

The Stolen Words and Works

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Abstract

Due to the widespread of stealing others' words and works phenomenon a.k.a plagiarism in the higher education setting, its negative impact in writing classrooms cannot be denied. One of the examples is that the teaching's objective is behind from the reach. It happens because the students are not assessed from their original works. In addition, in the future day, plagiarism also creates poor academic integrity that leads to poor work ethic. Considering its deleterious implications, this explanatory research aimed at explaining the students' reasons for plagiarizing. Thirty vocational university students in the writing class were involved as participants. Then, to collect the data, a set of closed-ended questionnaire composed of 16 statements was distributed. By the end, it was found three major reasons that activated the students to plagiarize which were first, the development of technology; second, the students' characteristics and behaviors; and third, teaching stuff and methodological aspects. To minimize the impact of plagiarism caused by those reasons, it is suggested that time management, understanding on plagiarism, use of technology, and implementation of regulation related to plagiarism should be augmented. By so doing, it is expected that the occurrence of plagiarism can be prevented in the forthcoming day.

Keywords: plagiarism, reasons, writing, and vocational EFL

Introduction

Have you ever experienced grading one student's paper which has no noteworthy difference compared to others? Have you ever discovered that the students duplicate the provided article in the internet and turn in it as their own? This phenomenon of doing "copy and paste" is commonly observed nowadays. It can be found as a constant problem for years at all various levels of education setting starting from elementary up to higher education (Balbuena & Lamela, 2015). Recently, it becomes a prevalent phenomenon among students (Roberts & Toombs, 1993)

Strengthening the preceding statement, referring to the researcher's experience as an English writing teacher in a vocational college setting, the identical problematic case was found in her classroom. At that time, the students were instructed to construct an informative essay text. In several previous meetings, some texts from highly reputable electronic journals related to the concepts and examples of the lesson were shared, analyzed, and discussed in both theory and practicum classes. The students then directed to write an outline before submitting the

whole text. Suggestion through peer's correction and teacher's review was also given in the following activity. By the end of the semester, the finishing papers were submitted, assessed, and graded. Unexpectedly, it was found that many students got dramatically enhancement. Their scores were significantly higher than the last semester. Nevertheless, neither satisfied nor pleased with the students' achievements, the teacher felt thwarted. After being checked, several students' papers were indicated as someone else's credit. This indication reflected that the phenomenon of plagiarism was there.

In relation to the existence of the above case, numerous experts declared their ideas and thoughts about the concepts of plagiarism. It covers definition, type, and impact. First, in connection to its definition, Barnhart & Steinmetz (1988) stated that plagiarism is adapted from the word *plagiarus* which means kidnapper, robber, misleader, and literacy thief. Standing on the same situate, Pyer (2012) in Bahadori, Izadi, & Hoseinpourfard (2012) believed that when someone claims others' ideas, words, or works, it is also considered into an act of plagiarism. Besides, utilizing sentences taken from published literature works without making any significant changing and giving proper acknowledgment towards the original writers are contemplated as plagiarism (Sharma & Singh, 2011) in (Bahadori, et al., 2012). Moreover, Cicutto (2008) defined plagiarism as an act of presenting and admitting another's work or idea as the second writer's product. Compiling from the previous explanation, the term plagiarism can be agreed as an act of reusing and claiming other's works with no proper credit given to the original creator.

Second, having a profound talk about the type of plagiarism, Cheema, Mahmood, Mahmood, & Shah (2011) grouped it into two classifications namely intentional plagiarism and unintentional plagiarism. As time goes by, plagiarism has broader categories which are accidental, unintentional, intentional, and self-plagiarism (Beasley, 2006) in (Maurer, Kappe, & Zaka, 2006). Accidental plagiarism appears when there is no virtuous understanding on the concept of plagiarism and citation. Then, unintentional plagiarism happens when thoughts and ideas from accessible sources are reused in the massive percentage. Next, intentional plagiarism can be detected when the whole or some parts of someone else's are reproduced with no credit acknowledged to the original writers. Last, self-plagiarism is the action of reusing self-published work in another occasion by giving no reference to the first work.

