



European Network
for Academic
Integrity

Reasons for plagiarism by students: Why does it happen?

Training module for HEI instructors
Version: O1-A-3, English, 16 July 2019



Supported by the Erasmus+
Strategic Partnerships project
2016-1-CZ01-KA203-023949.

Basic information for trainers



European Network
for Academic
Integrity

- Target group of instructors: B.A.-beginner courses
- Summary of content: This presentation lists the reasons of plagiarism as identified by plagiarizers themselves and then presents anonymous multi-mediated writing model as a remedy to prevent plagiarism in student assignments.
- Learning objective(s): Participants will identify reasons of plagiarism and plan their writing courses by encouraging effective exchange of peer feedback to prevent plagiarism.
- Educational format(s): presentation
- Duration: 30 minutes
- Recommended number of participants: any
- To maximize the benefits, participants are expected to be experienced in teaching writing.

Reasons of plagiarism

- A study conducted by Razi (2015b):
 - Aimed to reveal the reasons of plagiarism
 - by interviewing plagiarizers
 - enrolled in Advanced Reading and Writing Skills Course
 - a first year course at English Language Teaching Department of a university in Turkey

Reasons of plagiarism

- 194 students enrolled in the course
 - 28 plagiarized in their academic writing assignments
 - 11 male plagiarizers
 - 17 female plagiarizers
- Razi (2015b) interviewed plagiarizers.
- Considering any possible gender differences, the findings are presented separately for female and male students.

Findings: Male

- 11 plagiarism incidents
 - 3 accidental
 - 8 deliberate

- Male 10:

“One of my class mates told me that she had an assignment that she hadn’t submitted on Turnitin previously. I decided to submit her assignment since there was no risk but she was mistaken since she didn’t remember that she had submitted it on Turnitin last year.”

Reasons male

- M1: Did not know how to paraphrase.
- M2: Forgot to use quotation marks.
- M3: Tried to catch deadline.
- M4: Did not know how to paraphrase: Problems in restructuring.
- M5: Bored and then tried to catch deadline.
- M6: Cited like paraphrase to reduce quotation ratio.
- M7: Did not know how to paraphrase.
- M8: Did not know how to cite.
- M9: Insufficient number of sources. Cited a single source poorly.
- M10: Submitted a friend's assignment since she told him that she had not submitted it on Turnitin.
- M11: Submitted the same assignment for two courses.

Findings: Female

- 17 plagiarism incidents
 - 1 accidental
 - 16 deliberate
- Female 9:

“I realized that attending tutorials helped me avoid plagiarism as I had the chance of directly asking to you [the lecturer] but I got bored towards the end of the semester and did not attend the tutorials. To finalize my paper I simply copied expressions from other sources.”

Reasons female



European Network
for Academic
Integrity

- F1: To catch deadline, borrowed some expressions from a friend.
- F2: Since it was difficult to paraphrase, she avoided paraphrasing.
- F3: Thought that mentioning the author would be enough to copy the sentence.
- F4: Bored and then tried to catch deadline.
- F5: Tried to catch deadline.
- F6: Did not know how to paraphrase.
- F7: Tried to catch deadline.
- F8: Bored towards the end of the paper and did not paraphrase carefully.
- F9: Bored in some parts of the paper and did not paraphrase carefully. Non-attendance to tutors resulted in weak paraphrase.
- F10: Tried to avoid submitting a short paper and integrated weak paraphrased expressions.
- F11: Tried to avoid spoiling meaning in restructuring so only changed some words.
- F12: Non-attendance to tutors because of illness and then tried to catch the deadline.
- F13: Did not know how to paraphrase.
- F14: Thought that mentioning the author would be enough to copy the sentence. Tried to avoid spoiling meaning in restructuring so only changed some words.
- F15: Did not know how to paraphrase.
- F16: Tried to catch deadline.
- F17: Did not accept being interviewed.

