Students' Behaviors and Views of Paraphrasing and Inappropriate Textual Borrowing in an EFL Academic Setting

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This study examines skillful EFL writers' and less skillful writers' EFL performance and perceptions of paraphrasing and inappropriate text borrowing, the extent to which their performance matches perceptions, and the factors behind their problematic text borrowing. Ninety-five postgraduates and undergraduates in Taiwan accomplished a paraphrasing task and completed a questionnaire. The findings revealed a mismatch between the participants' behaviors and perceptions. The participants tended to deny having committed plagiarism and claimed they were aware of the importance of paraphrasing. However, such belief has contrasted sharply with their actual behaviors in the paraphrasing task in which both postgraduates and undergraduates failed to produce acceptable texts. The reasons for this included not having explicitly learned paraphrasing, unsuccessful transfer of paraphrasing knowledge to writing due to a lack of experience and practice, and the influence of their citation practice in Chinese writing. In addition, the undergraduates plagiarized more strings of words than the graduate students did. The possible reasons for this could include the undergraduates' less sufficient metacognitive knowledge and strategies, as well as their immature cognitive development. This study suggests that to raise EFL students' awareness of and performance in paraphrasing, improving their English proficiency and metacognition, and practice on paraphrasing are necessary in EFL writing classes.
Key Words: paraphrasing, plagiarism, second language writing, paraphrasing behavior, learner perceptions

1 Introduction

Plagiarism has received worldwide attention because the cases of plagiarism seem to increase in the field of higher education. A study of students' works on computer science at Edinburgh University showed that there were

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identical contents in ninety-one out of two hundred and fifteen pieces of work without proper citation. Then tested with further plagiarism software, there were twenty-six more plagiarism involved (English, 1999). The findings of the studies conducted in different countries around the world have suggested that plagiarism is a serious concern in the field of higher education (Ashworth, Bannister, & Thorne, 1997; O'Connor & Lovelock, 2002; Seppanen, 2002; Stefani & Carroll, 2001; Weeks, 2001; White, 1993; Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2001).

Plagiarism in students' papers may include stealing other people's works and taking them as one's own, copying the whole or even a portion of the source texts, and paraphrasing material from sources without appropriate documentation (Park, 2003; Wilhoit, 1994). According to Roig (2003), the forms of plagiarism found in the field of academy can be generally classified into three categories: plagiarism of ideas, plagiarism of texts, e.g., Howard's idea of patchwriting (as cited in Roig, 2003), and inappropriate paraphrasing.

There are a number of reasons for student plagiarism and Park (2003) listed some of them as follows: lack of understanding, personal values/attitudes, students' attitudes toward teachers and class, and students' academic performance, etc. Moreover, it seems that students of poorer academic performance tend to plagiarize more often than those of better academic performance (Straw, 2002). Howard argued that patchwriting would be a characteristic of immature writers (as cited in Roig, 2003). Novice writers rely heavily on the language from the original sources.

Moreover, personality studies have also uncovered factors related to academic dishonesty. For example, students who lack confidence in themselves or are alienated from other members in the class are more likely to engage in cheating (Calabrese & Cochran, 1990; Raffetto, 1985). Students who lack confidence in their writing in a second or foreign language tend to adopt the original sources rather than rephrasing the ideas they contain in their own words (Angelova & Riazantseva 1999; Biggs, 1994).

In addition, text readability and familiarity with the sentence structures and words that appear in source texts also affect paraphrasing performance. Roig (1999) found that fewer plagiarized sections were found with students who paraphrased a text with easy-to-understand sentences compared to a group of students who paraphrased a more difficult one. Thus, students may have difficulty producing proper paraphrases when the text is beyond their level of comprehension.

Further, plagiarism may result from students' immature summary skills. Researchers have focused on the relationship between summary skills and suspected inappropriate textual borrowing in students' writings (Brown & Day, 1983; Garner & McCaleb, 1985; Johns, 1985; Taylor, 1984). For example, to determine the effect that a second or foreign language may have on students' summary writings, Shi (2004) compared the use of sources between L1 and L2 students. The results showed that the Chinese-speaking

students depended more on the original sources than students who spoke English as their first language in writing summary in English.

Sometimes plagiarism may result from students' inappropriate paraphrasing or insufficient knowledge of appropriate referencing. Students may face the challenge of appropriate paraphrasing (Roig, 2001). Furthermore, students' immature cognitive and language development may affect their paraphrasing performance (Campbell, 1990; Pennycook, 1994). For the students who have to complete the papers with a second or foreign language, their limited writing competence may hinder them from legitimate paraphrasing. The suspicious textual borrowing in students' papers may merely result from the students' poor paraphrasing skills instead of their deliberate violation. Currie's (1998) study showed that an ESL student's unfamiliarity with subject matter and genres, as well as her insufficient knowledge to solve problems led the student to borrow text inappropriately. In addition, Deckert (1993) found that ESL Chinese students were unfamiliar with inappropriate textual borrowing in Western definition. Compared to cognitively less mature ESL Chinese students, more mature ESL Chinese students were more aware of inappropriate textual borrowing and regard authorship more seriously. Younger ESL writers thus require clear instruction to combat inappropriate textual borrowing.

