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# The Internet as a Reference Tool for Second Language Academic Writers

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# An outline of the presentation

1. General challenges of second language writers
2. Practical challenges of SLWs
3. Internet resources for SLWs
4. World wide web/corpora as reference tools for SLWs
5. Language forums as reference tools for SLWs
6. Online dictionaries as reference tools for SLWs
7. Software as reference tools for SLWs
  - A. Multiword pattern analytical tools
  - B. Spelling and grammar checkers
  - C. Online machine translators and bilingual dictionaries
  - D. Style formatting and citation software
8. Conclusion
9. Reference list



# 1. General challenges of second language writers

- Writers for whom English is a second or foreign language constitute 80% of all English writers (Graddol, 1997)
- ESL writers face more problems than their native counterparts (Nkemleke, 2011)
  - ❖ Idiosyncratic rhetoric norms (Ibanez and Schroeder, 2010: 2)
  - ❖ Different etymological trainings (Cadman, 1997: 3)
  - ❖ Their choices and uses of words are culturally determined e.g. the use of “I” in academic papers
  - ❖ Restricted knowledge of terms and variability of expressions
  - ❖ Lack of sensitivity to vocabularies e.g. degree, of formality and offence
  - ❖ Restricted knowledge of grammar



## 2. Practical challenges of second language writers

- Correctness of mass noun – e.g. in full war **gear**/in full war **gears**, against the **danger**/against **the dangers**
- Correctness of pronoun/particles – e.g. judging **from/with** discussions in workshops, **on** the internet/**in** the internet
- Tenses – e.g. is past tense of hang, **hanged** or **hung**?



## 2. Practical challenges of second language writers

- Correctness of a MWE – e.g. in **a** turn of events or in **the** turn of events, shed crocodile**le** tears or crocodile**e's** tear
- Correctness of spelling – e.g. well-**k**nown or well known
- Format of genre – resume, abstract, concept note

**Internet has a number of resources that can help SL writers to mitigate these challenges**



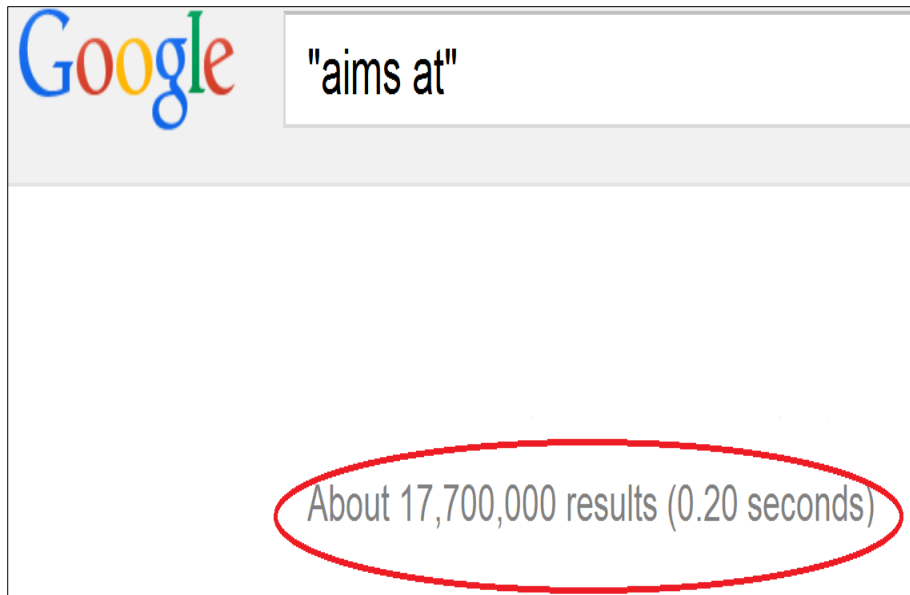
### 3. Internet resources for SLWs

- World wide web and corpora
- Forums
- Dictionaries
- Web pages
- Software
  - Reference software – Endnote and other Bibliographic Reference Programs, Mendeley, and Zotero
  - Online spelling and grammar checkers
  - Machine Translators



## 4. World wide web/corpora as reference tools for SLWs

- Searching expressions in world wide web can help SL writers to determine the most common/appropriate form of an expression
- Google search engine in inverted commas



