Citation from a cross-linguistic perspective: the case of French researchers publishing in English

The problems of non-English-speaking researchers who have to publish in English have been addressed by a number of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural studies. However, one core feature of research articles (RA), namely citation, has rarely been examined from this perspective. The present study therefore investigates the citation practices of French researchers publishing in English, using a corpus of the uncorrected pre-publication final versions of their articles in science and linguistics, and two comparable corpora of published RAs in English and French. The analysis focuses on three of the problems encountered in the data: hybrid citing styles, referential ambiguity and the use of reporting structures. The results show that the writer’s native language and culture both impact on the management of citation. In particular, ambiguous inter- and intra-textual reference and the underuse of reporting verbs and nouns can appreciably diminish the efficacy of citation in the French researchers’ articles written in English.