Third, after being defined and classified, experts also declared their opinions on the future implication of plagiarism in education setting. Many of them believed that plagiarism is one of dishonesties and misconducts in the academic world that brings both short-term and long-term impacts. Seeing from its short-term impact, the unfair scoring among the students can happen. The achievement and non-achievement students are difficult to be identified and differentiated since their works are not original. By the end, the teaching objective of the lesson is behind from the expectation (Gómez, Salazar, & Vargas, 2013). Then, viewed from its long-term impact, according to Hulsart & McCarthy (2009) the act of plagiarism causes future conceivable consequences. It is assumed that unethical behavior of employees observed in a workplace is closely related to those who plagiarize during school or college year (Mohr, Ingram, Fell, & Mabey, 2011). From the preceding explanation, it can be summed up that poor work ethic is the reflection of poor academy integrity.

Understanding the above elucidation, it is clear that the impacts of plagiarism put the students' future life in jeopardy. To cope with, many efforts have been done such as finding the students' reasons for plagiarizing. When the reasons can be identified, it is predicted that

the phenomenon of plagiarism can be prevented. Numerous research's endeavors on reasons for plagiarizing have been presented in different sequence of times and places involving diverse participants at the university levels. Darwish & Sadeqi (2016) conducted a research among Kuwait college students. It was invented that the most noticeable reason for plagiarizing among students is because they want to get decent grades and pass the classes. Then, another research conducted by William (2005) in Wan, Nordin, Halib, & Ghazali (2011) resulted that there are five reasons to plagiarize which are lack of time management towards the workload, low motivation and enthusiasm on the subject taught, massive external demand, diverse learning culture, and lack of knowledge of making quotation and citation. Other experts, Devlin & Gray (2007) explored the Australian university students' reasons to plagiarize. They were then listed as follows: admittance criteria determined by the university, lack of understanding on the concept of plagiarism, low academic skills, teaching's and learning's influences, personal problems, and pressures from the external demands. Then, the next research accomplished by Eret & Ok (2014) explored the reasons for plagiarizing in the digital era. The result indicated that the widely used of internet plays substantial encouragement and becomes the university students' prior tendencies to plagiarize. Next, Comas-Forgas & Sureda-Negre (2010) found in his explanatory research that there are many factors which trigger plagiarism in Spain and Spanish-speaking countries. Those factors then classified into three main classifications that are first, behavior factors which cover lack of time management, personal shortcoming to prepare the task given, the overload homework should be handled; second, provided information and communication technology which covers the accessible online information that can be copied and pasted easily; and third, teacher and subject taught which covers teacher's enthusiasm on their subject, and the massive number of theoretical and assignment.

Concluding the earlier paragraph related to the recent studies on the reasons to plagiarize, most of the experts focus on the students in university level only. However, there is rarely study of plagiarism conducted on vocational students accomplished their study in polytechnic level. Do the students' of vocational college do the same? What are their reasons to plagiarize? Based on this preceding gap, it provided the underlying principle for undertaking this explanatory study with the descriptive framework and initiated in a challenge to explain the reasons of vocational students to plagiarize others' words and works.

By the end, after presenting the findings of this study, it is hoped that the vocational students' reasons to plagiarize would be explained well. As a result, this research would become the stepping stone to prevent and stop the phenomenon of plagiarism especially in the higher vocational education setting in the forthcoming day.

Methodology

In order to accomplish this explanatory research related the reasons for higher vocational students to plagiarize, 30 students that consist of 24 female students and 6 male students were involved as participants. While the research was conducted, the students were taking Writing IV course under Diploma III of English Program in Language, Communication, and Tourism Department in State Polytechnic of Jember. In the previous semester, they also joined at Writing III course that the researcher who also rolled as the writing teacher taught them. As a result, the researcher knows well the students' general capability in writing. The teacher then was easy to differentiate between students' original works and papers resulted from plagiarism. It turned to be beneficial factors for the researcher to complete this research.