Finally, cultural factors can interfere with students' paraphrasing (Ballard & Clanchy, 1991; Bloch & Chi, 1995; Currie, 1998; Johns, 1991; Pennycook, 1996). The issue that Chinese learners are denounced as rote learners tending to imitate the memorized role model without their own creativity has been discussed in many studies (Biggs, 1991; Deckert, 1993; Jochnowitz, 1986; Sampson, 1984). The phenomenon can be explained in terms of memorization and imitation. Memorization is considered a crucial foundation of learning in the Eastern society for the following reasons. First, the habitual memorization of Chinese learners came from their unique writing system (Matalene, 1985). Different from English language, the Chinese writing system embraces numerous characters instead of alphabetic letters. Chinese would learn these complicated meanings of Chinese characters in the nursery rhymes: "Then they learn set phrases, mostly drawn from classical sources…" (Matalene, 1985, p. 792). Therefore, Chinese commonly use the idioms or phrases from the masterpieces in their expression, which is a way of showing one's superiority in learning and respect for the perpetual Chinese literary tradition. The second reason accounting for memorization in the Eastern society is that most learning and evaluation are based on textbooks (Hayes & Introna, 2005). The emphasis on memorization in Chinese convention stems from the Confucian tradition: "Confucianism has long been seen as a philosophy with places great emphasis on memorizing the classic texts and being able to recite them by heart (Bloch & Chi, 1995, p. 232). Marton, Dall'Alba, and Kun (2001) differentiated various forms of memorization: "The traditional Asian practice of repetition or

memorization have different purposes such as association with mechanical rote learning and to deepen and develop understanding" (p. 106).

Imitation is another tradition for Chinese learners (Shei, 2004) for three major reasons. First, Chinese learners believe that adopting other authors' words is in fact showing respect for these authors (Pennycook, 1996). Students are encouraged and even required to use or imitate the classical works or sayings from the masterpieces in their own writings. However, they may often fail to cite the quotes. Shei proposed the idea of integrated borrowing—students take the words, phrases, or even sentences from others' works without giving credit to the originators, to explain for this problem. Before Chinese learners become advanced writers, they are allowed to imitate others' works to gain experience in academic writing. Shei (2004) suggested that the "teacher go into the didactic procedure and try to find out…the difficulty [students] encounter…" (p. 8). Teachers should thus examine students' papers and views to find out the reasons for students' plagiarizing behavior to effectively help the students.

1.1 Students' attitudes and perceptions of paraphrase and plagiarism

Most studies on students' perceptions of academic dishonesty and plagiarism interviewed or surveyed students. The questionnaires included various scenarios related to plagiarism and cheating (Ashworth, Freewood, & Macdonald, 2003), asking students to rank the seriousness of the problem based on their own judgment. The results of numerous studies suggest that students' attitudes toward plagiarism are quite varied (Banwell, 2003; Hayes & Introna, 2005; Overbey & Guiling, 1999; Roberts & Rabinowitz, 1992; Sutton & Huba, 1995). On the one hand, some studies have shown that students recognize the seriousness of plagiarism and realize that it is necessary to avoid it, making use of citations and paraphrasing when needed. For example, Banwell (2003) investigated how Chinese and South-East Asian students in a UK University perceived inappropriate textual borrowing and academic dishonesty and found that "students are aware of what plagiarism is, and understand the importance of presenting their ideas in their own words and using correct referencing and citation methods" (p. 14). However, these students who were interviewed also indicated that the way students studied or conducted research in the United Kingdom was different from that in Asia, and that their limited English proficiency might hinder them from understanding the university demands.

On the other hand, the results of some studies have suggested that students consider inappropriate textual borrowing a minor problem, and that they tend to treat it in a rather tolerant way. For example, Hayes and Introna (2005) investigated students from different countries about their attitudes toward various issues concerning academic dishonesty. The results showed that most of the students regarded a small portion of plagiarized words or sentences in their papers acceptable. Therefore, Hayes and Introna (2005)

concluded that "…across all cultures, not only is copying several sentences likely to be endemic in coursework (or term paper) submissions, but also that regardless of background, students do not tend to judge it as an unacceptable practice" (p. 221). Moreover, some students even claimed that copying would facilitate their learning. Therefore, they believed that plagiarizing others' works will force them to understand the meanings of these works and finally help them learn the target language. In addition, students consider plagiarism committed by them and by their peers acceptable (Daniel, Blount, & Ferrell, 1991; Lim & See, 2001). Students tended to neglect the fact of their peers cheating and would rather keep silent than report to the authority concerned; they would regard their peers' plagiarism as understandable if their peers had learning problems (Lim & See, 2001). It seems that students have different opinions about plagiarism.

Finally, students may have different opinions on what legitimate paraphrase is (Roig, 2003). The issues on appropriate paraphrase and plagiarism have drawn many researchers' attention (Hale, 1987; Roig, 1997, 1999; Wilhoit, 1994). Roig (1997) conducted a study in which the undergraduates were asked to identify whether the written passages were plagiarism or legitimate paraphrase. The result showed that a great number of the tested undergraduates failed to tell the difference between the plagiarized texts and the qualified paraphrase. On the contrary, Hale (1987) found that only a small number of the students had a problem with identifying paraphrase and plagiarism while most of the students were aware of the proper ways of paraphrasing and referencing. It seems that the conclusions of different studies were incomplete and contradictory.

In Batane's (2010) study, with regard to the reasons for plagiarizing, one-fourth of the participants revealed that being lazy caused their plagiarism, which was confirmed by four-fifth of the instructors. Most students claimed that moral responsibility determined their plagiarizing behaviors, whereas 6.7% of the participants believed that insufficient skills caused their plagiarizing behaviors. In addition, they plagiarized to save time and exertion although they were able to paraphrased texts. The situation that colleges did not severely punish students for plagiarizing also led to the reoccurrence of students' plagiarism. Moreover, when students were assigned the same topics as previous years, they were likely to plagiarize the preceding students' papers.

