

# Reasons for College Students to Plagiarize in EFL Writing: Students' Motivation to Pass

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## Abstract

EFL students acquire their writing skill through practice and hard work. However, there seems to be a lot of reasons why EFL students should find the task of composing an essay so difficult that leads them to plagiarize. For that, the present paper tries to find out the real motivation for EFL students to plagiarize in writing. This research was conducted with freshman writing students through Fall Semester 2015/2016 in the English Department. A simple questionnaire and journal writing was used. The results shows that mainly the participants plagiarize in writing just to get good grades and pass the course. Moreover, their main source for plagiarizing is the internet. However, through the journal writing practice, the policy of free choice of topics evoked divided reactions from students.

**Keywords:** EFL writing, plagiarism, motivation, students' attitude, teachers' qualifications, journal writing, free topics

## 1. Introduction

Out of the four language skills in a foreign language learning process is writing which is considered one of the most difficult one (Hamp & Heasley, 2006). Deciding what to write, how to write it, and how best to get your reader's attention (Teacher) requires creativity and imagination. Few English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, when it comes to writing, are able to dash off something in final form, but the stressful experience of starting helplessly at a piece of paper, unable to think or to put words down on a paper, is considered rather a struggle; consequently, the EFL students commit plagiarism. Furthermore, in EFL writing, students need to have the knowledge of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage which are essential to editing, but it is secondary to discovering ideas, and choosing words for the sake of impressing the readers in which it leads EFL students to find the single task of composing so difficult that encourages them to plagiarize. Still, if EFL college students are not committed to college level of writing, then they will assign themselves to plagiarism. So, when college instructors teach EFL writing to college students, it becomes really difficult. That's because writing is not so much one skill; it is as a packet of skills that include sequencing, spelling, rereading, and supporting big ideas with examples. To uncover plagiarism in EFL writing demands effort as well as EFL teachers need to emphasize on learning in order to help students avoid committing plagiarism. For that reason, school and college EFL teachers prefer teaching literature to teaching composition.

## 2. Rational

In the British newspaper, 'The Times', dated January 2, 2016 an article on the first page with a title 'Student cheating crisis' has mentioned that about 50,000 students in British universities have been caught cheating and the professors in the universities are feared of plagiarism epidemic. Likewise, Teeter admitted through a research paper that in the UK, plagiarism and academic dishonesty occurs at high rates in universities around the country (2015). Furthermore, throughout the world, there is a growing concern about the issue of plagiarism and how to handle it especially in courses where English as a foreign language is being taught (Day, 2009 & Wheeler, 2009). One reason for plagiarism is surely the well-known difference in difficulty and complexity between writing a language and reading or speaking it. As Vygotsky (1962, p. 86) points out, almost all children learn to express themselves effectively in speech at about the same age, but many people never learn to express themselves freely

in writing. Even with careful instruction, there is a considerable lag between expressive speech and expressive writing in one's native language and also in a second/ foreign language. Moreover, writing ability, of course, differs from student to student in any given classroom (Vygotsky, 1962).

Another reason is probably discomfort with a foreign language. The Arabic-speaking Kuwaiti students in the College of Basic Education (CBE) neither hear nor read much English outside their English classes and thus, unlike ESL students in English-speaking academic environments, they cannot draw on a wide store of implicit knowledge of English when they write. Vygotsky regards spoken language as the key tool in the development of all cognitive skills especially literary skills (1962, p. 86). Although some EFL teachers note that writing skill can be based largely on reading input which is widely accepted that heavy input of some kind from a foreign language is invaluable for the beginning writer in that language, as well as the beginning speaker and reader (Greene, 1993; Haas, 1993; Hyland, 2004). A writer who does not have that input will be uncertain about what she/ he is doing (Williams, 2005). Still, when a writer makes use of words, ideas, or any information from a source other than his/ her own knowledge and experience, he/ she must give credit to the source in citation, and not giving credit to such borrowed intellectual material is plagiarism (Harris, 2005).

Scanlon and Neumann found out that more than 50% of college students admitted that plagiarism was committed in different forms (2002). They added that these forms include papers written by others using online sources, and purchasing papers from on line report writing companies. Furthermore, Scanlon and Neumann surveyed 698 students from nine campuses on their attitudes and practices related to online plagiarism (2002). They emphasized in their paper that academic dishonesty associated with plagiarism is when their peers go online just to do the acting of plagiarism. Therefore, EFL students' dishonesty in writing has been demonstrated through many factors that promote plagiarism. For all of the above reasoning the author tries to find out the real motivation for EFL students plagiarizing in writing by answering the research questions.