Next, to collect the data, the closed-ended questionnaire was distributed to the participants. The compilation of questionnaire was adopted from Comas-Forgas & Sureda-Negre (2010). Moreover, it was composed of three major reasons for plagiarizing which are first, teaching stuff and methodological aspects [MR1]; second, students' characteristics and behaviors [MR2]; and third, the development of technology [MR3]. The three major reasons than developed into 16 statements. Statements related to the first main reasons were distributed into 7 statements: the feeling that the teacher will hardly find that the students plagiarized [ST3], the feeling that the teacher does not have good skill in internet [ST4], the feeling that the teacher will not read and correct the submitted assignment thoroughly [ST5], the assignment given is too theoretical [ST7], the assignment will not take big portion on the final grade [ST8], the assignment given is too complex [ST9], and the feeling that there is no new knowledge contained in the assignment [ST12]. Then the second major reason was broken down into 8 statements: there is no time to cope with the assignment [ST2], the habit of completing the assignment approaching the deadline [ST6], the classmates do plagiarism [ST10], the belief that it is okay to do copy someone else's online work because everything published in it is public property [ST11], by plagiarizing, the score will be higher compared to the original work [ST13], by plagiarizing, the assignment will be easy to be done compare to the original work [ST14], other courses in different classes are asked numerous assignment [ST15], and students do not how to complete the assignment academically [ST16]. And then the last major reason related to the development of technology, it was represented in one statement: the ease to access provided information on the internet [ST1]. After being distributed in several statements, the students then should decide whether the statements given triggered them to plagiarize or not. If it was yes, they must mark the column [Yes] and if it was no the column [No] should be marked.

While the data taken from questionnaire were compiled already, they were then presented in three subsections based on the three major reasons to plagiarize. After that, they were discussed and compared with the existed theories. As the closing part, the conclusion and suggestion were stated to sum up the result of the research.

Results

After distributing the questionnaire which was composed of three major reasons for plagiarizing, the data collected were arranged in Table 3 as follows:

Table 3 Reasons for Plagiarizing

No	Major Reasons	Statements	Percentage		Total	
			Yes	No	Yes	No
1	teaching stuff and methodological aspects [MR1]	the feeling that the teacher will hardly find that the students plagiarized [ST3]	13%	87%		
		the feeling that the teacher does not have good skill in internet [ST4]	7%	93%		
		the feeling that the teacher will not read and correct the submitted assignment thoroughly [ST5]	27%	73%		
		the assignment given is too theoretical [ST7]	30%	70%	25%	75%

		the assignment will not take big portion on the final grade [ST8]	23%	76%		
		the assignment given is too complex [ST9]	70%	30%		
		the feeling that there is no new knowledge contained in the assignment [ST12]	7%	93%		
		there is no time to cope with the assignment [ST2]	43%	57%		
		the habit of completing the assignment approaching the deadline [ST6]	47%	53%		
		the classmates do plagiarism [ST10]	63%	37%		
		the belief that it is okay to do copy someone else's online work because everything published in it is public property [ST11]	60%	40%		
2	students' characteristics and behaviors [MR2]	by plagiarizing, the score will be higher compare to the original work [ST13]	30%	70%	57%	43%
		by plagiarizing, the assignment will be easily done compare to the original work [ST14]	60%	40%		
		other courses in different classes are asked numerous assignment [ST15]	93%	7%		
		students do not how to complete the assignment academically [ST16]	63%	37%		
3	the development of technology [MR3]	the ease to access provided information in the internet [ST1]	93%	7%	93%	7%

Teaching stuff and methodological aspects [MR1]

Listed in Table 3, the first major reason for plagiarizing, teaching stuff and methodological aspects [MR1], made 25% students marked the choice “yes” while the rest of them declared “no”. It means that there were only a quarter of participants plagiarized because of teaching stuff and methodological aspects implemented by the teacher in Writing IV. Significantly higher than the previous number, 75% of the students did not take this statement as a tangible reason to plagiarize. Likewise, being compared to the two other major reasons; students' characteristics and behaviors [MR2] and the development of technology [MR3], teaching stuff and methodological aspects [MR1] became the least reason that triggered the students to plagiarize.

