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INTERTEXTUALITY
AND PLAGIARISM

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Introduction

Intertextuality is a feature of all discourse and is particularly salient in most academic genres. Aspects of intertextuality have been extensively researched within the English for academic purposes (EAP) literature and are mainstays of the EAP classroom. Plagiarism, a specific form of intertextuality, is a topic of concern across the academic community.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the current state of knowledge about intertextuality and to outline the implications for the EAP practitioner. The chapter begins with a discussion of intertextuality, with particular reference to its manifestations in academic discourse. It then moves on to situate plagiarism within the broader spectrum of intertextuality, and to outline the sizeable body of research which has investigated the topic.

Because intertextuality is so prominent in academic discourse, and because plagiarism can have serious repercussions, EAP teachers need to know how to work with these concepts. Translating what we know about them into what we do about them is the subject of the penultimate section of this chapter. The final section will outline directions for future work.

Intertextuality

Intertextuality is a relationship between a given text and one or more earlier texts which have influenced it. Because texts are not produced in a discoursal vacuum but are socially constructed, it would be difficult to conceive of one which did not contain such relationships; practically speaking, intertextuality is a feature of all texts. However, intertextual relationships vary greatly in terms of how directly visible the influences of the earlier texts are. Fairclough (1992: 104) adopts a distinction made by Authier-Revuz (1982), and Maingueneau (1976) between manifest and constitutive intertextuality (though Fairclough prefers the term ‘interdiscursivity’ for the latter).

The relationship involved in manifest intertextuality is both direct and, as the name implies, visible. When a newspaper article includes a quotation from a source, it is made prominent both by linguistic features such as reporting phrases (e.g., ‘According to a Whitehall source’) and by paralinguistic features such as quotation marks. These devices make the relationship with the earlier text (in this case, the journalist’s interview with an informant) visible to the reader.
However, a newspaper article is influenced by earlier texts in less direct and immediately obvious ways as well. It has a headline and it may have a by-line identifying the journalist who wrote the article. If it is published in a broadsheet, it will be relatively formal in its choice of words, while avoiding overly technical or academic language; or, if in a tabloid, it will be decidedly less formal in word choice. All of these features, which are part of a common and widely shared set of expectations for the genre ‘newspaper article’, or the subgenre ‘tabloid newspaper article’ or ‘broadsheet newspaper article’, are conventional precisely because they are expected. Previous newspaper articles have had those features, so journalists and editors do not have an entirely free choice in these matters. Rather, they are constrained by what they know about the characteristics of earlier exemplars of the same genre. From that they know, or at least try to deduce, what their readers will expect.

In this way, the choices a writer makes about a new text are influenced by the writer’s awareness of what earlier, similar texts were like, and so the earlier texts exert an influence on the later. The influence is indirect; that is, the inspiration to put a headline on a newspaper article cannot be traced back to any other single, earlier article. It is also a less salient influence in that there are no signals to draw the reader’s attention to the relationship, as ‘according to’ does in the case of quotation. This less direct, less visible relationship is constitutive intertextuality, or interdiscursivity.

**Interdiscursivity in EAP**

Academic genres tend to be highly conventional (although subject to variation across academic disciplines). In other words, the effects of interdiscursivity are significant. The principal impetus behind EAP research has been to produce descriptions of academic discourse in order to provide teachers and learners with an agenda. In practice, this has meant that, in describing the conventional features of academic genres, researchers have simultaneously documented interdiscursive relationships.

Perhaps the most prominent example of this is John Swales’ Create a Research Space (CARS) model. Across various iterations (Swales 1990; Swales & Feak 2004) the CARS model has described a relatively stable series of ‘moves’ which authors use in the introductions of research articles (RAs) to contextualise the findings to be presented. Authors define the research area; describe a smaller ‘niche’ within it; and announce their intentions to occupy that niche. Each of these moves can be achieved by means of one or more from a menu of ‘steps’. For example, a niche can be identified by naming a gap in the existing research. Moves and steps may be associated with phraseological chunks, such as in (1) below.