### **3. Research Questions**

The research questions that the paper attempts at exploring are:

- 1) Why EFL students plagiarize when it comes to writing skill?
- 2) How do the EFL teachers motivate their students to write?
- 3) Is there an association between the EFL Students committing plagiarism in writing and their teachers?

### **4. Literature Review**

#### *4.1 Time and Students 'Attitudes Promoting Plagiarism*

A large body of research has in fact found that plagiarizing in writing tends to be easy and students are lazy to think (Gilmore, 2009). Parfitt (2012) clarified that the two reasons for EFL students to plagiarize one because they don't manage their time well. For example, Tuan clarified the time constrain in the EFL classroom is when students tend to be compelled to perform their writing tasks within a certain length of time, they feel that time pressure is unrealistic restriction specially if the academic writing essays which include many lengthy tasks is normally done inside the classrooms or during academic course (2010). The other reason is because EFL students feel the assignment is difficult, underestimate the size of the writing project, and can't complete it independently (Parfitt, 2012). Posner mentioned that one- third of all high school and college students have committed plagiarism or any types of academic fraud, and he added that the reason for EFL students to plagiarize in their writing is not only to save time or get better grade, but both of these facts (2007). He added that when students plagiarize they produce nothing of value (Posner, 2007). Also, Wells discovered within her 22 years of teaching writing skill that plagiarism in writing resulted from anxiety (1993). Because of the EFL students limited abilities in writing, and the teacher's expectations for the assignments to be handed in on time, students become concern and commit plagiarism.

#### *4.2 Motivation for Writing*

There are a large spectrum of theories and strategies that cover the many variables that affect student motivation in developing the students' second language writing skill (Bohous, 2011). One of these variables is when college students are given the opportunity to be exposed to new ideas and to express thoughts in their own words; however, difficulty may stem for EFL students from not understanding the English language, but from the lack of confidence in expressing ideas and concepts (Menager & Paulos, 2011). They added that when students cheat on their papers, they deprive themselves from the thinking, learning and writing practice (2011).

Another variable is when EFL teachers try a number of features of writing method which tends to emphasize the teacher's authority, including personal choice of topics, peer review of writing, and emphasis on ideas and

expression rather than on accuracy, which may disintegrate the resentment of adult authority that some young people feel this may cause students plagiarizing in their writing and leads to a war (Gilmore, 2009). This war would be between EFL teachers who try to find out and stop plagiarism, and students who try to find easy ways to plagiarize in which both will lose this war (Gilmore, 2009). Posner adds that weak students and even striving ones have a strong motivation to plagiarize if they have a good chance of getting away with it (2007). Gilmore adds that students don't want to plagiarize for the sake of cheating, but because they have been tempted to plagiarism (2009).

Also, Dornyei stresses on how the EFL teachers should set a classroom specific motives such as: creating a relaxed classroom atmosphere, presenting tasks properly to the students, creating a good relationship with the students, increasing the students' self-confidence, and increasing the learning goals through personalizing the learning process (2001a, b). Dornyei adds that learning the skills of a foreign language is linked to the student's personal identity in which the EFL student develops self-motivation in acquiring the target language. EFL students need to realize that learning the writing skill for the target language is not for getting degree in that language, but also for future effective communication (Burden, 2004).

Additionally, Ghaith adds that the EFL students would be motivated to learn and apply the foreign language writing skill in their life once they find the practical purposes for that language (2003). Students' achievement and positive experiences in a foreign language impacts students' confidence in using this language (Clement, 1980). Besides, Terrel and Rendulic argue that rewarding students for completing an assignment improve self-esteem and increased motivation (1996).

#### *4.3 Types of Plagiarism*

McLeod (1992) and Drum (1986) consider plagiarism either done consciously or unconsciously. Parfitt views of the most common types of plagiarism are the unintentional one due to the fact that most students do not understand the rules of documentations (2012). Moreover, Teeter clarifies the reasons for students committing academic unintentionally plagiarism is due to uncertainty with cite source material or inadequate training in paraphrasing (2015). Gilmore adds that students plagiarize for two reasons, unintentionally which students don't know the rules of plagiarism or intentionally when the students do cheat in their writings and no punishment is given to them (2009). However, he considers these two reasons are not apart.

McCune argues that when EFL students have difficulties in understanding and following their teachers modeling, guidance and feedback on their handouts and their topics which in turn leads to plagiarism because students have not well developed their writings (2004). Prosser and Webb point out that EFL students face difficulties in more sophisticated essay writing, especially if they didn't benefit from their teacher's advice and explanations (1994). This will lead to negative attitude to essay writing which in turn results in intentional plagiarism.