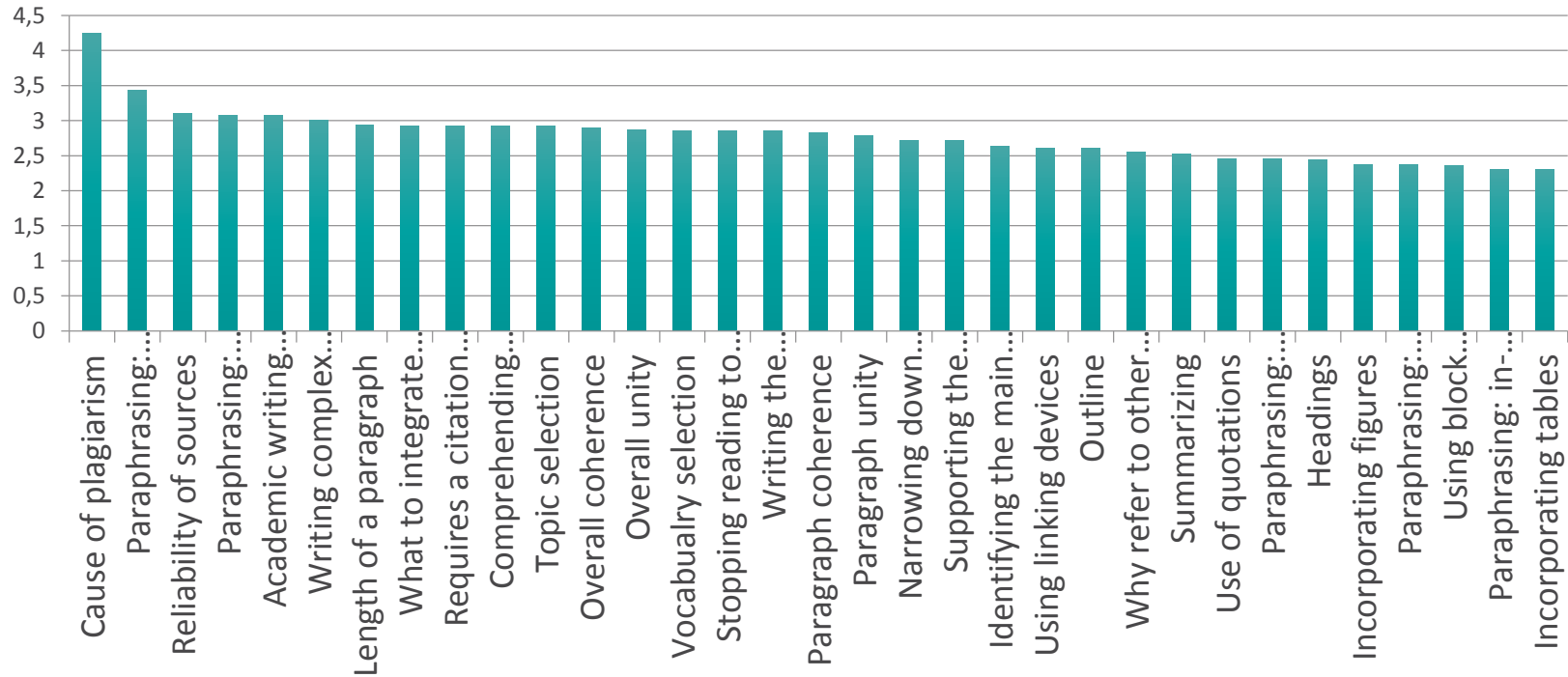
Some more evidence...

- Razi (2015a) conducted another study
 - to reveal the difficulties that students experience in academic writing
 - and compared students' self-reported difficulties with their actual problems (identified by Razi himself as the lecturer) in academic writing
- Students' difficulties did not match with their actual problems in academic writing.
- They were not aware of their actual problems and this made them prone to plagiarism.

Self-reported difficulties in academic writing (Razi, 2015a, p. 154)