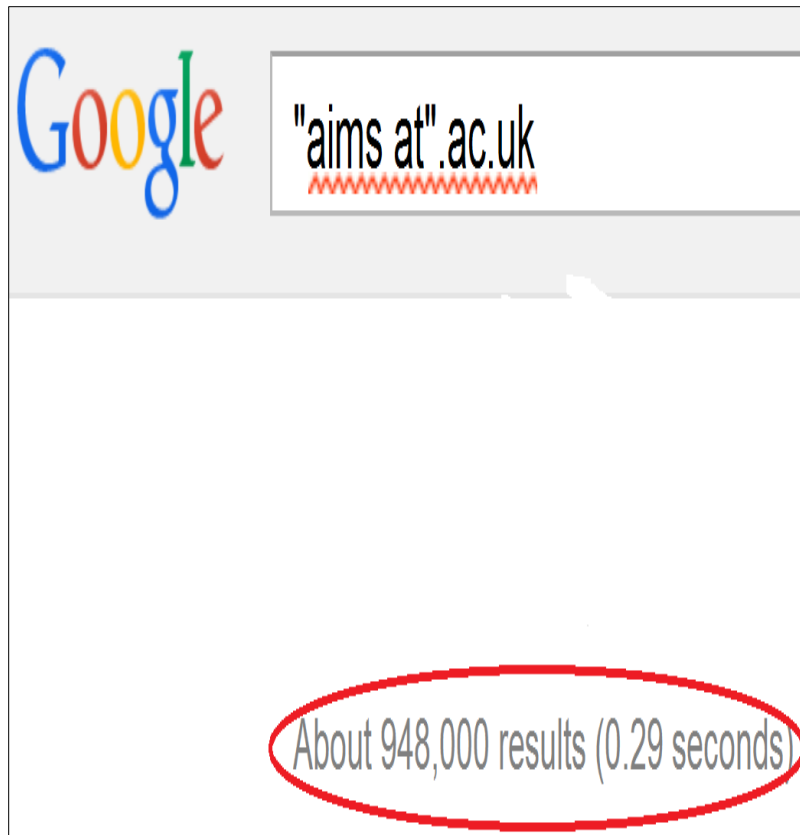
A screenshot of a Google search interface. The search bar contains the text "aims at". Below the search bar, the search results are mostly blank. At the bottom of the page, a red oval highlights the text "About 17,700,000 results (0.20 seconds)".



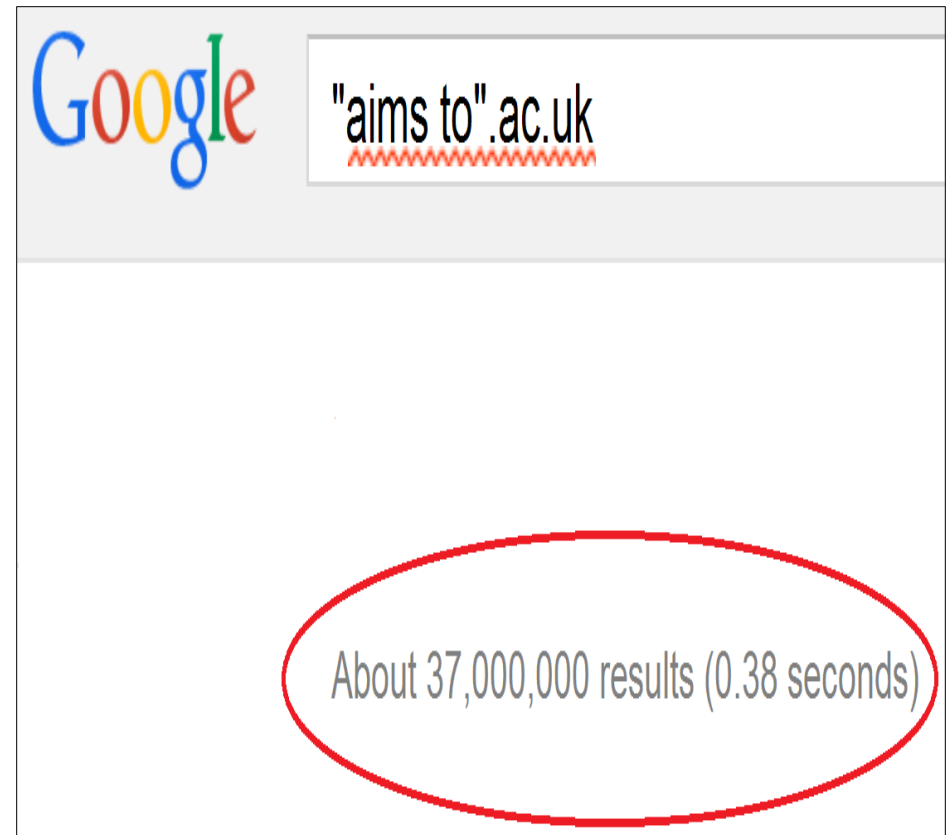
A screenshot of a Google search interface. The search bar contains the text "aims to". Below the search bar, the search results are mostly blank. At the bottom of the page, a red oval highlights the text "About 106,000,000 results (0.39 seconds)".