#### *4.4 Teachers' Qualifications*

Qualified EFL teachers need to identify the ways to engage students in exploring the teaching of writing in a wide range of situations beside their focus on detecting and avoiding plagiarism (Hansen et al., 2011). Curtain and Pesola (1994) suggest that foreign language teachers today require a combination of competencies and background traits that may be unprecedented in the preparation of language teachers, and that strong professional development is critical. Woo (2001) outlines a number of factors that make the teaching of writing in a foreign language especially challenging and emphasizes the need for strong professional development. One of these factors, is the current emphasis on the exclusive use of the target language in the classroom which requires that teachers have strong language skills specially the writing skill such as being skilled on assigning papers on certain topics that are not easily plagiarized.

Moreover, EFL teachers should be competent in the vocabulary related to these assigned writing papers. Met (1989) suggests that good foreign language teachers need to have a level of language proficiency in all of the modalities of the target language (speaking, reading, listening, and writing). So when you come to the EFL writing skill, it would be a creative approach for the instructor to assign unique and unusual assignments just to overcome students plagiarize. Furthermore, William (1975) claims that a well-balanced and proper administration of two ingredients, knowledge, skills and better understanding of how the target language writing instruction can assist EFL students to prepare for academic writing.

## **5. Research Design and Method**

### *5.1 Participants*

This paper was applied with English major freshman students who have passed the first writing course, Basic Writing, and are enrolled in the advance writing course. These first year English major students have to take two

compulsory English writing courses, Basic and Advance Writing. Furthermore, both writing courses are prerequisite for the rest of the courses in the English language major sheet. At the time of this research paper, the English Department had five advance writing sections with a total of 121 female students enrolled in those five sections. Two of those advance writing courses were taught by the author, and they had 20, 23 students in each section consecutively. Additionally, all participants in this research paper are female students because all public schools in Kuwait are segregated by gender into all-girl and all-boy schools, and only female teachers at the elementary level teach both genders (Al Darwish, 2006).

### 5.2 Data Collection Instrument & Procedure

On the first day of class, the author requested the students in both sections of her advance writing course to fill out a simple questionnaire (Appendix A) which covers some items about plagiarism and if they have applied it in their first writing course, Basic Writing. Moreover, the author requested from other instructors who are teaching the advance writing course in the English Department to distribute the questionnaire on their students who are enrolled in this course. Furthermore, the author collected all the assignments and daily logs from her students who are enrolled in her advance writing course in that semester.

The first day of classes, the author informed the 43 students who were enrolled in both sections of her advance writing course that the criteria for grading is as shown in Table 1 below for each writing assignment. Students were not familiar with this practice, which was an attempt to make the teacher's authority less intimidating.

Table 1. Writing skill actual assessment Score

Thesis Statement	1
Introductory Paragraph	2
Supporting Paragraphs	6
Concluding Paragraph	2
Vocabulary	2
Punctuation Marks	2
Spelling	1
Cohesion & Unity	2
Grammar	2
Total	20

The course content included composing processes such as planning, brain storming and editing. Besides, in both sections (groups), writing class chiefly involved discussions about each assignment through answering questions related to the type of assigned essay. Students had to choose their own topics for the five major writing assignments. The reasons for the free-choice policy were explained and discussed in the two sections with students face-to-face. It was the author's impression that many students were becoming aware that free writing on topics of personal interest to them improved their writing. In addition, the usual lecture topics were retained: English essay structure (thesis statement, history or background information about the topic, supporting ideas, examples, conclusion sentences, alternative ways of organizing the types of essay (description, narrative, compare/contrast, etc.)) so that students could choose between different organizations of these assignments and common mistakes in spelling, vocabulary, and grammar. The readings, which modeled different types of organization (different genres) were not changed. Moreover, classes took place for two sessions of 90 minutes each, twice per week over a semester of 14 weeks' duration. On the first day of class after filling out the questionnaire, the author asked the first section, Monitored Group (MG), only one question: "what is your understanding of plagiarism?" The author asked the students to reply on a piece of paper and hand the paper to her. Then informed them about plagiarism, and as the course went by monitored the students' writing in every class period. Accordingly, the author showed the participants in the MG the proper way to cite their work. Furthermore, the author after each class period, collected the students' papers and saved it for their next class meeting. However, the procedure with the second section, Free Group (FG), was not the same as the first section MG. The author didn't give any information or explanation about plagiarism, and even the author left the students to finish their assignments at home and bring it typed to their next class meeting. Furthermore, both

sections kept one notebook with their names on for journal writing. The students also were encouraged to write journal entries on whatever information concerns them. At the end of each week, the author collected the journals to record any change in writing fluency, accuracy and committing plagiarism. A weakness of this kind of paper is that the survey was conducted on a small number of students who are majoring English as a foreign language and are all located on a single campus.

