

## Conference Paper

# Graduate Students' Attitude Toward Plagiarism in Academic Writing

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## Abstract

Plagiarism is one of academic dishonesty that becomes a central issue and challenge faced by the educational sector. Students who study in a higher level of education will face many kinds of academic writing, which is not easy to deal with. Moreover, students need to find information related to their writing to support theories and arguments for their academic writing. This study aims to find out graduate language students' attitude toward plagiarism in academic writing.

This present study used a quantitative approach and survey as the design of the study. The target population was all of the graduate students in language study program in the second semester from four departments; English Language Teaching, Indonesian Language Teaching, Arabic Language Teaching, and Keguruan Bahasa department. 86 students were chosen as a sample using random sampling. Questionnaire and interview were used as the instruments in this study. The questionnaire was divided into three parts; cognitive, emotional and behavior.

The result shows that 66% or 57 students have a neutral attitude toward plagiarism. It means that they knew that plagiarism was an improper action, but they can tolerate plagiarism action. However, 33% or 28 students have a negative attitude toward plagiarism which means that they cannot tolerate plagiarism action. In contrast, only 1% or 1 student has a positive attitude toward plagiarism which means that they do not think that plagiarism is an improper action.

**Keywords:** Attitude, Plagiarism, Academic Writing

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## 1. Introduction

Academic dishonesty has become a central issue and challenge faced by the educational sector; one of them is plagiarism. The change of assessment method from oral examination to paper examination due to the increasing number of students made them easier to cheat and plagiarize (Gallant, 2011). Moreover, the availability of the huge number of resources on online tempts the students to commit plagiarism. In contrast, the development of information technologies not only make someone easy to plagiarise but also to discovering it (Foltýnek & Čech, 2012).

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Our focus of interest in this present paper is plagiarism, as one of the most common forms of academic misconduct and often not considered as serious offense among students (Jordan, 2001). The word plagiarism originally comes from a Latin “plagiarius” which means kidnapper (Permana & Santosa, 2018). Lambert, Hogan, & Barton (2003) define plagiarism as academic dishonesty that is a fraudulent action or attempt conducted by a writer or writers to use unlawful means in any academic work. Thus, it can be concluded that plagiarism is claiming someone’s idea, thoughts, or inventions to be one’s own without any attribution mentions to the original.

Previous studies stated that lack of knowledge about plagiarism, students’ tendency toward such behavior and not understanding of seriousness that violations increase plagiarism frequency (Bilić-Zulle, Ažman, Frković, & Petrovečki, 2008; Mavrinac, M., Brumini, G., Bilić-Zulle, L., & Petrovečki, 2010) especially when the Internet is the source of plagiarism (Jones, Reid, & Bartlett, 2008). Recognizing attitudes towards plagiarism is an important basis for educating and deterring students from plagiarizing (Pupovac, Bilic-Zulle, Mavrinac, & Petrovecki, 2010).

Attitude can be defined as a way of opinion or feeling that someone usually has about something (Longman Advanced American Dictionary, 2007). Hogg & vaughan (2005) defined attitude as a relatively enduring organization of belief, feelings and behavioral tendencies towards socially significant objects, groups’ events or symbols. Attitude is a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution or event (Ajzen, 1988). In short, attitude is an individual’s belief, thinking, feeling about something such as an object, groups, event or symbols. When people have a favorable attitude toward something, they would have an intention to perform the action while when they have unfavorable attitude, they would not intend to do it (Cahyono, 2005). As a result, if the students have a positive attitude toward plagiarism, it will make them possible to commit plagiarism. On the other hand, if the students have a negative attitude toward plagiarism, it will make them carefully in writing so that they can avoid committing plagiarism. Having a negative attitude toward plagiarism is important. A negative attitude can lead the students to produce an original written work. The purpose of this study is to explore the attitudes of graduate students in the language program toward plagiarism.

## 2. Method

This present study used a quantitative approach and survey as the research design. 86 graduate students from four language majors; Pendidikan Bahasa Indonesia, Pendidikan

Bahasa Inggris, Pendidikan Bahasa Arab and Keguruan Bahasa in Universitas Negeri Malang took part in this present study and 12 of them were interviewed.

Questionnaire and interview guideline were instruments in this study. The questionnaire was adapted from Cahyono (2005) and Mavrinac, et al (2010) and its consist of 25 statements which divided into three parts; cognitive, emotional and behavior. The questionnaire set out in positive and negative statements. Expert validator and tryout were used to validate this instruments.

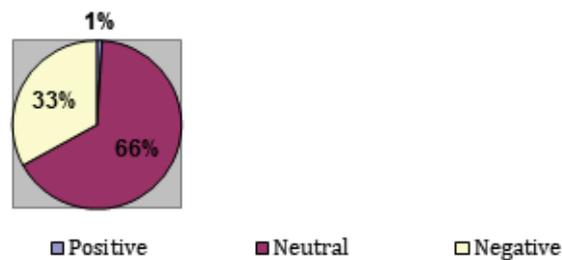
Moreover, the writer divided the score from the questionnaire into three; score around 25 – 58 means that they have a positive attitude, score around 59 – 93 means the students have a neutral attitude and score around 94 – 125 means that the students have a negative attitude toward plagiarism. Then, the writer analyzed the respondents' respond through the questionnaire and seek suitable respondents for interview. The questions regarding plagiarism on the interview were based on two main questions; What do you think about plagiarism? And Do you want to commit plagiarism? The interview session recorded and after that the writer transcribed it.