Then, having a further description of the detail proportion in each statement, students' choices were distributed unequally into 7 statements stated in Table 3. Started from the most frequent statement which made the students plagiarized [ST9], 70% of students believed that the assignment constructed by the teacher was too difficult. To deal with this situation, they simply copied and pasted someone else's work. On the contrary, only a small number of them said the dissimilar point of view. Then, on the second rank, 30% of students decided to plagiarize because the assignment given was too theoretical [ST7]. However, the other 70% of them disagreed. Then, having faintly altered percentage with [ST7], the two other reasons which are the feeling that the teacher will not read and correct the submitted assignment thoroughly [ST5] and the assignment will not take big portion on the final grade [ST8] became the next statements which triggered the students to use and claim other's words. Conversely, more than two third of the students placed their choice on different sideways. Last, the three

reasons which are the feeling that the teacher will hardly find that the students to plagiarize [ST3], the feeling that the teacher does not have good skill on internet [ST4], and the feeling that there is no new knowledge contained in the assignment [ST12] played a very inconsequential role. There was a very small number of students, less than 13%, who plagiarized because of [ST3], [ST4], and [ST12].

Students' characteristics and behaviors [MR2]

As it is stated in Table 3, students' characteristics and behaviors [MR2] took a larger portion than the previous major reason, teaching stuff and methodological aspects [MR1], for prompting the students to plagiarize other's words. Moreover, because of [MR2], more than half of the students which were stated in 57% decided to plagiarize. Having no significant difference with the previous percentage, 43% of students were not influenced by [MR2] to plagiarize.

Besides, students' characteristics and behaviors [MR2] were represented in eight statements. Statement [ST15] which was other courses in different classes are asked numerous assignments earned the uppermost percentage among all. It made the students did not turn their original work and chose to steal other's credit. The rest of the students stated in 7% declared that the massive quantity of assignment did not bother them to plagiarize. Another statement, [ST10] proved that 63% of students plagiarized because their friends did the same. On the different side, 37% of them disagreed with it. Next, exactly gaining the same percentage with the previous statement, students plagiarized because they do not really know how to complete the assignment academically [ST16]. Next, related to [ST11], 60% of students chose to plagiarize because of their belief about online work; something published is considered as public property that can be used by everyone. Then, less than half of the students represented in 40% were not initiated by [ST11] to do plagiarism. Then, achieving the same percentage, [ST14] which was it is easy to accomplish the assignment through plagiarism also activated more than half of the students to plagiarize. Then, the other two statements related to time management which are there is no time to cope with the assignment [ST2] and the habit to complete the assignment when it is approaching the due date [ST6] made nearly half of the students to use the provided works to be submitted instead of making their own. Last, only 30% of students plagiarized because they need to get an improved score. However, 70% of the students did not think the same.

The development of technology [MR3]

In relation to the third major reason for plagiarizing, it can be observed in Table 3 that just about all students decided to select "yes" toward the statement: the ease to access provided information [ST1]. Then, having a contrast proportion, a minor number of the students represented by 7% did not make [ST1] as a reason for plagiarizing. Moreover, being compared to the other two foremost reasons, teaching stuff and methodological aspects [MR1] and students' characteristics and behaviors [MR2]; [MR3] was highlighted as the most density reason for plagiarizing.

Discussion

According to the previous section, the result gathered then compared to the existed theories in this discussion part. Three major reasons for plagiarizing are presented as follow starting from the most frequent findings up to the least.