2 Statement of the Problem

To explore explanations for students' insufficient knowledge about paraphrasing and inappropriate textual borrowing, researchers have conducted studies adopting different methods (Brown & Day, 1983; Garner, 1982; Glatt & Haertel, 1982; Hale, 1987; Kennedy, 1985; Park, 2003; Roig, 1997, 1999; Shi, 2004; Standing & Gorassini, 1986; White, 1993; Winograd, 1984). However, few studies have been examined EFL students in college or higher education concerning their behaviors and perceptions of paraphrasing

and inappropriate textual borrowing, and the factors which account for their plagiarizing behaviors. Even fewer studies have investigated the relationship between students' English proficiency level (cognitive factor) and the students' inappropriate textual borrowing behaviors. Therefore, this study aims to examine whether students' English proficiency plays an important role in their inappropriate textual borrowing behaviors and views, i.e., whether more and less skillful writers' and less skillful writers' differ in their behaviors and views, considering the students' personal, cultural, and affective factors. If so, then this study supports the view that improving EFL students' English proficiency may contribute to the students' awareness and performance in paraphrasing. In addition, the individual characteristics related to writers' inappropriate textual borrowing behaviors disclosed in this work can inform EFL writing teachers of the writers' major problems in order to effectively help the writers to avoid inappropriate textual borrowing. Primarily, this study intends to examine four questions:

1. What is the performance in the paraphrasing activity of the graduate and undergraduate students?
2. What are the perceptions of and attitudes toward paraphrasing and plagiarism of the graduate and undergraduate students?
3. To what extent do the participants' paraphrasing behaviors match their perceptions of paraphrasing and plagiarism?
4. Are there any differences between the undergraduate and graduate students in their behaviors and perceptions of paraphrasing and plagiarism?

3 Method

3.1 Participants

Fifty-seven English-major sophomores and 38 graduate students in the TESOL program at a national university in Taiwan participated in this study. Forty-nine of the sophomores had achieved Level 2 of the College Student English Proficiency Test (CSEPT), which is equivalent to the high-intermediate proficiency level of the GEPT. Twenty-six of the graduate students had passed the high-intermediate to advanced writing proficiency level of the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT). Approximately 97 percent of the participants had learned English for more than six years, while nearly 85 percent had received formal English writing instruction for at least two years. An identification number was assigned to each of the participants in order for them to respond to the test and questionnaire anonymously.

3.2 The instrument

The instruments include a reading passage for the paraphrasing task and a questionnaire. The reading passage, "Spare the Rod, Spoil the Parenting" written

by Pitts, Jr. (2001) (see Appendix A), was used to test the participants' actual knowledge and performance in paraphrasing. Definitions of difficult words were added at the end of the reading passage. The subjects were required to read the passage carefully and then paraphrased two selected paragraphs, which were chosen based on their representation of the main idea of the passage.

The questionnaire intended to examine the participants' perceptions and understanding of paraphrasing and plagiarism. It included two parts. The first part collected the demographic data, while the second contained twenty-six statements to assess the students' attitudes toward paraphrasing and plagiarism using a five-point Likert Scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. In addition, to better understand the reasons for the participants' behaviors, an open-ended question which asked about this was also included.

3.3 Procedure

The researcher first explained to the participants the goal and the procedure of the study. Then the participants received the reading passage and were required to read the whole text thoroughly and then focus on two selected paragraphs and to read the paragraphs carefully before they paraphrased them. The reading and paraphrasing process took about an hour. Once the paraphrasing task was completed, the participants were given 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

3.4 Data analysis

The quantitative data collected from the paraphrasing task and the questionnaire were analyzed using the SPSS software package. The qualitative data—portions of plagiarized text obtained from the participants' paraphrasing task—were coded and categorized based on the coding scheme adopted from Shi (2004) (see Appendix B). Two evaluators analyzed, coded, and categorized the student behaviors of paraphrasing demonstrated in the paraphrasing task, and the inter-rater reliability was .86. The number and category of plagiarized words were added at the end of each suspicious sentence. The coded texts which represented the plagiarism patterns were selected as samples for discussion.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Students' paraphrasing behaviors

Based on the interpretation of the reading passage, the graduate and undergraduate students' paraphrasing samples were categorized into correct- and distorted-interpretation groups. Around 25% (24 out of 95) of the participants misinterpreted the meaning of the reading material.

Table 1 shows the mean length of paraphrases written by the participants. Generally speaking, paraphrasing tasks written by the graduate students were slightly longer than those written by the undergraduate students, either with correct or distorted interpretation (M=101.55, 96.71 words respectively by graduate students, and M= 95.6, 95.71 words respectively by undergraduates).

Table 1. Paraphrasing Tasks of Graduate and Undergraduate Students

Participants	Correct Interpretation				Distorted Interpretation			
	N	%	M	SD	N	%	M	SD
Postgraduates	31	43.66	101.55	23.359	7	29.17	96.71	13.124
Undergraduates	40	56.34	95.6	29.327	17	70.83	95.71	29.141
Total	71	100			24	100		

Sum= 106 words

Coding criteria adopted from Shi's (2004) study were used to categorize the types of plagiarism that appeared in the student writing (see Appendix B). In the coding scheme, the three major categories of data coding include With no Reference (N), With Reference (R), and With Quotation (Q). Furthermore, the three subcategories involve strings of words copied exactly (C), strings of words slightly modified by adding/deleting words or using synonyms for content words (M), and strings of words modified by reformulating the syntax or structure of the original text (R). The codes used for student plagiarism include NC, NM, NR, RC, RM, RR, and QC.