### 3. Findings and Discussions

The result revealed moderate attitude toward plagiarism among graduate students. In the cognitive component, 76,8% of graduate students believe that plagiarism in academic writing could not be ignored if the academic writing is an important scientific work. 64% of graduate students state that plagiarism could not enhance their score. 61,6% of graduate students believe that on certain occasions plagiarism is okay. Then, only 55,8% argue that sometimes plagiarism is needed in academic writing and plagiarism is not something bad. In contrast, 32,4% argue that plagiarism could make them finish the task faster and only 27,9% believe that plagiarism is a violation of academic integrity.

In the emotional component, 73,7% of graduate students believe that the researcher should not commit plagiarism. 68,6% of graduate students argue that it is not permissible to use other people's ideas without citing the source. 60,4% of graduate students think that plagiarist should be punished. 55,8% state that it is not okay to use own previously published work without citing to complete the current work and 47,7% of graduate students believe that sometimes someone could avoid using others people ideas/ writing without citing the source. 43% believe that it is not okay to commit plagiarism if we do not know the definition of plagiarism and only 27,9% graduate students state that early researchers who did not know much about plagiarism must not receive lighter penalties for plagiarism and

In the behavior component, 73,3% of graduate students would not commit plagiarism if they think they would not be caught. 71% of graduate students would not commit plagiarism if they think they will get a high score. 63,9% of graduate students argue that the deadline would not be made them committing plagiarism. 57% believe that it is not okay writing by taking phrases from various materials without mentioning the source. 58,2% of graduate students state that it is not okay to copy and paste material from the internet for essay writing. 40,7% of graduate students argue that it is not okay to summarize other people's ideas without mentioning the source if the idea is the same with their idea. Figure 1 showed the students' attitude toward plagiarism.



**Figure 1:** Students' Attitude toward Plagiarism

Based on the questionnaire, the majority of students had a neutral attitude toward plagiarism and others had a negative attitude. However, there was one student who had a positive attitude toward plagiarism. The interview result also in line with the questionnaire.

1. *"If someone intentionally stealing others' ideas, it means he did an improper action. But, it was okay to commit plagiarism because they had a lack of knowledge about plagiarism". (ED)*
2. *"I strongly disagree about plagiarism, however, in our country plagiarism was not a serious problem". (NA)*

The difference of attitude might be caused by several aspects such as what they believe, their emotion and their cognitive to the plagiarism were different. Their attitude toward plagiarism would make the students considered to commit plagiarism (Teeter, 2015).

Some students might believe that plagiarism could enhance their score and it would make their family proud. It is like they only focus on the score as the final result of learning, not the process. Besides, graduate students usually laid at the competitive

atmosphere (Aina & Wijayati, 2018). It makes them want to get a high score too. Plagiarism is an iniquitous competition and definitely, a contravene of Moral rights because the accused is stealing ideas of some other person or presenting some other persons work by making his own without acknowledging the person (Green, 2002).

Some students also believed that plagiarism could make them finished their task faster. They argued that their lectures sometimes gave many assignments with limited time so that they have to plagiarized in order to finish all of the tasks. It is clear that the heavy workload has impacted students to plagiarize (Ehrich, Steven, James, 2015). They also stated that their lecturer sometimes asked them to cite a “hard” sources to find, so that they have to cite the sources with secondary plagiarism.

In some part, the acceptance of plagiarism are varied (Hu & Lei, 2012). They argued that the assignment would not be checked by the lecturer so that their lecturer would not know that they committed plagiarism. They believed that most cases of plagiarism are not identified by their teachers and they would not be punished severely if they were caught with plagiarism (Mu, 2010). However, for their thesis, they claimed that they would prevent plagiarism because the university would check their thesis using plagiarism software. In contrast, some of English major and Keguruan Bahasa stated differently. They argued that some of their lecturers know when they plagiarize and some of their lecturers used plagiarism checker software so that they scared to committed plagiarism in that course.

Moreover, Some students believed that plagiarism is a violation of academic integrity.

(3) *“No, I would not commit plagiarism. like I stated before that my writing ever is plagiarized, so I would not do the same mistake as the plagiarist did to me”.*(NA) However, they argued that it was really hard to keep away from it.

(4) *“Hahaha... I would prevent plagiarism as much as I can. however, maybe if the time is limited, I would commit it”.* (AD)

(5) *“As much as I can, I would prevent plagiarism. However, honestly, it would be difficult to get away from plagiarism”.*(ND)

Most of them knew that plagiarism was an improperly action, but they had to do and their attitude to plagiarism was neutral. Then, some of them argued that it was okay to committed plagiarism if they did not have sufficient knowledge about it. They also believed that they cannot avoid using other ideas because they argued that there was nothing new under the sun. Therefore, most of the graduate students had a neutral attitude toward plagiarism. The students argued that honestly they strongly disagree with plagiarism, but in some conditions, they had to commit plagiarism. Thus, they had a neutral attitude.

## 4. Conclusion and Suggestions

In short, graduate students on Universitas Negeri Malang had a neutral attitude toward plagiarism. Neutral attitude means they knew that plagiarism was an improper action, but they can tolerate plagiarism action. It was proven by although some students believed that plagiarism was not an appropriate action, sometimes they still committed it. This may be because there is no checking for their task and they never caught up when they committing plagiarism. Students must be aware that plagiarism is an improper action which had to avoid. The academic staff also have to spread out the consequences of plagiarism, as a result, although plagiarism is not fully resolved, it may be decreased.

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