

Awareness of Plagiarism among the undergraduate students of An Nabhanya College of Science and Arts, Qassim University, KSA

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Abstract

The study aimed at the “Awareness of Plagiarism among the undergraduate students of An Nabhanya College of Science and Arts, Qassim University, KSA”. Structured questionnaire was designed to collect the data. Out of 45 questionnaires 40 filled in questionnaires were received back. The present study compares various aspects of plagiarism such as awareness on plagiarism among the students, awareness of citation style, awareness of the ways to avoid plagiarism while writing their course work and students’ awareness of plagiarism checking soft wares both before and after teaching or revising these aspects of plagiarism to various levels of students studying English Linguistics and English Translation Course in College of Science and Arts, An Nabhanya, Qassim University, KSA.. The study insists on instructors’ role in imparting the instructions on plagiarism and doing the following up after assigning a task.

Keywords: Plagiarism, Awareness, Instructors’ Role Citation Style, Anti-Plagiarism software tools,

1. Introduction

As academic writing is nothing but building on the existing concepts and integrating it with one’s own thinking, there are frequent tendencies towards sliding on plagiarism intentionally or unintentionally. With the advent of the internet, plagiarizing someone else’s work now requires just a few strokes of the keyboard (Dye, 2007; Kraus, 2002) ¹⁰. Unfortunately, even when this apparent student ‘cut-and-paste’ mindset is acknowledged, the extent of plagiarism and academic misconduct is likely much worse than it appears. Recent studies have indicated that students plagiarize. Kraus expands this notion by being “convinced that a rapidly growing number [of students] simply do not see plagiarism as wrong. . . . It has become a misdemeanor in the eyes of a new generation, something on the order of jay-walking or sneaking a grape while shopping for produce” (Kraus, 2002, p. 84) ¹⁰. There is no way to ascertain with certainty how students have arrived at this conclusion. That’s the reason this study insists that it is obligatory for the instructors to teach their wards what plagiarism is, and how to avoid it through careful use of source material, rhetoric, and citations.

1.1.1 Goal

This research aims to provide the teachers and students an awareness of plagiarism, attitudes towards plagiarism and perception of plagiarism by checking where do they stand currently.

1.1.2 The Significance of the Study

The findings of the study will redound to the benefit of society considering that teaching the students not to plagiarize plays an important role in producing future good research scholars.

1.1.3 Objectives of The Study

To know the students' awareness on plagiarism

To know the students' opinion on whether they are providing right references in their theses

To know the citation style of students' using in their research

To know whether the students know when, what, why and how to cite

To study the students' awareness of punishments for plagiarism.

1.2. PLAGIARISM

1.2.1 Definitions of plagiarism

According to Merriam–Webster dictionary plagiarism represents:

- “(1: a) The theft and use of other people's ideas or words as yours;
 b) Use of sources without attribution;
 c) Literary theft and
 d) Presenting some ideas as own and as it is new, while this idea already exists in other source.”

To put it in simple words plagiarism is an act of theft of someone else's work and submitting it as one's own work.

1.2.2 Types of plagiarism:

Teach the students Ten most common types of plagiarism that are listed below since, knowing them might help in assisting the students to understand plagiarism and committing the offense.

1. [Clone– Also, known as ‘ The Shadow Author’ Submission of someone else's work, which is transcribed, as one's own;
2. Ctrl + C– Also, known as ‘The Duplicate Author’ Contains most of the text from a single source, without alterations;
3. Find–Replace– Also, known as ‘The poor Disguise’ Changing key words and phrases, but retaining a substantial part of the content of the primary sources;
4. Remix– Also, known as ‘The labor of laziness’ Paraphrasing multiple sources which are so arranged that complement each other;
5. Recycle– Also, known as ‘The self-stealer’ Using their own work (if the article is already published somewhere and not cited);
6. Hybrid– Combine perfectly cited sources with the copied without citation;
7. Mash up– Also, known as ‘The Potluck Paper’ Blending the copied material which is taken from multiple sources;
8. ERROR 404–Also, known as ‘ The Mis - informer’ Includes quoting non-existent or inaccurate source;

9. Aggregator–Include proper citation of sources, but contains almost nothing of their own work;
10. Re–Tweet–Includes proper citation, but with too much text used from the original.]²

1.3 Reasons For Plagiarism

Students mostly plagiarize since they don't know the why, what, when and how of plagiarism. It becomes primary duty of the teachers to enlighten these things in the young minds. The teachers should also apprise the students about the consequences of plagiarism. They should take time to detect plagiarized course works and penalize them at the initial stage itself. Sometimes students plagiarize due to lack of time. Again it's in the hands of the teachers to apprise their wards how to manage time and also give the students ample time to do their course works.