The criterion for determining plagiarized strings of words is the combination of at least two content words from the original text. In addition, for ease of data analysis, the plagiarized words were calculated in numbers since most of the sentences in the participants' paraphrases included a combination of different types of plagiarism. That is, two words at the beginning of one sentence may be coded as non-referenced strings of words copied exactly (NC), while the rest of the words in this sentence may be coded as non-referenced words with slight modification (NM). The number and category of plagiarized words were added at the end of each suspicious sentence. In addition, the descriptive analysis of the participants' paraphrasing tasks is illustrated in Table 2.

First, based on Table 2, the number of words with appropriate references is low in both postgraduate and undergraduate students' texts. Furthermore, more strings of words with appropriate references were found in the correctly-interpreted paraphrasing tasks (M= 5.70 and M= 1.96) than in the distorted ones (M= .43 and M= .00). Second, regarding the strings of words with no reference, on the one hand, more strings of words without reference were found in the graduate students' correctly-interpreted paraphrasing tasks than in their distorted ones (M= 39.87 and M= 21.43 respectively). In addition, similar numbers of words without reference were found in the undergraduate students' correct and distorted paraphrasing tasks (M= 52.56 and M= 52.46

respectively). Third, most strings of slightly modified words were found in postgraduates' correctly-interpreted paraphrasing tasks and in both the undergraduates' correct and distorted paraphrasing tasks (M= 22.29, M= 35.53 and M= 34.76 respectively) without any references to the author.

Under the category of no references, the number of words copied exactly was higher (M= 12.57) for the distorted paraphrasing tasks produced by the graduate students than for the other two types—NM and NR (M= 4.00 and M= 4.86). Meanwhile, with regard to the distorted paraphrasing tasks produced by the undergraduates, the number of words with slight modification (M= 34.76) was higher than those for the other two types—NC and NR (M= 6.94 and M= 10.76). In the correctly-interpreted paraphrasing tasks produced by the graduate students, the number of words with slight modification (M= 22.29) was higher than those for the other two types (M= 10.84 and M= 6.74). Similarly, in the correctly-interpreted paraphrasing tasks produced by the undergraduates, the number of words with slight modification (M= 35.53) was higher than those for the other two types (M= 6.40 and M= 10.63), even though the mean (M= 35.53) was higher than that for the graduate students (M= 22.29).

In their correctly-interpreted paraphrasing tasks, more strings of words with appropriate references were found in the graduate students' tasks (M= 5.70) than the undergraduates' (M= 1.96). In contrast, in their correctly-interpreted paraphrasing tasks, more numbers of words without references were found in the undergraduates' work (M= 52.56) than the graduate students' (M= 39.87). Most strings of words with appropriate references were found in the graduate students' exactly copied words (M= 3.35), whereas most strings of words with appropriate references were found in the undergraduates' strings of words modified by restructuring sentences (M= 1.03).

Table 2. Categories of Participants' Plagiarized Text

| Types | Graduate Students | | | | Undergraduate Students | | | |
| | Correct Interpretation (n=31) | | Distorted Interpretation (n=7) | | Correct Interpretation (n=40) | | Distorted Interpretation (n=17) | |
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
NC	10.84	12.23	12.57	11.70	6.40	11.35	6.94	8.57
NM	22.29	24.39	4.00	3.16	35.53	35.69	34.76	34.33
NR	6.74	10.97	4.86	6.18	10.63	18.93	10.76	12.95
Subtotal	39.87		21.43		52.56		52.46	
RC	3.35	14.74	.00	.00	.15	.66	.00	.00
RM	.87	4.85	.00	.00	.15	.95	.00	.00
RR	1.19	6.65	.00	.00	1.03	6.48	.00	.00
QC	.29	.90	.43	1.13	.63	2.75	.00	.00
Subtotal	5.70		.43		1.96		.00	
Total	45.57		21.86		54.52		52.46	

Based on the analysis, one point deserves our attention. The students who distorted the meaning in their paraphrases (nearly 25%) tended to adopt more strings of words from the reading passage. This might be because the passage may be too difficult for them to comprehend. As Roig (1999) suggested, students may have difficulty producing proper paraphrases when the text is difficult for them to understand. Further, more strings of unreferenced words (subtotal M= 21.43 and M= 52.46) than strings of referenced words (subtotal mean of M= .43 and M= .00) were found in the paraphrasing tasks written by the graduate students and undergraduates who misinterpreted the reading passage. The students may thus have encountered problems paraphrasing the task, and have been less likely to hold themselves accountable for providing the source information.

The students' paraphrasing tasks show that several individuals simply replaced unfamiliar key words with the definitions provided, while keeping original sentence structure. An example is shown, as follows, with the adopted phrase underlined.

Plagiarized Sample 1—produced by an Undergraduate Student
A university study suggests that corporal punishment may be <u>stating officially that someone who has been blamed for something is not guilty</u>.

The Definition of "Exonerate" Provided by the Researcher
"Exonerate" means stating officially that <u>someone who has been blamed for something is not guilty</u>.

The rephrased sections seemed to be awkward because the participants had forced an inconsistent chunk into their own sentences, and this can also be considered as an example of patchwriting (Howard, 1995, as cited in Roig, 2003). Samples of each type of plagiarism uncovered in the participants' paraphrasing tasks are provided in Table 3, and the number of borrowed words is added at the end of each student sample.