(1) However, to date little attention has been paid to the question of …

The existence of regular patterns in structure, phraseology and other features is evidence of interdiscursivity at work. More precisely, these patterns demonstrate that the idea to structure RA introductions in a given way, including reviewing the literature and describing an unresearched question, a gap, is not the original invention of any given author. Authors choose to do it this way so that their RA will be a homogeneous addition to the body of scholarship on a topic. There is thus an intertextual relationship between the new work and earlier ones, but the source of the relationship is not that writers (ordinarily) adopt the idea of a CARS structure or a phrase like ‘to date, little attention has been paid’ from a particular text. Rather, by virtue of having read a large number of contributions to their scholarly literature, writers become aware of what features are conventional. Assuming the same awareness
on the part of their readers, adopting the same features is a means of accommodating the anticipated readers’ expectations. (In principle, of course, the writer could defy conventions, thus challenging readers’ expectations. This is uncommon in academic discourse, and more to the point, regardless of whether they are met or flouted, the expectations themselves are evidence of interdiscursivity.)

The interdiscursivity of EAP has also been documented by investigations of rhetorical structures in genres as diverse as abstracts (e.g., Lorés 2004; Okamura & Shaw 2014), titles of RAs (e.g., Soler 2011), acknowledgements in theses (Hyland 2004b; Hyland & Tse 2004), and the closing portion of academic lectures (Cheng 2012). In addition, interdiscursivity can be seen at work in other features; for example, word choice in titles (Anthony 2001) or phraseology in lecture closings (Cheng 2012). (See Part III of this volume for a review of several academic genres.)

**Manifest intertextuality in EAP**

Like interdiscursivity, manifest intertextuality is a prevalent feature of academic discourse. Scholarly activity is incremental in nature, with new work building upon the findings of existing research. It is therefore fundamental to the nature of scholarly texts that they are influenced by earlier ones. This dependence on earlier works should be acknowledged; as Groom notes, ‘it is a conventional expectation among readers of all but the most playfully postmodern of Anglophone academic texts that it will be clear at any given point whose “voice” is “speaking”’ (2000: 15). This is accomplished in academic texts by means of a reference, or citation, to the source as well as a number of other devices which indicate the nature of the relationship.

Writers have a number of choices open to them in citing sources, and these have been the subject of extensive investigation. The first is whether to include a citation at all, and writers choose to do so for various reasons, including to structure an argument, provide information for readers, position ideas in the literature in relationship to each other and forestall accusations of plagiarism (Harwood 2009). This last is an important function: by providing a citation, the writer announces that some portion of the credit and responsibility for a given proposition is due the source author. If no citation is present, the reader will assume that the proposition is one for which the writer is prepared to take exclusive responsibility, and for which the writer would like exclusive credit. Tadros (1993) called these functions attribution and averral, respectively.

If a writer believes that intertextual influences should be acknowledged, then the next choices are how to include the proposition and the reference into the new text. The basic choice for incorporating content from a source is whether or not to use the source author’s own wording, i.e., to quote. The alternative is to paraphrase, that is to reformulate the idea so that the content is conveyed accurately but expressed differently. Some researchers have further refined this distinction. For example, Hyland (2004a) distinguishes between block (longer) quotations and shorter quotations integrated into the running text, and between summary (a paraphrased account from one source) and generalisation (a restatement of an idea which can be found in and is attributed to more than one source).

References can be more or less visible in the new text as well. Swales (1990) noted that some references make the source author a constituent of the reporting sentence (as in (2) and (3) below), while others (4) relegate the source to parentheses, a footnote, etc. Swales termed the former ‘integral citation’ and the latter ‘non-integral’ (or, more recently, ‘parenthetical’; see Swales 2014). By means of making the name of the source more prominent, integral
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citations can easily have the effect of enhancing the influence and authority of the source, potentially at the expense of the writer’s authority.

(2) Cheddar (1997) argues that the moon is made of green cheese.
(3) Stilton (2002) notes that there are questions about the composition of the moon.1
(4) The moon is made of green cheese (Cheddar 1997).

