**Lecture Two: Techniques of Using Materials (quoting)**

Students are not asked to use source references on everything they say or write. Otherwise, they would not be producers but just consumers. General facts like historical events, for instance, do not require mentioning sources. In other cases in which something is debatable and different opinions are needed, it is obligatory to collect some references, use them and cite them. Students can quote, paraphrase or summarize a passage.

**1. Quoting**

Using sources, students can rely on many techniques by which they can avoid plagiarism. Quoting is probably the most frequently used technique of using materials.

**1.1. Definition of quoting**

Quoting is copying the exact words of the author and holding them in quotation marks without modifying, omitting or adding anything to the original extract. This does not mean that no modification, omission or addition is permitted. However, some rules that will be discussed in the coming titles have to be respected. In other words, quoting is word for word borrowing of one’s production. Every detail is important and has to be mentioned even if there are mistakes in the original extract. The mistakes, if found, have to be left as they are. The student is asked to use the abbreviation [sic] to refer to the mistake.

**1.2. Modifying quotations**

**1.2.1. Punctuation marks.**The use of punctuation marks in quotations is another issue that has to be highlighted because most students are confused with that. The rules below are adapted from Straus.

**1.2.2. Ellipsis.** In quoting, we might sometimes find the quote too long or contain information which does not serve what we are writing. On this basis, it is possible to omit the unneeded parts of the quotation. Yet, this is only permitted if two conditions are fulfilled:

* The meaning of the quotation is not distorted ;
* The use of the ellipsis ... to signal to the reader where the omission has been done.

Let us consider the following example:

**Original quotation**

“Language certainly figures centrally in our lives. We discover our identity as individuals and social beings when we acquire it during childhood. It serves as a means of cognition and communication: it enables us to think for ourselves and to cooperate with other people in our community. It provides for present needs and future plans and at the same time carries with it the impression of things past” (widdowson, 1996, p.3).

**Modified quotation**

“Language certainly figures centrally in our lives. We discover our identity...when we acquire it during childhood. ...it enables us to think for ourselves.... It provides for present needs and future plans and at the same time carries with it the impression of things past” (widdowson, 1996, p.3).

**1.2.3. Square brackets.** Sometimes, what we are quoting is not clear to the reader who does not have access to the whole text, for instance. This is the reason why, it is of paramount importance to elucidate the quotation by adding one or more words. In this case also, the aforementioned conditions should be fulfilled:

* The meaning of the quotation is not distorted;
* The use of the square brackets [ ] to signal to the reader where the new words have been inserted.

Let consider the example below:

**Original quotation**

“Women’s international struggle to overcome their differences and find a coherent public voice in defense of their human rights constitutes a significant victory over cultural biases and demographic particularities”(Zoelle, 2000, p.9).

**Modified quotation**

The attempt “to overcome [women’s] differences and find a coherent public voice in defense of their human rights constitutes a significant victory over cultural biases and demographic particularities” (Zoelle, 2000, p.9).

Another use of the square brackets is to insert the abbreviation [*sic*] to signal incorrect material (grammar, spelling, misuse of words or phrases, etc.). AOxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*Sic* means: “...the word is wrongly spelled or wrong in some other way”

Let us consider this example:

She wrote, "I would rather die then [*sic*] be seen wearing the same outfit as my sister" (Straus, 2008, p.62)

**References**

Zoelle, D.G. (2000). *Globalizing concern for women’s human rights: The failure of the American model.* NY: St. Martin’s Press.

Widdowson, H.G. (1996*). Linguistics*. In H.G. Widdowson (Series Ed.), *Oxford introductions to language study*. Oxford: O.U.P.

Straus, J. (2008). *The blue book of grammar and punctuation: An easy-to-use guide with clear rules, real-world examples, and reproducible quizzes* (10th ed.). Jossey-Bass