Table 3. Samples of Types of Plagiarism

Code	Participants' Sample	Original Text
NC	Instead, it reminds us of **the central tenet of family life: parents in charge.** (9 words)	Yet the very fact that spanking must be exonerated by a university study suggests how far afield we've wandered from what used to be **the central tenet of family life: parents in charge**.
NM	**Is it really hard to see where that road stretches?** (10 words)	**And is it so difficult to see where that road leads,…**
NR	**The answer used to obvious, but not anymore.** (8 words)	**The answer used to be obvious. It's obvious no more.**

RC	Second, **a spoiled child becomes a self-centered adult**, and he or she will be **ill-equipped to deal with the vagaries and reversals of life**. (Pitts, 2001) (17words)	**…and that a spoiled child becomes a self-centered adult ill-equipped to deal with the vagaries and reversals of life?**
RM	**The report implies how far we have been away from the dominant principle of family life.** (Pitts, 2001) (16 words)	Yet the very fact that spanking must be exonerated by **a university study suggests how far afield we've wandered from what used to be the central tenet of family life:** parents in charge.
RR	The authors think that **the answer is not obvious anymore.** (Pitts, 2001) (6 words)	**The answer used to be obvious. It's obvious no more.**
QC	It suggests that we need to know what the central principle of family life: "**parents in charge**." (3words)	Yet the very fact that spanking must be exonerated by a university study suggests how far afield we've wandered from what used to be the central tenet of family life: **parents in charge**.

Further, paraphrasing samples of each type of plagiarism written by the graduate and undergraduate students are specified as follows, and the suspicious plagiarized strings of words are underlined (refer to Appendix A for the original text).

> *Plagiarized Sample 2—NC (by a Graduate Student)*
> Though <u>a university study suggests</u> that spanking is not guilty, we have been far away from <u>the central tenet of family life: parents in charge</u>. (13 words)

> *Plagiarized Sample 3—RC (by a Graduate Student)*
> …, and that <u>a spoiled child becomes a self-centered adult</u> who is not ready to <u>deal with the vagaries and reversals of life</u>? (Pitts, 2001) (15 words)

Based on the plagiarized samples 2 and 3, the strings of words which the participants tended to copy are of two types. One is the phrases that are common for daily use. For example, a great number of the participants copied the phrase, "a university study," in their paraphrases. The other type is the phrases that were not familiar to these participants.

> *Paraphrasing Sample 4—NM (by a Graduate Student)*
> <u>Moreover, it is hard to notice where the direction is</u> and <u>to figure out that it's likely to be ruined by self-esteem</u>. (21 words)

Paraphrasing Sample 5—RM (by a Graduate Student)
<u>The report implies how far we have been away from the dominant principle of family life</u> in the past. (Pitts, 2001) (16 words)

It can be seen from the student samples 4 and 5 that either with correct interpretation or misinterpretation, the graduate students and undergraduates tended to replace original words or specific phrases with synonyms while keeping the original sentence structures.

Plagiarized Sample 6—NR (produced by an Undergraduate Student)
<u>The answer was so apparent before while it is vague now</u>**.** (11 words)

Plagiarized Sample 7—RR (produced by a Graduate Student)
<u>The answer which used to be so clear is no longer evident anymore</u>**.** (Pitts, 2001) (13 words)

The other type of plagiarism found in the participants' paraphrases is simply restructuring sentences from the source material by combining two related sentences with conjunctions or clauses (refer to plagiarized samples 6 and 7) while keeping most of the original words or phrases. Samples 4, 5, 6, and 7 suggest that these participants had not acquired the knowledge required to produce a legitimate paraphrase, or that they could not apply what they knew to the actual paraphrasing task they were given.

Paraphrasing Sample 8—QC (produced by an Undergraduate Student)
Regardless with how to put corporal punishment into execution, <u>"the central tenet of family life—parents in charge"</u> is enforced. (9 words)

Strings of words which were used with quotation marks formed a small portion in the paraphrasing tasks, although the participants failed to provide appropriate references for these. When the participants had problems rephrasing the phrases, they would choose to put them in quotation marks, as in the student sample 8 did with the phrase, "parents in charge." In sum, the outcome of the participants' paraphrasing tasks showed that most of the participants in the present study failed to produce either appropriate paraphrases or provide the necessary references for quotes.

4.2 Students' perceptions of paraphrasing and inappropriate textual borrowing

Table 4 shows the students' overall perceptions of paraphrasing and inappropriate textual borrowing, presented by the means and standard deviations. The top three factors which accounted for their plagiarizing behaviors included their English writing deficiency (Statement 18), unfamiliarity with the topic of the reading material (Statement 19), and difficulties in rephrasing the original tasks in their own words (Statement 25).

Table 4. Means and Standard Deviations of the Students' Perceptions of Paraphrasing and Inappropriate Textual Borrowing

Statements	M	SD
1. I have learned the appropriate way to write a paraphrase.	2.93	1.20
2. I have practiced the appropriate way to write a paraphrase.	3.27	1.11
3. I know how to paraphrase correctly.	2.85	.96
4. I have learned direct quotation.	3.61	.99
5. I have practiced direct quotation.	3.63	.91
6. I know how to quote correctly.	3.45	.95
7. I have learned from the mass media about the plagiarism scandals.	4.04	.79
8. I know that plagiarism is a serious offense, in both academia and other professions.	4.44	.56
9. I know that plagiarism is a serious offense, so I will try to avoid it.	4.47	.56
10. When doing research papers, I will review the relevant literature from books, journals, and the Internet to find references.	4.52	.56
11. When doing English research papers, I will quote or paraphrase the sentences from the sources to support my idea.	4.34	.58
12. I think the popularity of the Internet has made it convenient for me to find useful sources.	4.47	.63
13. I have copied ideas or sentences from the books and journals and taken them as my own without providing citations.	2.89	1.14
14. I have copied ideas or sentences from the on-line materials and taken them as my own without providing citations.	3.18	1.12
15. If I am not certain about the sources of the quoted materials, I will not provide the citations.	3.34	.94
16. I have committed plagiarism when doing English research papers.	2.74	1.05
17. Even though I know the right way to produce a legitimate paraphrase, I am not certain whether my paraphrases are appropriate or not.	4.23	.61
18. I may paraphrase inappropriately due to my English writing deficiency.	3.86	.87
19. I may paraphrase incorrectly due to my unfamiliarity with the topic of the passage.	3.74	.91
20. I know that inappropriate paraphrasing may lead to plagiarism.	4.02	.81
21. I know that inappropriate use of references may lead to plagiarism.	4.25	.56
22. I know that plagiarism is an offense, but I still do it for some reasons.	2.97	.93
23. I plagiarize because time is too limited for me to search for relevant sources to support my own ideas.	3.27	1.04
24. When I do not have appropriate ideas, I may copy others' ideas without providing references.	3.36	1.01
25. I plagiarize because I have difficulty putting the original tasks in my own words.	3.55	.98
26. I plagiarize because I cannot fully understand the meaning of the original tasks.	3.24	1.10