The language of referencing has been of interest to EAP researchers virtually since the inception of the field, with the reporting verb (the verb used to introduce an account of content from a source) coming in for early and thorough scrutiny. The semantics of the reporting verb give the writer scope to signal meaning of various types. In their landmark typology, Thompson and Ye (1991) classified reporting verbs in several ways, including according to what they say about how the original source author and the writer of the citing work regard the proposition in question. Thus, in (2), ‘argues’ suggests that Cheddar agrees with the proposition that the moon is made of green cheese, but does not signal whether the writer citing Cheddar concurs. ‘Argues’ thus indicates positive author stance but non-factive writer stance. In (3), ‘notes’ suggests that the writer agrees with the source author, making the writer’s stance factive.

Formal aspects of the verb phrase, like tense and voice, have been investigated and specialised usages (i.e., distinct from patterns of verb form usage described in general grammars) have been found (e.g., Oster 1981; Tarone et al. 1998). Importantly, formal choices in the reporting verb phrase are not isolated or arbitrary. Rather, they are bound to contextual and evaluative factors such as supporting overall textual cohesion, whether the writer sees the cited proposition as currently valid, and how the writer wishes to position him/herself within the discourse community (Charles 2006; Pecorari 2013a; Shaw 1992).

Like many other aspects of academic discourse, citation varies greatly across academic disciplines. Differences can be seen in features such as the frequency of citations, choice of reporting verb and verb form, types of source cited and the use of quotation (Charles 2006; Hyland 2004a; Pecorari 2006). Significantly, the differences are not arbitrary, but can be traced to aspects of knowledge construction in the disciplines. Thus, there is an overwhelming tendency in the natural sciences and technical fields to avoid quotation while it is a routine if minority form of reference in most of the social sciences and humanities (Hyland 2004a; Pecorari 2006). A reasonable explanation for this phenomenon is that quotation is not often needed in the relatively objective world of the ‘hard’ subjects, while the subjective nature of the ‘soft’ subjects can make it important to avoid the risk of distorting a source by paraphrasing. (For a more detailed description of cross-disciplinary practices with regard to citation, see Hyland 2004a.)

As the above review suggests, aspects of manifest intertextuality have been investigated primarily in written texts and this may reflect a greater propensity toward intertextual references in written academic discourse. Adel (2008) found fewer references to experts in university lectures than in written academic discourse. Shaw et al. (2010) also studied university lectures and found that nearly half of all references were to a text which was itself the topic of the lecture, and many of the remainder related to classroom management. There was, therefore, little reference to external authorities, a result which is compatible with Biber’s (2006) findings. Thus, while there is too little research on intertextuality in spoken academic genres to draw firm conclusions, it would appear that manifest intertextuality is not as strongly salient in spoken as in written academic discourse.
Plagiarism is typically defined as the reappropriation of portions of an earlier text by a more recent one, and as such is a form of intertextuality. However, unlike most forms of intertextuality, plagiarism is unconventional, unauthorised and highly stigmatising.

Definitions of plagiarism in academic contexts are frequently written for regulatory purposes and intended to close loopholes, to prevent an accusation of plagiarism being rebuffed with the response ‘I didn’t know I couldn’t do that’. Consequently, academic definitions often contain long enumerations of the many kinds of texts which can be the object of plagiarism, as (5) below illustrates. Ideas or words can be plagiarised, as can figures, tables, diagrams, drawings, music, computer code, etc. In short, any intellectual contribution and/or form of expression of an intellectual contribution can be plagiarised.

(5) Example definition of plagiarism

What is plagiarism?

‘Plagiarism’ means using the words or ideas of another without giving appropriate credit. Even if the student paraphrases the ideas in his/her own words, the source must be cited. If exact words are used, the student must put the words in quotation marks and cite the source. Students are responsible for knowing what plagiarism is and avoiding it. Be particularly careful about copying and pasting information from the Internet—materials used from Internet sources must be quoted and cited just like information from other sources. Students must also be aware that copying or adapting pictures, charts, computer programs or code, music, or data without citing sources and indicating that the material has been copied or adapted is plagiarism. It may also be copyright infringement.