## 4. World wide web/corpora as reference tools for SLWs

- Academic domain realizes trustworth results



A screenshot of a Google search interface. The search bar contains the text "aims at".ac.uk with a red wavy underline. The Google logo is visible on the left. At the bottom of the page, the text "About 948,000 results (0.29 seconds)" is circled in red.



A screenshot of a Google search interface. The search bar contains the text "aims to".ac.uk with a red wavy underline. The Google logo is visible on the left. At the bottom of the page, the text "About 37,000,000 results (0.38 seconds)" is circled in red.



## 4. World wide web/corpora as reference tools for SLWs

- Academic domain realizes trustworth results

**CORPUS OF CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH**

DISPLAY ?

LIST  CHART  KWIC  COMPARE

SEARCH STRING ?

WORD(S)  ?

COLLOCATES ?

POS LIST ?

**RANDOM**   ?

SECTIONS  SHOW ?

1 **IGNORE**  
-----  
SPOKEN  
FICTION  
MAGAZINE  
NEWSPAPER  
**ACADEMIC**

2 **IGNORE**  
-----  
SPOKEN  
FICTION  
MAGAZINE  
NEWSPAPER  
**ACADEMIC**

## 5. Language forums as reference tools for SLWs

**Language forums** – are platforms where you can post a grammatical problem/writing challenge to elicit views of other language users on a particular linguistic challenge.

### 1. WordReference forums

<http://forum.wordreference.com/>

### 2. Language forums

[https://www.myenglishpages.com/forum/forum\\_files/forum\\_index.php#.VYr7f0b3RiE](https://www.myenglishpages.com/forum/forum_files/forum_index.php#.VYr7f0b3RiE)

### 3. Grammarist

<http://grammarist.com>



## 5. Language forums as a reference tools for SL writers

### 4. UsingEnglish.com

<http://www.usingenglish.com>

- Query formats: the difference between **to** me and **for** me
- Query retrieve a number of discussions on the problem in question from different experts in the field
- You judge the best answer by the discussions in the forum of your choice



## 5. Language forums as reference tools for SL writers

### Re: Hard or hardly

Originally Posted by **The French**

Hello, I am 'The French',

I saw in a grammar rule for adverb in English, that the adverb for the word 'hard' is the same as the adjective hard.

Sometimes, people use hard or hardly for the adverb, but my question is, are the both correct ?

Thank.

Hard can be either an adjective or an adverb:

It was a hard hit. (adjective)

The champion hit hard. (adverb)

Either way hard implies putting effort into the task.

Adverbial use of hard is often associated with verbs of action, and forms compounds with them, as in hard-earned, hard-fought, hard-won, hard-working. In

## 5. Language forums as reference tools for SL writers

**ASK YOUR QUESTION**

**In the end / at the end**

Tuesday December 6th 2011

**Question**

In the end / at the end

**Answer**

Isaac, from Israel, asked about the difference between ***in the end*** and ***at the end***, and when to use them.

**In the end**

*In the end* is used mostly as an idiom that means "finally," "after a long time," or, "when everything is considered." It is often followed by a comma. Here are some sentences with this idiom:


1. We worked hard, and *in the end*, we achieved our goal.
2. *In the end*, what really matters in a friendship is trust.

**At the end**

*At the end* is used in the idiom "at the end of the day." which means something similar to *in the end* (= when everything is considered). However, *at the end* is most commonly used more literally, as a prepositional phrase followed by *of*, to refer to the end of a specific noun. This noun can be a physical object, a period of time, an event, a place, or something more abstract, such as one's patience.