Scale: 5= Strongly Agree; 4= Agree; 3= Neutral; 2= Disagree; 1= Strongly Disagree

The results of the study revealed a mismatch between the participants' behaviors and perceptions of paraphrasing and inappropriate textual borrowing. Responding to the questionnaire, the participants tended to deny having committed plagiarism when writing research papers (statement 16), strongly agreed that they would attempt to avoid plagiarism (statement 9), and claimed that they were aware of the importance of legitimate paraphrasing (statements 11 and 20) and the seriousness of inappropriate textual borrowing (statement 8). However, such beliefs were contradicted by their actual behaviors in the paraphrasing tasks.

To know the extent to which the graduate students' and undergraduates' reactions to paraphrasing and inappropriate textual borrowing differed, the data were further analyzed by the one-way ANOVA. The results are shown in Table 5 (only the significant results are listed). A significant difference was disclosed between the graduate students' and undergraduates' perceptions and knowledge in statements 5, 6, 13, 14, 24, and 26 ($p < .05$).

Table 5. One-way ANOVA of the Perceptions between Postgraduates and Undergraduates

Source of Variables	M	SD	F	P
Statement 5	3.63	.91	4.43	.038*
Statement 6	3.45	.95	5.92	.017*
Statement 13	2.89	1.14	4.20	.043*
Statement 14	3.18	1.12	7.09	.009*
Statement 24	3.36	1.01	7.29	.008*
Statement 26	3.24	1.10	7.86	.006*

*p <.05

Table 6 further illustrates the respective means and standard deviations of the postgraduates' and undergraduates' perceptions, which also showed a significant difference. First, based on statements 5 and 6, the extent to which the graduate students agreed on having practiced direct quotation and knowing how to quote correctly in statements 5 and 6 ($M = 3.87$ and $M = 3.74$) was higher than that of the undergraduates ($M = 3.47$ and $M = 3.26$). Second, statements 13 and 14 showed that the degree to which the undergraduates admitted to having copied ideas or sentences from written or online materials ($M = 3.09$ and $M = 3.42$) was higher than that of the graduate students ($M = 2.61$ and $M = 2.82$). In addition, based on statements 24 and 26, the extent to which the undergraduates agreed that they might plagiarize because they had problems generating ideas or could not fully comprehend the meaning of the source materials ($M = 3.58$ and $M = 3.49$) was higher than that of the graduate students ($M = 3.03$ and $M = 2.87$). Similar to the finding of previous studies (Banwell, 2003; Hayes & Introna, 2005; Overbey & Guiling, 1999; Roberts & Rabinowitz, 1992; Sutton & Huba, 1995), students in this study varied in their perceptions of paraphrasing and inappropriate textual borrowing. It is possible that the length of exposure to and time of learning English writing

may have been the cause for such different beliefs between the graduate and undergraduate students.

Table 6. Means and Standard Deviations of the Graduate and Undergraduate Students' Perceptions

	Graduate Students		Undergraduate Students	
	M	SD	M	SD
Statement 5	3.87	.78	3.47	.97
Statement 6	3.74	.92	3.26	.94
Statement 13	2.61	1.15	3.09	1.11
Statement 14	2.82	1.21	3.42	1.00
Statement 24	3.03	1.17	3.58	.82
Statement 26	2.87	1.23	3.49	.93

The participants were further required to provide other possible reasons for inappropriate textual borrowing in the open-ended question. Their responses are summarized as follows. First, most of the participants indicated that their limited second language writing ability hindered them correctly paraphrasing the reading passage. Specifically, they revealed that they had little confidence in their second language writing and struggled during the paraphrasing process, so that they would rely on the original phrases or sentences instead of expressing the meaning in their own words. This aspect corresponds to Roig's (2001) conclusion that student inappropriate textual borrowing might derive from the students' poor paraphrasing skills instead of deliberate violation of the rules against such behavior. Second, another reason may be their insufficient knowledge of and experience in paraphrasing and appropriate textual borrowing. Some of the students believed that it was acceptable to integrate several words from the source materials into their own expressions, and in fact they had seldom practiced how to paraphrase and cite sources in class. In addition, some participants even reported that copying the original phrases or sentences would help them to master the target language, because they would learn expressions by different native authors. Banwell (2003) indicated that the way students study or conduct research in the West is different from that in Asia. As Pennycook (1996) suggested, inappropriate textual borrowing found in the Chinese students' writing tasks may stem from their lack of the knowledge and practice in the conventions of authorship and ownership which have long been emphasized in the West. The findings of this study support the result of previous studies that insufficient cognitive development, knowledge, experience, or practice in English writing and paraphrasing can lead students to plagiarize in writing (Abasi, Akbari, & Graves, 2006; Angelil-Carter, 2000; Chandrasoma, Thompson, & Pennycook, 2004; Howard, 1995, 2001; Pecorari, 2003; Price, 2003; Wheeler, 2009). The findings of this study correspond to Wheeler's (2009) conclusion that students' inappropriate textual borrowing resulted from their little knowledge and scarce experience in citing sources correctly. Similarly, Abasi, Akbari, and Graves (2006) regarded students' plagiarizing behavior as an "authorial

identity construction" problem (p. 102) which was affected by their prior education. The students lacked experience in writing and awareness of ownership in their writing. Therefore, the students' consciousness of their "authorship" (p. 111) and of the relationship between writing and "identity" (p. 114) should be developed to address this problem.