(From the University of California)

It is worth noting that all of these sorts of texts can also be the object of conventional and appropriate re-use. The conditions under which re-use is appropriate vary, but include at a minimum acknowledgement of the source and the nature of the re-use. Thus, the criteria which indicate plagiarism are negative, in the sense that it is not the intertextual relationship per se which breaks norms but the absence of a signal revealing that relationship.

Plagiarism, then, is an intertextual relationship which is non-normative because it is not transparent: the reader is not offered the chance to understand the relationship because the usual and conventional signals, like citations and quotation marks, are missing. Further, plagiarism is widely held to be deceptive: the influences from earlier texts are hidden from the reader because the writer deliberately set out to conceal them. While some would dissent and claim that plagiarism can be unintentional, including many university policies and definitions which seek to close off ‘I didn’t mean to’ as a line of defence, there is ample evidence to support the view that intention to deceive is part of the prototypical understanding of plagiarism.

Plagiarism is usually named in university policies as a form of cheating; the extract in (5), for example, comes from the website of the Student Judicial Affairs office at a US university, and the rest of the page concerns itself with other aspects of cheating and the disciplinary procedures which are invoked to respond to it. Cheating is by its nature a deliberate act of dishonesty, and, to the extent that people who behave dishonestly generally wish to escape detection, one which usually entails an effort to deceive. Explanations of why plagiarism is wrong frequently invoke other kinds of dishonesty as metaphors. The
university web page cited above links to a document written in a less legalistic and more informative vein which undertakes to explain why students should not plagiarise: ‘because it misrepresents the work of another as your own’; because ‘it is taking unfair advantage’ and because ‘it is wrong to take or use property’. The last suggests a metaphor which many policies explicitly draw for plagiarism: theft. All of this points to a received understanding that ‘plagiarism’ is applied to relationships which are believed to be the result of a deliberate breaking of rules rather than misunderstanding or some other, less malignant nature.

As an act of wrongdoing, plagiarism is treated seriously. Although penalties vary, the consequences can be severe. In countries like the US, the UK and Australia, a failing grade or suspension are common punishments. When plagiarism is discovered after a student has been awarded a degree, it may be revoked. Consequences can be equally serious in countries outside the traditionally English-speaking world. In Sweden, where an increasing number of students take courses with English as the medium of instruction (EMI), plagiarism is treated as one form of cheating and a typical punishment is suspension ranging from several weeks to months (Sutherland-Smith & Pecorari 2010). EAP students who travel abroad to EMI contexts should thus be aware that plagiarism has the potential to disrupt their careers as students.

Plagiarism in student work even has the ability to haunt the writer with repercussions much later. Plagiarism from decades earlier in the student writing of Martin Luther King Jr. attracted considerable negative attention when it was discovered after his death, and was responsible for a serious contender for the US presidency having to withdraw from the contest in the 1980s (Pecorari 2008). More recently, prominent German politicians have been forced out of office following the discovery of plagiarism in their doctoral theses (Weber-Wulff 2014).

When plagiarism is the result of a conscious attempt to circumvent rules in order to attain unearned credit, this strong reaction is not surprising. However, a substantial body of research has demonstrated that some intertextual relationships which risk being labelled as plagiarism have other causes than deception (e.g., Abasi & Graves 2008; Currie 1998; Pecorari 2003; Petrić 2004). It is, thus, necessary in the remainder of this section to be able to refer to an act which *risks* being labelled plagiarism, despite the fact that the label would be disputed by some. The term *textual plagiarism* will be used here to indicate writing which bears an inappropriate, unsignalled relationship to a source text, regardless of the writer’s intentions. *Prototypical plagiarism* will be used here to refer to a subcategory of textual plagiarism, that which involves intention to deceive.

A number of explanations for non-deceptive plagiarism have been put forth. One is a lack of understanding on the part of some writers that they are expected to cite their sources, and that inappropriately reproducing language from a source can be regarded as plagiarism (e.g., Crocker & Shaw 2002). That in turn raises the question of why some writers might not share the decidedly condemnatory reactions with which plagiarism is frequently met. One explanation is that a range of views exists about which intertextual practices are acceptable, and that these differences conform to boundaries of subject areas. Much as there is cross-disciplinary variation in citation practices, there is also variation in which practices are labelled as plagiarism (Borg 2009; Jamieson 2008; Pecorari 2006).