1.3.1 Why, When, What & How To Cite

It would be really great if the instructors apprise their students the reasons behind the need for citing. Citing is of great help to those who want to acquire more information about the author's ideas and where these ideas came from. The purpose of citing is also to provide the reader with all the required information such as

Title of the article;

Page numbers from which the material was taken;

Date the article/ book was published

And the Time when some content was “downloaded” from some official sites where the content is stored and presented for public use (Open access) so as to find the original source easily.

Citing shows how much work has gone into research and it helps the reader to distinguish between the author's and ideas of others. The instructors should also teach the students

1. When & how to cite?
2. When to use quotation marks?
3. When & how to Paraphrase?
4. When & how to Summarize?
5. To detect self plagiarism using the tools like (“Turnitin” and “Safe Assign” software) and scientific plagiarism (“Cross Check” and “eTBlast” software).

1.3.2 The students should also be aware of different styles of citation:

1. APA (AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION).
2. MLA (MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION)
3. ACS (AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY)
4. IEEE (INSTITUTE OF ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONICS ENGINEERS)
5. NLM (NATIONAL LIBRARY OD MEDICINE)
6. VANCOUVER (BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES)
7. CHICAGO

II. Literature Review

In a study regarding students' understanding of the concepts of plagiarism, Devlin and Gray (2007)¹ interviewed 56 Australian university students. Students' feedback showed the lack of understanding of what exactly plagiarism is. The researchers identified many reasons for plagiarism such as 1. Slack admission criteria, 2. No understanding of plagiarism, 3. Low level academic skills, 4. Teaching and learning factors, 5. Personal factors and time constraints and pressure. Moreover, Ellery (2008)³ who interviewed 21 South African undergraduate students who committed plagiarism found that majority of the students were unaware that they had plagiarized based on their writing practices. Many students failed to realize that some of their writing practices such as failing to cite references to paraphrased texts are also come under plagiarism. The study also revealed that the students' knowledge of the concept of plagiarism is very low and thus they need better guidance than they had been provided with on how to avoid plagiarism.

Trupti and Vandana,(2011)¹² conducted a survey on prevalence of Plagiarism among Medical Students. The authors found that only 17 (9%) of students did not plagiarize at all and 68 (34%) plagiarized less than 10% of the text. The average plagiarism rate (% of plagiarized text) was 19% (5-95% percentile=0-88). Students who were strictly warned not to plagiarize had a higher total word count in their essays than students who were not warned ($P=0.002$) but there was no difference between them in the rate of plagiarism. Students with higher grades in Medical Informatics exam plagiarized less than those with lower grades ($P=0.015$). Gender, subject source, and complexity had no influence on the plagiarism rate. The authors concluded that plagiarism in writing essays is common among medical students. An explicit warning is not enough to deter students from plagiarism.

Detection software can be used to trace and evaluate the rate of plagiarism. (Lidija Bilic and others , 2005).⁷ Mathieu stated that plagiarism is a crime against academy. It deceives readers, hurts plagiarized authors and gets the plagiarist undeserved benefits. The author also explained that copying a few sentences that contain no original idea is of marginal importance compared to stealing the ideas of others. (Lidija Bilic and others ,2005). Shahabuddin, (2009)¹¹ explained that plagiarism sometimes creates legal and ethical problems for students and faculty.

Howard, R., & Robillard, A. (2008)⁵ opine that most scholarly publications on plagiarism mirror mass media's attempts to reduce the issue to simple black-and-white statements. Pluralizing Plagiarism recognizes that it takes place not in universalized realms of good and bad, but in specific contexts in which students' cultural backgrounds often play a role. Teachers concerned about plagiarism can best address the issue in the classroom — especially the first-year composition classroom — as part of writing pedagogy and not just as a matter for punishment and prohibition. Price, M. (2002)⁹ offers examples of classroom practices to help teach a concept of plagiarism as situated in context.

In many countries like the United States the authentic ideas are regarded as intellectual property that is protected by copyright laws. All forms of expression are under copyright protection when they are published as a book or a computer file. So plagiarism is considered as a crime.