Here are some sentences with *in the end* + *of*:

Archive  
Select month... ▼



Jane Mairs, Director of English language Learning Publishing

## 6. Online dictionaries as reference tools for SLWs

- Online Oxford Collocation Dictionary
- Helps you sound professional and natural

### Online OXFORD Collocation Dictionary

**finding** *noun*

<sup>1</sup> result of research into sth

**ADJ.** important, key, significant | main | general | interesting | striking, surprising, unexpected | novel | positive | conflicting | early, initial, original *The original findings conflict with more recent findings.* | interim, preliminary | new, recent | scientific | empirical, experimental, research | survey

- [IELTS S](#)
- [Topics \(pa](#)
- [IELTS E](#)
- [Topics](#)
- [IELTS V](#)
- [JIC N](#)
- [Except](#)



## 6. Online dictionaries as reference tools for SLWs

**FINDING + VERB** **be based on sth** *The findings are based on interviews with more than 2,000 people.* | **relate to sth** *Our findings relate to physically rather than the visually handicapped pupils.* | **apply to sth** *The findings from the case study school may apply to schools elsewhere.* | **indicate sth, point to/towards sth, reveal sth, show sth, suggest sth** *Our findings point to a lack of training among social services staff.* | **agree with sth, be consistent with sth, be in agreement with sth, be in line with sth, confirm sth, support sth** *Our recent findings are in line with those of an earlier study.* | **conflict (with sth) | lead to sth** *The findings led to the conclusion that ...* | **provide sth** *The research findings will provide practical assistance for teachers.* | **be made** *Similar findings were made in Spain.* | **emerge** *A similar finding emerged from a later experiment.*



## 6. Online dictionaries as reference tools for SLWs


**word hippo**

Select Option

**Find It!**

**hide?**

Synonyms for this



Another word for  
Opposite of  
Meaning of  
Rhymes with  
Sentences with  
Plural of  
Singular of  
Past tense of  
Present tense of  
Verb for  
Verb for

hide

**Find It!**



## 7. Software as reference tools for SLWs

### 7 A. Multiword pattern analytical tools

[Search options](#)

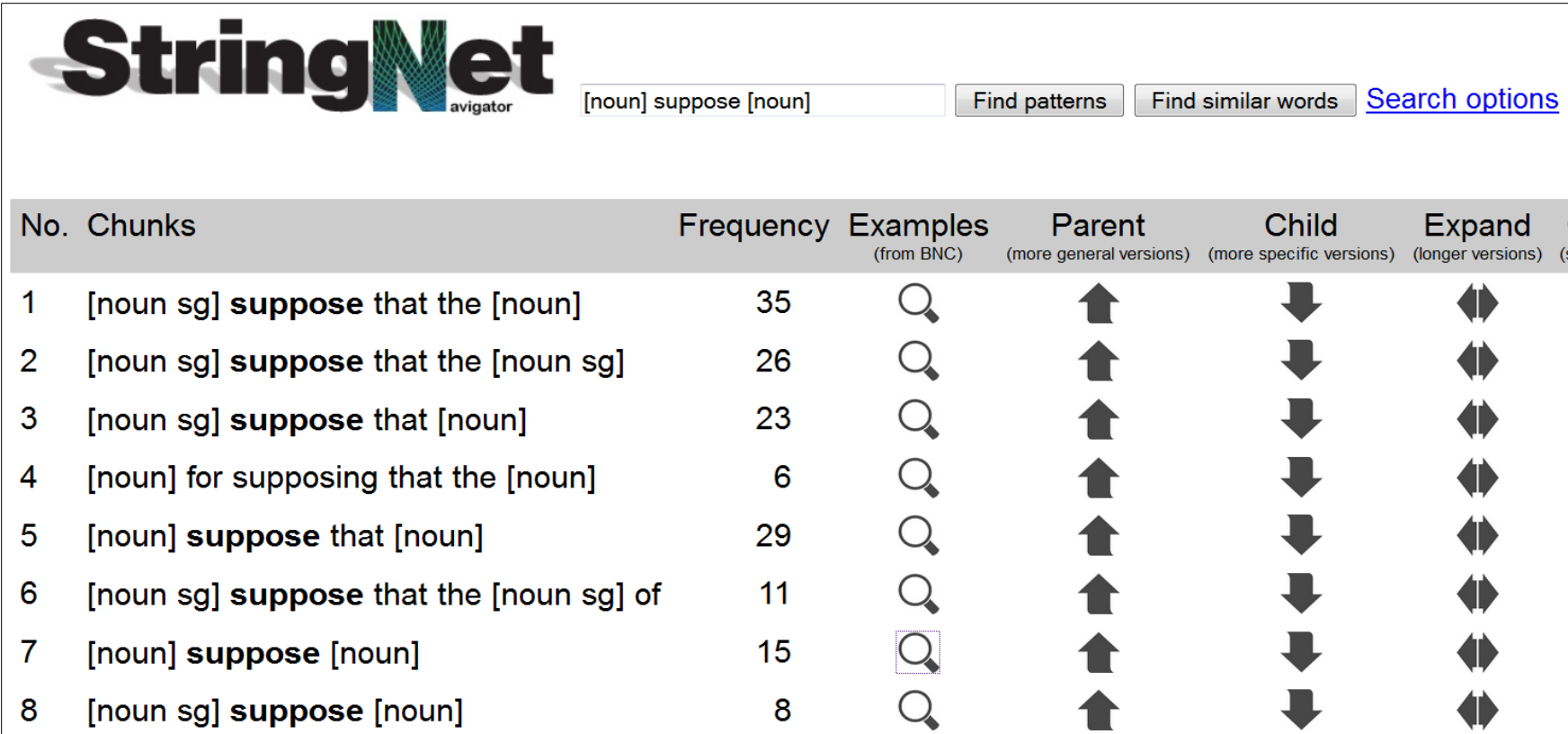
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#### FYI:

- Some sample query types to try: time way word under keep make.
- You can use part-of-speech categories in your query as in: verb time  
Some you can use: [verb], [noun], [adj], [adv] and [prep].

# 7. Software as reference tools for SLWs

## 7 A. Multiword pattern analytical tools



No.	Chunks	Frequency	Examples (from BNC)	Parent (more general versions)	Child (more specific versions)	Expand (longer versions)
1	[noun sg] <b>suppose</b> that the [noun]	35				
2	[noun sg] <b>suppose</b> that the [noun sg]	26				
3	[noun sg] <b>suppose</b> that [noun]	23				
4	[noun] for supposing that the [noun]	6				
5	[noun] <b>suppose</b> that [noun]	29				
6	[noun sg] <b>suppose</b> that the [noun sg] of	11				
7	[noun] <b>suppose</b> [noun]	15				
8	[noun sg] <b>suppose</b> [noun]	8				

## 7 B. Spelling and grammar checkers

- Show grammatical and punctuation mistakes in a text
- Suggest appropriate vocabularies and punctuation
- Shows plagiarism

- Grammarly

<https://www.grammarly.com/1>

- Grammar check

<http://www.grammarcheck.net/>

- SpellCheckPlus

<http://spellcheckplus.com/>



## 7 B. Spelling and grammar checkers

**grammarly**

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**Check your text**      **Upload a file**

*Try*



## 7 B. Spelling and grammar checkers

Grammar score: ? 83% (number of words: 120)

### Summary of Possible Errors

- punctuation
  - **Language but it** You should use a comma before *but* if it introduces a complete clause, e.g.: *I'd like to go, but I can't afford it.*
- word form
  - **considered as** It would be simpler to use only the word *considered*, e.g.: *She is considered an expert.*
  - **A'** You probably need to remove the apostrophe.
- spelling
  - **Kiswahili** Swahili, Swahilis, Swahili's, Kissable, Sahel, Swill, Pigswill, Isahella, Sweatily, Gasohol, Erstwhile, Swaddle