Other differences have been asserted to exist across cultural boundaries. Claims include the idea that in some cultures citation implies the reader is unfamiliar with work in the field; or a collectivist orientation causes writers to view the language of published works as being in the public domain; or elegance of expression is valued over originality. Claims that cultural differences are responsible for plagiarism have, however, been challenged in
accounts from cultural insiders (e.g., Le Ha 2006) and researchers (e.g., Wheeler 2009). As Bloch (2012) demonstrates, any relationship between culture and plagiarism is extremely complex.

There are, however, undeniably transnational differences in higher education, and many students who are required to write academic texts in English have not had the exposure to coursework and writing for assessment purposes which characterises the Anglophone university (see, for example, Timm 2013 for a description of the situation in India). Students whose educational backgrounds have provided them with few opportunities to practise academic writing are presumably less likely to be skilled in doing that which is necessary to avoid plagiarism: writing good academic texts autonomously.

This is not an issue exclusively affecting second-language writers; learning to write academic texts, even in the first language (L1), requires the acquisition of a new discourse. This observation, coupled with a need to explain the phenomenon of students reproducing parts of their sources, led Howard (1995, 1999) to describe a strategy she called ‘patchwriting’. Students who patchwrite take language from their sources and use their own formulations to stitch these chunks into a coat of many colours, which they may then embroider by making superficial changes, such as the substitution of synonyms or the reordering of items in a list. Howard argues that inexperienced academic writers note the difference between the work they produce and the more confident, authoritative language they read. Patchwriting is an effort to bridge this gap.

If all writers, regardless of L1, must learn academic discourse, the learning curve for L2 writers is especially steep. As an explanation for textual plagiarism, then, patchwriting applies to all students but it is reasonable to think that L2 writers may make especially heavy use of it, and indeed there is some evidence that this is the case. In a recent study, Howard, Serviss and Rodrigue (2010) investigated work produced primarily by L1 writers. They found patchwriting similar to that produced by Pecorari’s (2003) L2 writers, but the chunks of repeated language were shorter.

On the basis of this brief account of some of the causes of textual plagiarism, it is possible to conclude that there are many reasons why EAP writers may produce texts which can attract the label ‘plagiarism’ and along with it, severe consequences (Pecorari & Petrić 2014 give a more detailed review). The following section indicates how EAP teachers can address this and other intertextualities.

**Recommendations for practice:**

**working with intertextuality and plagiarism**

As the above discussion has demonstrated, intertextuality in its broadest sense presents a diverse set of challenges for the L2 writer. The pervasive nature of intertextuality across academic genres makes it essential for writers to have the full panoply of resources for grounding their texts in existing work. Avoiding intertextual relationships simply is not an option. At the same time, such relationships open up a risk of plagiarism, which cannot be avoided solely by dint of a determination not to cheat. Avoiding plagiarism also requires the ability to incorporate appropriate intertextual relationships in writing.

This means that the needs of the EAP student are twofold. To the extent that students may lack an awareness of the seriousness with which plagiarism is viewed in Anglophone academia, and/or an understanding of the sorts of acts which can be labelled plagiarism, they need to be supplied with the declarative knowledge about which source use practices are likely to be considered unacceptable in EAP contexts.
However, simply warning and informing is not sufficient, because producing good academic texts requires a set of skills—conditional knowledge—as well as the procedural knowledge about when to use them. Writing appropriately intertextual academic works requires, first of all, an ability to read and understand academic writing, in order to be able to grasp the context in which the new work is situated. In this sense, reading is an essential skill for writing (see Hirvela 2004).

Reporting the ideas and insights gleaned from reading requires a sufficiently large vocabulary to be able to express complex topics in academic register. Doing this involves both the ability to substantially reformulate an idea without distorting its meaning and, at least for writers in disciplines in which quotation is conventional, the surprisingly challenging skill of incorporating a quotation into a new setting in such a way that the flow of the text is not disrupted. If an integral reference to the source is chosen, it too must be smoothly integrated into the larger text.