III. Methodology

Based on the review of literature a structured questionnaire was prepared to collect data from the students. For this purpose a total of 50 questionnaires were distributed among the students and checked their awareness on plagiarism and their knowledge of the ways to avoid plagiarism. Then the researcher brain stormed, taught and tested their knowledge of plagiarism, paraphrasing, and summarizing, quoting, referencing and soft wares to check plagiarism. Then the researcher taught and revised lessons

on English Skills Development focusing on helping the students how to make their coursework simply original. After that a second questionnaire was distributed among the same students to check their knowledge of plagiarism and the methods to avoid plagiarism. Then the data obtained in both sets of questionnaires were analyzed, tabulated, interpreted and presented. T test calculator was done.

Column1	Column2	Column3	Column4
		BEFORE TEACHING/REVISING	AFTER TEACHING/REVISING
		% OF POSITIVE RESPONSES	% OF POSITIVE RESPONSES
S.No	Questions		
1	Do you know what plagiarism is?	75	95
2	Have you plagiarized?	42	84
3	Have you heard your instructors telling you not to plagiarize?	65	86
4	Do you know what paraphrasing is?	53	93
5	Do you know what Referencing is?	75	93
6	Do you know how to summarize?	93	100
7	Do you know how to check the% of plagiarism?	27	74
8	Do you know to quote lines from others?	67	90
9	Do you know the ways to avoid plagiarism?	60	88
10	Adding referencing is the only way to avoid cheating.	53	40
11	Students named the researcher as the instructor who taught them not to plagiarize	55	100

Table 1: Students- awareness before & after being taught/ revised the concept of Intellectual property rights

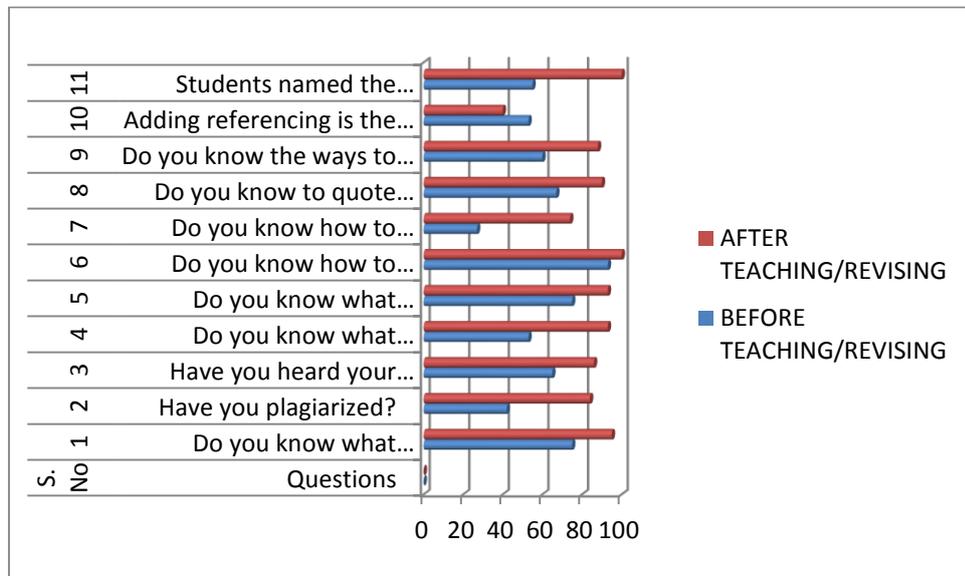


Fig1: Students- awareness before & after being taught/revised the concept of Intellectual property rights

T Test Value for two independent Calculators

Difference Scores Calculations

Treatment 1

$$N_1: 11$$

$$df_1 = N - 1 = 11 - 1 = 10$$

$$M_1: 60.45$$

$$SS_1: 3146.73$$

$$s^2_1 = SS_1/(N - 1) = 3146.73/(11-1) = 314.67$$

Treatment 2

$$N_2: 11$$

$$df_2 = N - 1 = 11 - 1 = 10$$

$$M_2: 85.73$$

$$SS_2: 2854.18$$

$$s^2_2 = SS_2/(N - 1) = 2854.18/(11-1) = 285.42$$

T-value Calculation

$$s^2_p = ((df_1/(df_1 + df_2)) * s^2_1) + ((df_2/(df_1 + df_2)) * s^2_2) = ((10/20) * 314.67) + ((10/20) * 285.42) = 300.05$$

$$s^2_{M1} = s^2_p/N_1 = 300.05/11 = 27.28$$

$$s^2_{M2} = s^2_p/N_2 = 300.05/11 = 27.28$$

$$t = (M_1 - M_2)/\sqrt{(s^2_{M1} + s^2_{M2})} = -25.27/\sqrt{54.55} = -3.42$$

Significance Level:

The t -value is -3.42168. The p -value is .001351. The result is significant at $p < .05$

IV. Results and Discussion

The researcher ceaseless efforts in teaching the students how not to plagiarize brought home the desired efforts.

