>	3
<i>Quote</i>	4
<i>Report</i>	1
<i>Confirm</i>	1
<i>Refuse</i>	2
<i>Announce</i>	0
<i>Advise</i>	0
<i>Decline</i>	0
<i>Senience</i>	8
<i>Deny</i>	2
<i>Explain</i>	7
<i>Add</i>	3
<i>Agree</i>	5
<i>Speak</i>	2
<i>Suggest</i>	2
<i>Accuse</i>	0
<i>Conclude</i>	5
<i>Vow</i>	0
<i>Warn</i>	0
<i>Offer</i>	10
<i>Echo</i>	0
<i>Impose</i>	0

<i>Insist</i>	0
<i>Argue</i>	2
<i>Interject</i>	0
<i>Acknowledge</i>	0
<i>Complain</i>	0
<i>Call</i>	3
<i>Pledge</i>	0
<i>Ask</i>	3
<i>Criticize</i>	1
<i>Describe</i>	0
<i>Doubt</i>	2
<i>Respond</i>	4

The table (5). Offer (f=10), Sentence (f=8) and Explain (f=7) are the most often operated Communication Verbs by the participants. There were no RVs like Decline (f=0), Advise (f=0), and Accuse (f=0) in this category. RVs like Criticize and Report, on the other hand, were hardly ever used by the students.

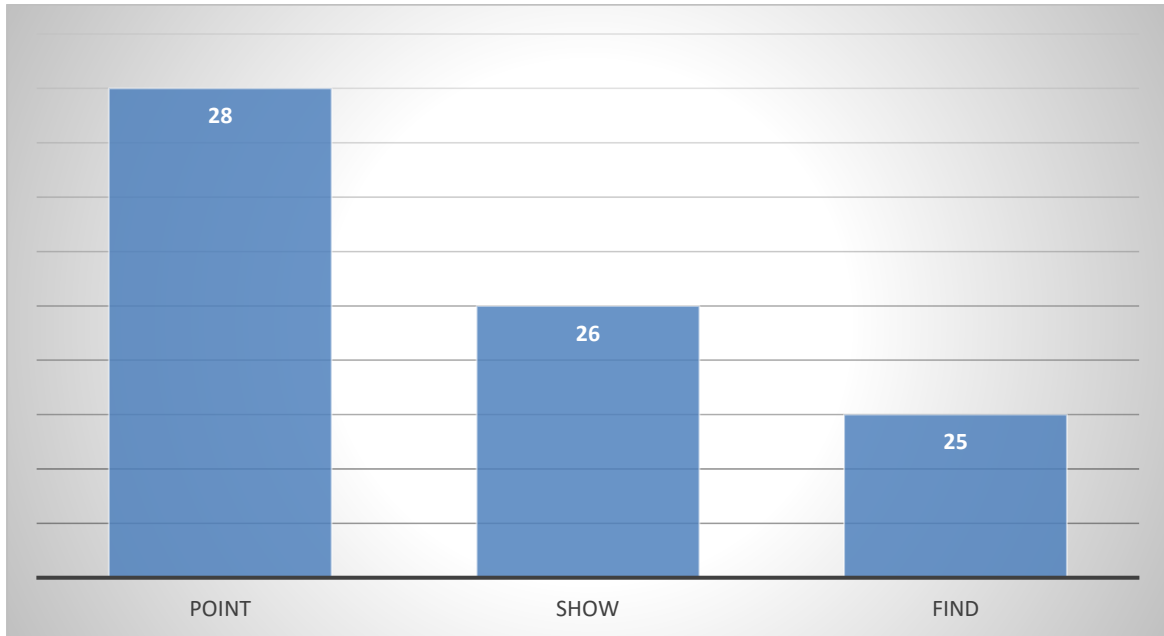
Table 6. *The Frequency of Mental Verbs*

<b>Mental Verbs</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<i>Estimate</i>	1
<i>Expect</i>	4
<i>Decide</i>	3
<i>Believe</i>	12
<i>Note</i>	0
<i>Think</i>	11
<i>Hope</i>	11
<i>Weigh</i>	0
<i>Consider</i>	6
<i>Assume</i>	2

Table (5). shows the results of the use of Mental Verbs by the participants, the most used Mental Verbs are *Believe* (f=12), *Think* (f=11), and *Hope* (f=11). In this category, the students did not use RVs like *Note* (f=0) and *Weigh* (f=0). Furthermore, the students rarely used RVs like *Estimate* and *Assume*.