European Network
for Academic
Integrity

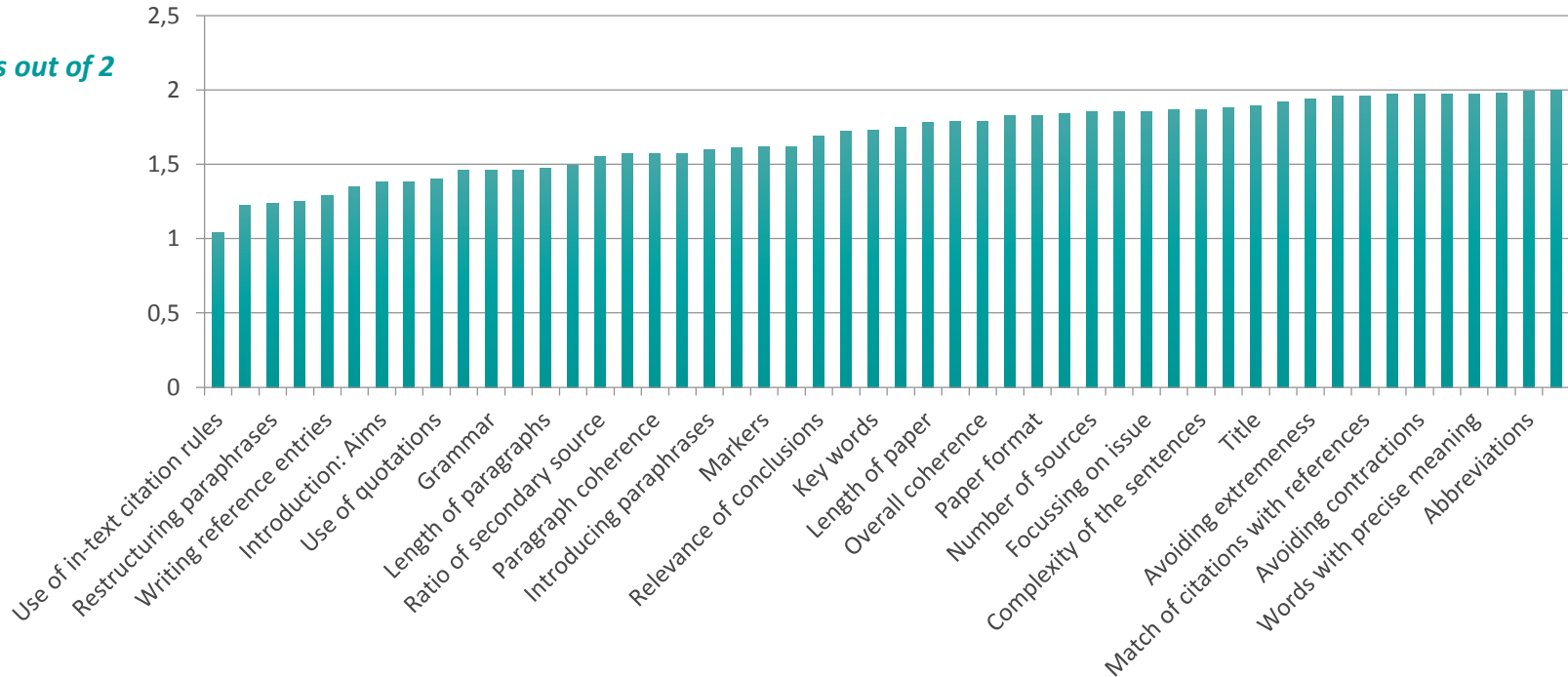


Lecturer-reported actual achievement of students in academic writing (Razi, 2015a, p. 155)



European Network
for Academic
Integrity

Note:
Scores out of 2



How to encourage students to develop better academic writing skills and prevent from plagiarism?

- Benefit from anonymous multi-mediated writing model (Razi, 2017).
- The model encourages students to exchange peer feedback in order to overcome their writing problems.
- Each student paper is matched with three anonymous reviewers.
- Before assigning reviewers, students are divided into three subcategories, namely 'good', 'moderate' and 'weak' in accordance with their writing proficiency.
- Each student receives feedback from a good, moderate and weak peer and also provides direct feedback to a good, moderate and weak peer.
- Such feedback exchange ensures a balanced distribution of asymmetrical and symmetrical feedback.
- After students receive peer feedback, they revise and resubmit their papers.

Feedback exchange in anonymous multi-mediated writing model (Razi, 2017, p. 32)



Conclusion

- Students might have a variety of reasons to plagiarize.
- Take first-year undergraduates' inexperience into consideration.
- Writing in a second/foreign language may increase the risks plagiarising due to lack of insufficient language proficiency.
- Anonymous multi-mediated writing model reduces plagiarism incidents by helping students to develop metacognitive skills and become autonomous learners.

Acknowledgement & references

- Razi, S. (2015a). Cross-checked problems in undergraduate academic writing. K. Dikilitaş, R. Smith, & W. Trotman (Eds.), *Teacher-researchers in action* (pp. 147-161). Kent, UK: IATEFL.
- Razi, S. (2015b). *Reasons of plagiarism in undergraduate academic writing and benefiting from Turnitin*. Paper presented at the International conference plagiarism across Europe and beyond 2015, 10-12 June, Brno, Czech Republic.
- Razi, S. (2017). Anonymous multi-mediated writing model: Peer feedback exchange in EAP. In D. Köksal (Ed.), *Researching ELT: Classroom methodology and beyond* (pp. 29-42). Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

Author & contact information



- Salim Razi (salimrazi@comu.edu.tr, salimrazi@gmail.com)

License information



Title of the work: Reasons for plagiarism by students: Why does it happen? – Training module for HEI instructors

Attribute work to name: ENAI working group for educational materials

Licensed under: creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0

Attribute using following text:

“Reasons for plagiarism by students: Why does it happen? – Training module for HEI instructors” by ENAI working group for educational materials is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0).