Third, some of the participants recalled that their plagiarizing behaviors could be due to the fact that they did not understand the meaning of the source materials. Even more, some of them were not interested in or familiar with the topics of the research papers. Furthermore, several participants reported that if they were not certain of the origin of the cited sources, they would not provide references to them.

Fourth, some participants implied that the instructors' attitudes towards paraphrasing and inappropriate textual borrowing would sometimes affect their attitudes. In other words, if the instructors under-emphasized the importance of proper paraphrasing and referencing in class, or they did not examine the students' papers carefully, the students would tend to plagiarize ideas or strings of words from the source materials when they were writing research papers. Finally, personal characteristics or attitudes are other factors which might influence the students' plagiarizing behaviors. Some of the participants admitted that sometimes they were too lazy to check the origin of the cited sources, or they copied the original phrases and sentences to save time in drafting papers. If their instructors had assigned too many papers as homework, they would plagiarize with those topics they regarded as less important. Furthermore, some participants considered inappropriate textual borrowing a minor problem, or they would depend on luck and believe that they would not be caught copying material. In addition, sometimes the inappropriate textual borrowing would result from their carelessness. That is, they might forget to mark the sources of the reviewed literature and give credit to the authors. In general, there are many reasons which could explain the participants' plagiarizing behaviors, and it seems that although few students admitted to having committed plagiarism (statement 16), they were aware of the reasons that might account for such behavior.

5 Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

The results of the present study reveal a mismatch between the participants' behaviors and perceptions of paraphrasing and inappropriate textual borrowing. In response to the questionnaire, the participants tended to deny having committed plagiarism when writing research papers, strongly agreed that they would try to avoid inappropriate textual borrowing, and claimed that they were aware of the importance of legitimate paraphrasing and the seriousness of inappropriate textual borrowing. However, such beliefs contrasted sharply with their actual behaviors in the paraphrasing task, in which both postgraduates and undergraduates failed to produce acceptable

paraphrases, and many strings of plagiarized and inappropriately-referenced words were identified. In addition, the results show that the undergraduates plagiarized more strings of words than the graduate students. The possible reasons for this could include the undergraduates' less sufficient metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive strategies, as well as their immature cognitive development, which are worth further investigation. In order to elevate EFL students' awareness and performance in paraphrasing, improving their English proficiency and metacognition may thus be necessary.

Furthermore, when specifically being asked about their perceptions of plagiarizing written materials or online sources, the graduate students, who might be more confident in their English writing skills, tended to deny having committed plagiarism to the higher extent than the undergraduate students who might have less experience, cognitive development, metacognitive knowledge and strategies in English writing. Also, both groups of participants had more confidence in using direct quotations than legitimate paraphrases and proper references. The reasons provided by the participants for their plagiarizing behaviors included their limited English writing abilities and difficulties in rephrasing sources in their own words, insufficient knowledge and practice in paraphrasing and citation, lack familiarity with the topic, and misunderstanding of the source materials.

The reasons for the gap between the participants' perceptions and performance on paraphrasing and inappropriate textual borrowing are discussed in this paragraph. We could infer that the participants had not explicitly learned the right ways of paraphrasing and citing sources, or that their knowledge of these things did not transfer successfully to their writing due to a lack of experience and practice. In addition, the participants in this study did not provide proper references when they were not certain where the sources came from. Such loose criteria on citation could be influenced by their citation practice in Chinese writing, which suggests students omit the source when they are uncertain of it (Liao & Chen, 2009). Therefore, explicit awareness of the differences between English and Chinese citation practice should be made part of EFL writing classes. Students need education, training, and practice in appropriate textual borrowing at the early stage of their English paraphrasing writing. In addition, Currie (1998) revealed the complexity of one ESL student's plagiarism, and suggested instructors to understand students' previous strategies and attitudes, and provide the students meaningful tasks for them to practice integrating sources continuously, and help develop their consciousness of the relevant cultural differences.

In addition, to avoid student plagiarism, teachers can discuss the requirements for acceptable paraphrasing, discuss examples of inappropriate textual borrowing and appropriate paraphrases, and present strategies to avoid copying. Further, continuous practice in proper paraphrasing and citation is necessary if EFL students are to be able to apply what they know to their writing. On the other hand, educational institutions and instructors

have to pay attention to the issue of plagiarism because their attitudes and policies will influence the students' beliefs and behaviors. Regulations should be clearly explained in class. In addition, sufficient research-related courses incorporating critical reading, note taking, summarizing, and paraphrasing strategies and practice should be added to the curriculum to better equip students with the knowledge they require to overcome this problem.

Further, although novice ESL writers borrowed texts inappropriately when they attempted to construct their identity earnestly, the writers constructed their identities continuously in their writing process which contributed to their development in English writing and conventions (Quellette, 2008). Identity and plagiarism could be defined differently across social historical contexts. Thus, as Quellette (2008) suggested, ESL students need the opportunity to create, construct and negotiate their identities constantly, and discuss and assess inappropriate textual borrowing in different contexts.