First, it can be concluded that the most substantial reason that triggered the vocational students for plagiarizing was the widespread of technology, the internet in this case. To get internet service, nowadays, the students of the Writing IV class did not need to go anywhere. Students just needed to push one button in their cellphone or say the keywords; the internet's service would be there in one second. When the internet was operated, the overabundance information was ready to be used. Students could do anything such as downloading, copying, pasting, and editing others' published works. Responding to this situation, Campbell (2006) agrees that the availability of internet usage, in the education setting for this case, is potentially to facilitate the students to plagiarize. The huge amount of documentary sources is very accessible and reachable. As a result, instead of constructing the assignment by following the step instructed by the teacher, the students tended to select the "short cut" way to finish the work. It was much easier and simpler. From this fact, it can be observed that the internet in the education setting roles as double-edged swords as a source of information and platform for plagiarizing.

Coping with the above dilemma, generally, the existence of internet connection is always blamed as one of the crucial reason for plagiarizing. However, the answer to that question is also available on the internet. Suggested by Barret & Malcolm (2006) the use of online plagiarism checkers can be the best answer to detect the students' work. The teacher can effortlessly insert the students' paper in the online checkers then it would work automatically. When the students' assignments are indicated as someone else's works, the checker gives the notice to the teacher. Then, for its long-term prevention, also the use of technology is highly proposed. The online application for writing reference can be counted as a solution to minimize plagiarism. By implementing the online tools, it is hoped that the information provided on the internet will still help the students to find the correct sources and the problem of copying and pasting other's works will be prevented.

Second, the next major reason that activated the vocational students to plagiarize was the students' characteristics and behaviors. According to the questionnaire given, the students felt that the amount of assignment was too many. Also, other courses were instructed to finish a huge number of assignments. Having checked to the teacher, it was clearly stated in her course outline, all the assignments were explained clearly at the beginning of the semester. With that in mind, it was expected that the vocational students enabled to budget their time wisely and started to accomplish the assignment based on its timeline. By so doing, the amount of assignment won't be too many at the end of the semester. From this fact that it is clearly seen that time management is unquestionably vital. The poor time management leads the students to plagiarize (Dordoy, 2002), see also (Devlin & Gray, 2007).

Besides, still related to the students' characteristics and behaviors, when the students saw their friends plagiarize, many of them were triggered to do the same. Since everybody did it, plagiarism then accepted as a common thing to do. They did not feel shame or guilt. As a result, the phenomenon of plagiarism is not viewed as serious misconduct (Park, 2003). To change

the students' point of view on plagiarism appears to be easy but is in fact hard. The teacher should explain deeper about the concepts of plagiarism. Supported by Cheema, et al. (2011), the awareness of the general concepts of plagiarism covers its conceptual understanding and types would definitely reduce the number of plagiarisms. An extra class or explanation at the beginning of the semester might be the answer to this problem. Also, instead of the classroom teacher, the institution as the highest stakeholder and policymaker must contribute to change the students' point of view by regulating clear policy on it. Comas-Forgas & Sureda-Negre (2010) believed that by implementing such rule, not only plagiarism but also other potential academic misconducts can be well prevented.

Third, the least reasons for plagiarizing was teaching stuff and methodological aspects. According to the results, students blamed the level of difficulty of the assignment given. They believed that it was too hard to be accomplished. This fact proved that the reasons of plagiarism not only come from the internal factor but also the external one (Comas-Forgas & Sureda-Negre, 2010). Facing this condition, the teacher's quality of teaching should be improved. The congruity between what has been taught and what has been assessed should be clear.

Conclusion

Having explained and discussed the findings of this research, it can be concluded that there were three major reasons that triggered the vocational students to plagiarize which are first, the development of technology; second, the students' characteristics and behaviors; and third, teaching stuff and methodological aspects. To handle the previous reasons, this research highlighted the three education stakeholders to solve the problem which are the students, teachers, and institutions. From the students' side, it is highly recommended that they must be able to budget their time wisely. Also, their understanding on the concept of plagiarism should be augmented. Then, from the teachers' side, the quality of teaching must be improved by involving technology in classroom teaching such as the use of the online application which covers plagiarism checker and bibliography's writer. Last but not least, the institution as the policy and decision makers should have the commitment to stop and prevent the occurrence of plagiarism in the education setting by creating and implementing rules on it.

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