© Nadaclair Language Technologies, 2001-2015: Terry Nadasdi & Stéfan Sinclair

SpellCheckPlusP

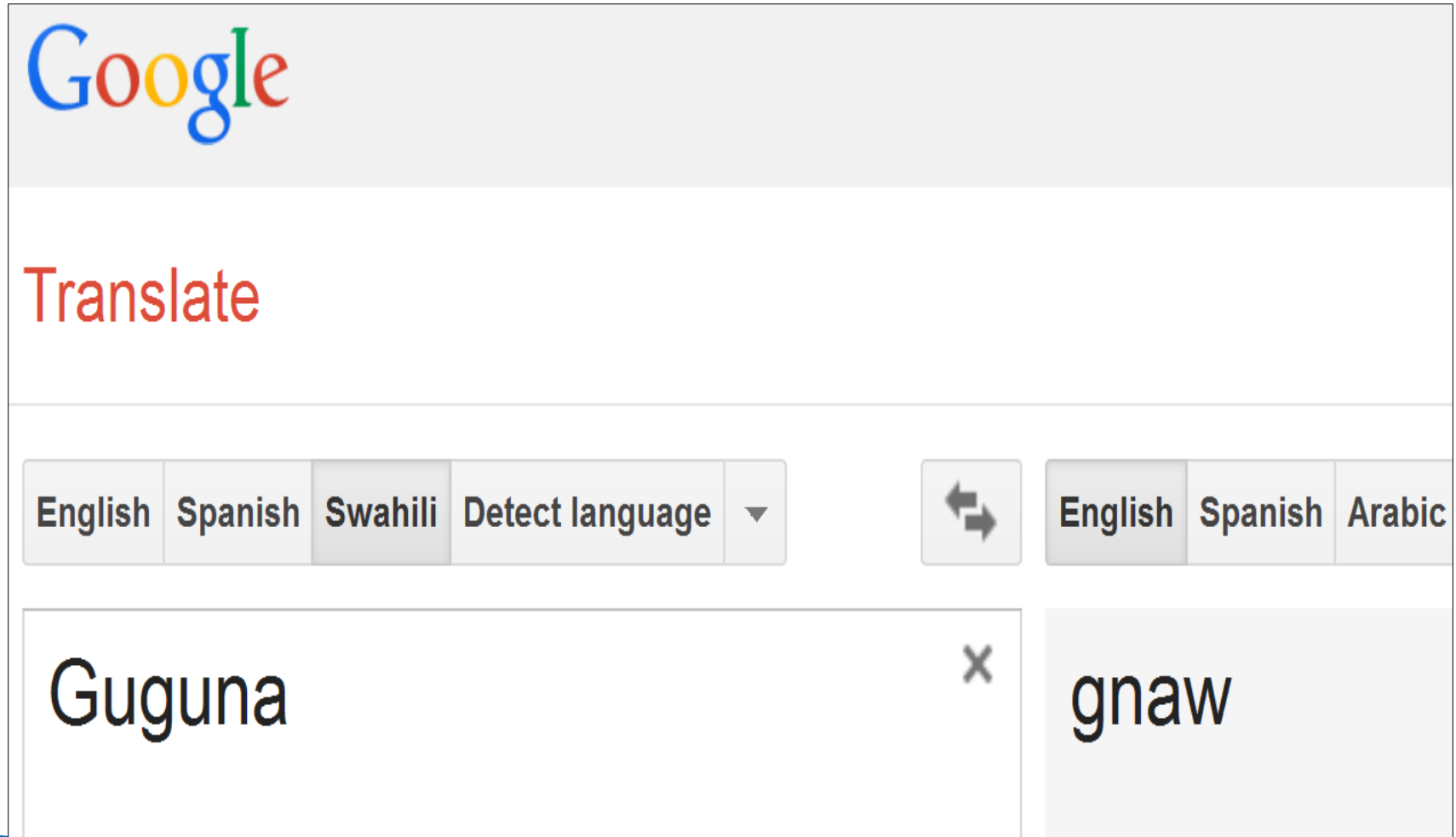


## 7 C: Online machine translators & bilingual dictionaries

- People tend to use their mother tongue as the language to think, dream and feel emotion (Guvercin, 2010)
- We sometimes only know the concept in our mother tongue or a second language, not in our medium of writing (English in this case)
- In this context, there are a number of online machine translators and bilingual dictionaries that can help a second/foreign language writers to find an equivalent sense in his/her medium of writing



## 7 C. Online machine translators & bilingual dictionaries



The screenshot displays the Google Translate web interface. At the top left is the Google logo. Below it, the word "Translate" is written in red. The interface features two language selection menus. The left menu has "English", "Spanish", "Swahili", and "Detect language" with a dropdown arrow; "Swahili" is currently selected. The right menu has "English", "Spanish", and "Arabic"; "English" is currently selected. A double-headed arrow icon is positioned between the two menus. The input text box on the left contains the Swahili word "Guguna" and has a small 'x' icon to its right. The output text box on the right contains the English translation "gnaw".





## 7 D. Style formatting and citation software

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- Stop worrying about the form of your papers—now you're free to focus on the content.
- Handy manual includes installation and application guidelines.

## 8. Conclusion

- Internet has a lot of helpful resources for second language writers.
- It gives SL writers much information on the subject of their choice.
- It reduces time used to write a good paper (easily accessible).
- It coaches second language writers on format and grammar so that their productions are acceptable to the academic community.
- Even so, there is a lot of wrong information on the internet.



## 9. References

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