The results of this study may not be applicable to other writing genres, such as critiques or arguments, and thus studies which examine the inappropriate textual borrowing behaviors of other writing genres are suggested. Further interviews with EFL students about their behaviors and perceptions of paraphrasing and inappropriate textual borrowing, and the factors for them, are also recommended. Moreover, other possible factors which may result in L2 students' plagiarizing behaviors should be explored. In addition, the participants indicated that being unable to interpret the meaning of sources or unfamiliarity with the topic might cause inappropriate textual borrowing, and text readability can also be taken into consideration in further studies.

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Appendix A.

Paraphrasing Activity

The following article in the *Seattle Times* in September 2001 was written by Leonard Pitts, Jr.. Please read the article and then paraphrase the blacken passage. (adopted from Ramage, J. D., Bean, J. C., & Johnson, J. (2003). *The Allyn & Bacon Guide to Writing, Brief Edition,* 3rd ed., pp. 403-405)

Spare the Rod, Spoil the Parenting

I hate to tell you this, but your kid is spoiled. Mine aren't much better.

That, in essence, is the finding of a recent Time/CNN poll. Most of us think most of our kids are overindulged, materialistic brats.

If you're waiting for me to argue the point, you're in the wrong column.

No, I only bring it up as context to talk about a controversial study released late last month. It deals with corporal punishment— spanking—and it has outraged those who oppose the practice while rearming those who support it.

It seems that Dr. Diana Baumrind, a psychologist at the University of California at Berkeley, followed 164 middle-class families from the time their children were in preschool until they reached their 20s. She found that most used some form of corporal punishment. She further found that, contrary to what we've been told for years, giving a child a mild spanking (defined as open-handed swats on the backside, arm or legs) does not leave the child scarred for life.

Baumrind, by the way, opposes spanking. Still, it's to her credit as an academic that her research draws a distinction other opponents refuse to. That is, a distinction between the minor punishments practiced by most parents who spank and the harsher variants practiced by a tiny minority (shaking and blows to the head or face, for example).

Yes, children whose parents treat them that severely are, indeed, more likely to be maladjusted by the time they reach adolescence. And, yes, the parents themselves are teetering dangerously close to child abuse.

But does the same hold true in cases where corporal punishment means little more than swatting a misbehaving backside?

For years, the official consensus from the nation's child-rearing experts was that it did. Maybe that's about to change. We can only hope.

For my money, there was always something spurious about the orthodoxy that assured us all corporal punishment, regardless of severity, was de facto abuse. Nevertheless, we bought into it, with the result being that parents who admitted to spanking were treated as primitive dolts and heaped with scorn. They were encouraged to negotiate with misbehaving children in order to nurture their self-esteem.

But the orthodoxy was wrong on several fronts.

In the first place, it's plainly ridiculous—and offensive—to equate a child who has been swatted on the butt with one who has been stomped, scalded or punched. In the second, the argument that reasonable corporal punishment leads inevitably to mental instability always seemed insupportable and has just been proven so by Baumrind's study. And in the third, have you ever tried to "negotiate" with a screaming 5-year-old? It may do wonders for the child's self esteem, but, I promise, it's going to kill yours. Your sanity, too.

Don't get me wrong, contrary to what its proponents sometimes claim, corporal punishment is not a panacea for misbehavior. Rearing a child requires not just discipline, but also humor, love and some luck.

Yet the very fact that spanking must be <u>exonerated</u> by a university study suggests how far <u>afield</u> we've wandered from what used to be the central <u>tenet</u> of family life: parents in charge. Ultimately, it probably doesn't matter whether that tenet is <u>enforced</u> by spanking or other corrective measures, so long as it is enforced.

I've seen too many children behave with too grand a sense of entitlement to believe that it is. Heard too many teachers tell horror stories of dealing with kids from households where parents are not sovereign, adult authority not respected. As a culture, we seem to have forgotten that the family is not a democracy, but a benign dictatorship.

Small wonder our kids are brats.

So the pertinent question isn't: To spank or not to spank? Rather, it's: Who's in charge here? Who is teaching whom? Who is guiding whom?

The answer used to be obvious. It's obvious no more. And is it so difficult to see where that road leads, to understand that it is possible to be poisoned by self-esteem, and that a spoiled child becomes a self-centered adult ill-equipped to deal with the <u>vagaries</u> and reversals of life?

Some folks think it's abuse when you swat a child's backside. But maybe, sometimes, it's abuse when you don't.

Definition:
Exonerate means stating officially that someone who has been blamed for something is not guilty. **Afield** refers to far away.
Tenet is a principle or belief.
Enforce suggests making something happen or forcing someone to do something.
Vagaries are unexpected changes in a situation or someone's behavior which cannot be controlled but have effect on one's life.

Appendix B.

Coding Scheme for Textual Borrowing

Adopted from Ling Shi (2004). Textual Borrowing in Second-Language Writing. *Written Communication*, *21*(2), p. 197.

Major Categories	Subcategories	Codes
With no reference to the author (**N**)	Strings of words exactly copied (**C**)	**NC**
	Strings of words slightly modified by adding/deleting words or using synonyms for content words (**M**)	**NM**
	Strings of words modified by reformulating syntax or structure of the original text (**R**)	**NR**
With reference to the author (**R**)	Strings of words exactly copied (**C**)	**RC**
	Strings of words slightly modified by adding/deleting words or using synonyms for content words (**M**)	**RM**
	Strings of words modified by reformulating syntax or structure of the original text (**R**)	**RR**
With quotation (**Q**)	Strings of words exactly copied (**C**)	**QC**