Figure 2. *The overuse of RVs in the writing of Iraqi MA students*



An example of a popular recreational vehicle (RV) is seen in Figure 2. Point ( $f=28$ ), Show ( $f=26$ ), and find ( $f=25$ ) were employed by participants in figure 2. Earlier studies by Uba (2019), Jarkovská and Kurková (2020), and Junnak and Veerachaisantikul (2016) support the current findings, which reveal that students frequently utilise the words "show" and "discover" when composing their essays.

## 5. Discussion

Reporting verbs are verbs used to describe what people say, think, and learn, as well as how they speak (Stevenson, 2010, p. 46). Bonelli and Camiciotti also claim that RVs have been studied to see how writers evaluate previous studies and present their findings using tense (Bonelli & Camiciotti, 2005, p. 71). At the university level, academic writing often involves students to review various sources of information and evaluate the strength of their arguments. Reporting verbs are a critical tool for accomplishing this. However, careful verb choice can help demonstrate the assessment of the quality of what they have been said. Additionally, depending on the sort of information being mentioned, it is necessary to be aware of and endeavor to employ a variety of reporting verbs.

The current study identifies reporting verbs in the 30 essays produced by Iraqi master students. The central taxonomy for analyzing reporting verbs in these sections is Biber's (2002) theory equipped by Quirk (1985). The semantic category of the reporting verbs discovered in the data is analyzed, and three categories are observed: activity, communication, and mental verbs. The types assist in improving pass-level work and developing critical thinking skills in approaching the levels of the Iraqi students. The results of analyzing their writings show that (18 percent mental, 27 percent communication, and 55 percent activity) verbs indicate that discourse is being quoted or paraphrased. For this category, students must consider the most appropriate words to use in order to incorporate active verbs. The most commonly used reporting verb is 'point,' which appears 28 times, indicating that most students prefer to be neutral rather than tentative or firm. They prefer to use tangible language to communicate the writer's methodology. Students should, however, use stronger verbs to impress readers; using a higher level of reporting verbs in essays will make them more exciting and increase the acceptability of the works.

Understanding linguistic features enable master's students to create clear, coherent, and effective tasks. This study also gives information on how to aid university students, particularly master's degree students, in the usage of compelling reporting verbs while producing persuasive essays. This material is provided as part of the study. In conclusion, it is possible to state that the student's voice is permitted to be used in each essay; however, it is required to be supported by established statements in which citations are used to support the student's own ideas, and this will be accomplished by making use of powerful reporting verbs.

## **6. Conclusion**

From the data analysis, it can be concluded that it is frequently necessary to refer to other people's research and report on their findings using reporting verbs in academic writings. Many reporting verbs are available for authors to pick from in place to avert overuse, which is a method they utilize to support their current claims. However, Uba (2019) notes that authors in the science domain mostly use distinct symbols, equations, and images from those in the humanities domain; this could be viewed as one of the primary reasons for the limited use of reporting verbs (Uba, 2019, p. 97). As a result, the essays of 15 Iraqi students are used to demonstrate the percentage of the frequent and rare use of reporting verbs. This study

explain Iraqi MA students' use of RVs to fill a void left by the fact that very few studies have concentrated on RV use among Iraqi students at Iraqi universities. What's more, Biber's theory (2002), the semantic categories of the reporting verbs that can be discovered in the essays written by Iraqi students may be categorized into three categories: the categories of activity verbs, communication verbs, and thought verbs. The analysis of the essays reveals that the authors of current data use active verbs more frequently than other reporting verbs. Iraqi students typically use purposeful activity to refer to an intentional act performed by a specific doer. However, using the same verb repeatedly; will result in a slight variation in their writing. Thus, each reporting verb has a slightly different meaning depending on the author cited.

Eventually, the study displays the most commonly used verbs within the same category to describe alternative ways of referring to literature and emphasizing the voices. The most frequently used verb is construed as referring to the idea that students are drawing on other people's work directly to construct their argument. Thus, reporting verbs express agreement, disagreement, suggestions, or even neutrality (Wai Ho & Brooke, 2017, p. 75). The findings of this study are consistent with the findings of earlier research conducted by Uba (2019), Jarkovská and Kurková (2020), and Junnak and Veerachaisantikul (2016). All of these researchers discovered that students used the words "show" and "find" in their writing at a relatively high frequency.

Finally, rather than relying solely on the curricular materials for the composition course, the English Department at Tikrit University ought to offer a course in academic writing as a means of enhancing students' capacity to satisfy excellent writing requirements. This would be preferable to the current situation. Also, as Jomaa (2019) suggests, cause of “the complexity of both academic and non-academic discourses could probably require using multiple approaches and methods to obtain either emic or etic perspectives from a writer, a context or set of texts through employing varied lenses” (p.12).

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