Approximately 27%, more than two-thirds, of the students didn't know that there are online soft wares to check plagiarism before teaching and later only 74% knew since there were many absentees during the weeks in all the levels when the classes on plagiarism were given. Though the absentees were given classes later it affected the data in the second questionnaire too, since the questionnaire was answered immediately after the classes on Research Skills classes.

About 53 to 75% of students before teaching or revising and about 90 to 93 percent of students after teaching ascertained that they know to paraphrase, and to quote and what plagiarism and Referencing are. That's the success of the researcher's ceaseless efforts to help students acquire research skills in each of her course.

Some students (inclusive of freshman and sophomores) who never did a course were unaware of Plagiarism and research skills.

But after the lectures on research skills a 100% of them named the instructor as the one who taught them research skills and about 10% of them included added a few other instructors who had also asked them not to plagiarize.

Again there were a 93 percent of the students before teaching them how to summarize and 100% of them after the classes agreeing that they knew summarizing since they are being taught in Reading I, Reading II and Reading II courses to summarize the reading passages. In such cases, if the Reading courses were fully utilized by expert teachers, it would be eating a cake for the students to do summarizing in their researches.

The common causes of plagiarism may be ignorance of the concept of plagiarism which prevails in a greater extent due to the fact that Academicians ignore it. It is also due to lack of time.

A true profound understanding and analysis of the causes of plagiarism and the need for creating an awareness on plagiarism, paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting, referencing, and checking the % of plagiarism in one's own works will better curriculum design, policy development, classroom practices and the output expected from educational institutions in regard to nullifying plagiarism and the workload and costs associated with detecting it.

V. Limitations

The study has covered only the English Major Students of An Nabhanya College of Science and Arts and therefore the data collected could be considered as an indication only.

Though there were a few limitations to the study design, the student respondents answered the questions honestly and on their own without any other influence since the students' answering both the questionnaires was done as if they sat for an exam. They weren't allowed to plagiarize or not even to discuss the questions. Thus the researcher saw to that nothing skewed the results.

VI. Conclusions

On one hand the students are equipped with readymade databases available on the Internet, so that there isn't any need for them to go physically from one library to another library or spend money on buying books and journals. On the other hand, a ever-growing number of plagiarism and other unethical behaviour of the students are ignored by the academicians. With the same advent of the technology

plagiarism is now easier to detect thanks to databases and software packages specifically designed for this purpose. So, the educators should make use of it to train the students and the future researchers to produce the original work.

Plagiarism as well as many other kinds of academic dishonesty is on the rise for many reasons (Graham et al., 1994; Genereux & McLeod, 1995)⁴. Students are blind to the fact that internet information is private knowledge and has intellectual property rights; hence, they do not cite internet information. Though exactly why students plagiarize always remains elusive, we should accept peer-related factors greatly influence academic dishonesty along with time constraints, the vigilant instructors with their perfect role as facilitators can eradicate plagiarism.

The vast majority of the students indicated that they had previously cheated on tests and exams.

The students had the same misunderstanding or misuse of paraphrasing as before even after they were taught about plagiarism. They couldn't paraphrase or summarize without plagiarism and it was really a Himalayan Task to get them write their own, since their lack of skills in writing.

Even though comparative data signify that they cheat less, or that a greater majority of student respondents are aware that 'copy-paste culture' without proper citations is unacceptable, based upon factors like "situational ethics syndrome", the students just cited referencing sources and plagiarized with the assignments of other courses which they studied with some other lecturers; mainly due to lack of time and pressure and they thought the assignments wouldn't be checked for plagiarism. It is hoped that if the students were taught by the instructors how to paraphrase and summarize the tendencies towards academic dishonesty would decline; however, this cannot be asserted for certain.

Students need clarification about academic integrity from their instructors. For example, McCabe (2005)⁸ stipulates that when faculty clarify course expectations, it becomes one of the most important and helpful items they can do toward prevention of plagiarism. Graham et al. also voices that "faculty should clearly define what is acceptable behavior in their class and what is not" (Graham et al., 1994, p. 259)⁴. Turrens probably states it best by proposing that instructors must provide students with the foundation of ethical conduct in all types of classes, thereby "openly explaining and discussing what constitutes plagiarism, data fabrication, and manipulation" (Turrens & Davidson, 2001, p. 65)¹³.

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