Many conventional phraseological chunks (such as ‘as X correctly notes’ and ‘the first comprehensive study of Y’) can be taught and learned. EAP textbooks include some of these and two sources, Graff and Birkenstein (2014) and Morley’s Academic Phrasebank provide a particularly large selection. Resources like these—in essence, vocabulary lists consisting of multi-word units rather than single orthographic words—serve a real need for students, but at the same time highlight a lack of thoughtfulness in guidance on plagiarism by demonstrating that the prohibition on using words from a source without quotation marks is not intended to be applied universally and without exception.

Another essential skill is knowing how to make the intertextual relationships transparent (i.e., visible) to the reader. In advice on avoiding plagiarism, this is typically covered by an admonition to give a reference for every source which is used. However, the task is actually more complex than such instructions indicate, and there are many potential pitfalls. Inexperienced writers frequently provide a reference but position it in such a way that it is not seen clearly to apply to all of the content which comes from the source. The complex authorship and editorship patterns of academic texts mean that it may not be easy for an inexperienced academic reader to work out which author should be cited. In short, there is a set of skills to identifying the way sources have influenced a work which must be learned.

Writers also need to know what plagiarism is, and to understand the sorts of source use which can trigger an accusation of plagiarism. In part, this means an awareness that for many gatekeepers there is no middle ground between quotation and fully proficient paraphrases. A patchwriting strategy which involves superficial changes to an original is not only likely to be considered plagiarism by many teachers, the changes will be seen by some as an aggravating factor, evidence that the writer tried to ‘file off the serial number’ to escape detection. Equipping EAP writers to understand how their texts may be received is not easy; beyond the contextual variation found across national and disciplinary cultures and reviewed above, there is also evidence that individual teachers have idiosyncratic perceptions of what is appropriate (Pecorari & Shaw 2012). However, given the devastating consequences which can attend an accusation of plagiarism, the only safe position for an EAP writer is to be beyond reproach.

These are some of the minimum conditions for a text to be considered free of plagiarism, but to be successful, EAP students also need to know how to make the sources they use work effectively to support the overall objectives of the text. It is important to remember in this connection that academic writing is a skill. Aspects of declarative knowledge can be useful, but like any other skill, this one can only be learned through practice and feedback.
Feedback, however, is greatly complicated by the fact that many aspects of inappropriate source use can be difficult to diagnose.

Because of the difficulties in diagnosing how students have used sources, text-matching software has become widely used. Also known as ‘plagiarism detection’ tools, text-matching services try to find wording in student writing which matches wording in various sources: work submitted by other students, texts available on the open internet and, in some cases, a limited selection of databases. It is important to remember in taking a decision whether to use text-matching software that it can return both false negatives and false positives, and the results can only indicate the extent of overlap between two texts, not whether that overlap is acceptable. Teachers who choose to use such tools must be aware that they can only be a complement to other efforts to diagnose problems with source use, and not a complete solution in themselves.

The catalogue of knowledge and skills which EAP students need to exploit intertextuality appropriate and to good effect is a long one, which means that the brief for the EAP teacher is a challenging one (for a fuller treatment of issues related to teaching to address plagiarism, see Pecorari 2013b). There is a need for both pedagogical development and research advances to support the work of teachers and students in this area. The final section identifies some of these areas of need.

**Future directions**

The previous section related approaches to addressing the issues implicated in intertextual relationships in the EAP classroom. Because the issues dealt with in this chapter are practical ones which impact all academic writers and because they have been the object of considerable research, it is in the area of applications that the greatest need, moving forward, exists.

As noted above, there is a great deal of unevenness in what is known and believed about the kinds of intertextuality which are inappropriate. In particular, there is evidence to suggest that textual plagiarism is accepted in some disciplinary cultures, but certainly not in all. This inconsistency places EAP writers in a difficult position: an act called plagiarism has the ability to end academic careers, but nobody can say with authority which acts fall—or more importantly, categorically do not fall—under that heading.

Since disciplinary policies are typically written and enforced at an institutional level, cross-curricular differences may not be ideal, but there are precedents for working around them. However, that would require an open acknowledgement of the differences and a discussion about how to handle them. Most university teachers are experts primarily on their own subjects and less aware of cross-curricular inconsistencies. EAP teachers, on the other hand, typically meet students from across the university and reflect a great deal on what constitutes good writing, and as a result are perfectly placed to initiate and sustain such a discussion.

The issue is particularly important from an EAP perspective because English is the lingua franca of academic activity (see Mauranen, Hynninen & Ranta, this volume) and the playing field is not level for English L2 users. If writers in the sciences are prepared to exercise a greater degree of tolerance for source-dependent writing, writers for whom English is an L2 have an especially great incentive to use the strategies that tolerance makes possible. If gatekeepers in other fields show less tolerance and insist on more complex and nuanced intertextual networks and a greater autonomy of expression, then the burden to produce texts which reach this more exacting standard will weigh most heavily on English L2 users. This means that the issue of intertextuality and plagiarism is fundamentally one of equality. Perhaps paradoxically, the issues of inequality which have been caused by the rise of English
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as a lingua franca have been better rehearsed in the English applied linguistics literature than anywhere else. Bringing this debate to a wider public and connecting it to the very language-specific issue of intertextuality would be a worthwhile contribution for future work in EAP to make.

A similar contribution could potentially be made with regard to some of the root causes of inappropriate intertextuality. The higher education landscape is rapidly changing and two of the sources of change—internationalisation and the expansion of the sector—present universities with significant challenges. As larger swathes of the population go to university, the proportion who have a non-academic background and/or a linguistic background in something other than the language of instruction is also growing. International mobility continues to increase, and an enabler of that increase is the trend toward offering courses taught in English in countries which are not part of the traditionally English-speaking world. This not only provides more countries of destination for international students, it means that an increasing number of students who pursue university study in their own country do it through the medium of English as a second language.

As seen earlier in this chapter, the skills needed to produce successful academic writing without textual plagiarism are many and complex. Writers who must work through a second language are bound to find them especially challenging. To ensure that all students have reasonable chances of success on their courses, universities might be thought to have a responsibility to admit only those who have an adequate level of language proficiency to make success a likely outcome, and to give them the necessary support during their courses. Instead, the reality in many countries is that university budgets are increasingly squeezed, and filling seats in the classroom (particularly with fee-paying international students) is seen as one remedy and precisely the opposite effect is created: students are admitted to some institutions with low-proficiency levels, and the resources are not available to provide them the insessional support they need.

This sets the stage for students to feel strongly incentivised to adopt textual plagiarism as a strategy for producing written work. Indeed, many universities have had unwanted publicity over perceptions that plagiarism is widespread and have experienced reputational damage as a result. In 2011, a parliamentary report from the Victorian (Australia) ombudsman into the treatment of international students considered the incidence of plagiarism among other kinds of misconduct and concluded that more needed to be done, noting that ‘universities need to accept that not taking action on these types of issues heightens the risk to their integrity and reputation’ (Taylor 2011: 9). Yet, policy decisions in these matters are frequently taken by educational administrators who lack sufficient insights into the implications of studying at university level through the medium of English as L2.

Since its inception forty or so years ago, the field of EAP has produced a substantial body of research describing the characteristics of academic English in its various manifestations. A literature on methods and pedagogical approaches is also growing (e.g., Charles 2012). A meaningful development in EAP with direct impact on intertextuality and plagiarism would be if EAP teachers’ knowledge were used as a resource and were to inform decisions made by admissions offices, study support centres, disciplinary boards and in curriculum meetings across the university, where decisions are made which shape the EAP student experience.

Further reading

Hirvela (2004); Hyland (2004a); Pecorari (2013b)
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Related chapters

10 Academic reading into writing
11 Language and L2 writing
19 Genre analysis
Part VII: Pedagogic contexts

Note

1 I, like others, follow Swales (1990) in adopting this cheesy tradition of exemplifying citation forms.

References