## 6. Results

### 6.1 Questionnaire

The survey (Appendix A) consisted of simple statements concerning the reasons and sources for plagiarism, and students were asked to indicate using 5-likert type scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree on why they plagiarize. From the survey, the respondents were between the ages 18- 24, but most of them are 19 years old. Accordingly in Figure 1 & 2, the majority of the participants need high marks to impress their instructors and pass the course. In fact the great majority of students had studied English as a foreign language for twelve years, in public elementary, middle and high schools. They could speak English fairly fluently if not always correctly, but they were not able to write effectively. Also, EFL students are taught to memorize model answers for the sake of passing the examination. Consequently, memorizing sentences and model answers causes students' lack of confidence in themselves especially in English as a foreign language which has a great effect enforcing students into plagiarizing. Moreover, because participants may encounter problems to understand the task (type of essay), therefore they are more likely hold themselves accountable for providing a worthy and overwhelmed piece of writing just because they need to pass the course and proceed with their other courses. Another result which deserves attention is not only 52% of the participants agree that they plagiarize just because they need to pass the course, but also 73% of participants plagiarize just to get high marks in writing. This is due to the fact that EFL student writers may be disadvantaged by cultural factor as they are attending writing courses just to get a paper qualification which will lead them to be judged academically.

Moreover, in Figure 1, 77% of the participants believe that the teachers are qualified, yet based on their writing in their journal, the EFL students mentioned that their teachers need to provide effective training for students in not only the mechanics of format and syntax, but also in the process of academic writing. Furthermore, teachers can teach the subject matter properly and provide sufficient practice and revision. Accordingly, because of the constraints of limited target language knowledge, writing in a foreign language may be hampered because of the need to focus on language rather than content. Consequently, those students used the original language that is on the internet because they were incapable of writing it in a better manner.

According to Figure 1, 72% of the participants disagreed with the statement that plagiarizing is not wrong because the participants know they have the lack of understanding on how to give credit to sources. As well, most of the participants are not trained and aware of how to do citation and referencing in EFL writing. Moreover, 42% and 40 % of the participants respectively have difficulties in expressing in EFL writing and coming up with ideas. These two points reveal that because EFL students are not native speakers, they are confronted with unproductively and not fully developed many of the language skills especially the writing skill for academic purposes. Therefore, when students suffer from the lack of understanding, their personality and their academic performance leads them to plagiarize.

According to Figure 2, more than half of the participants have an issue with timing. As time is a precious and exhaustible resource, and if EFL student writers can produce an essay that the EFL teachers like without emphasizing on the source, then this encourage students to plagiarize especially the desperate ones who face difficulties coping with problems that hinder their progress in thinking critically and writing academically in the target language.

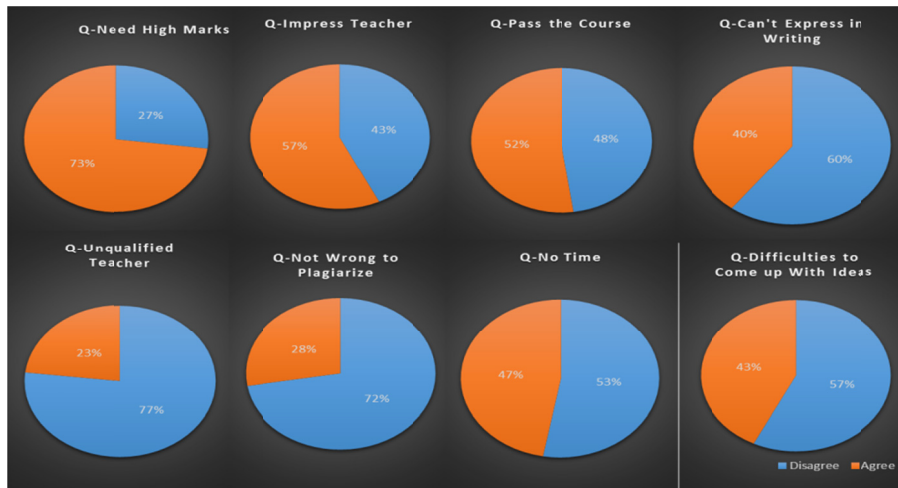


Figure 1. Agree/disagree ratio for plagiarism in writing

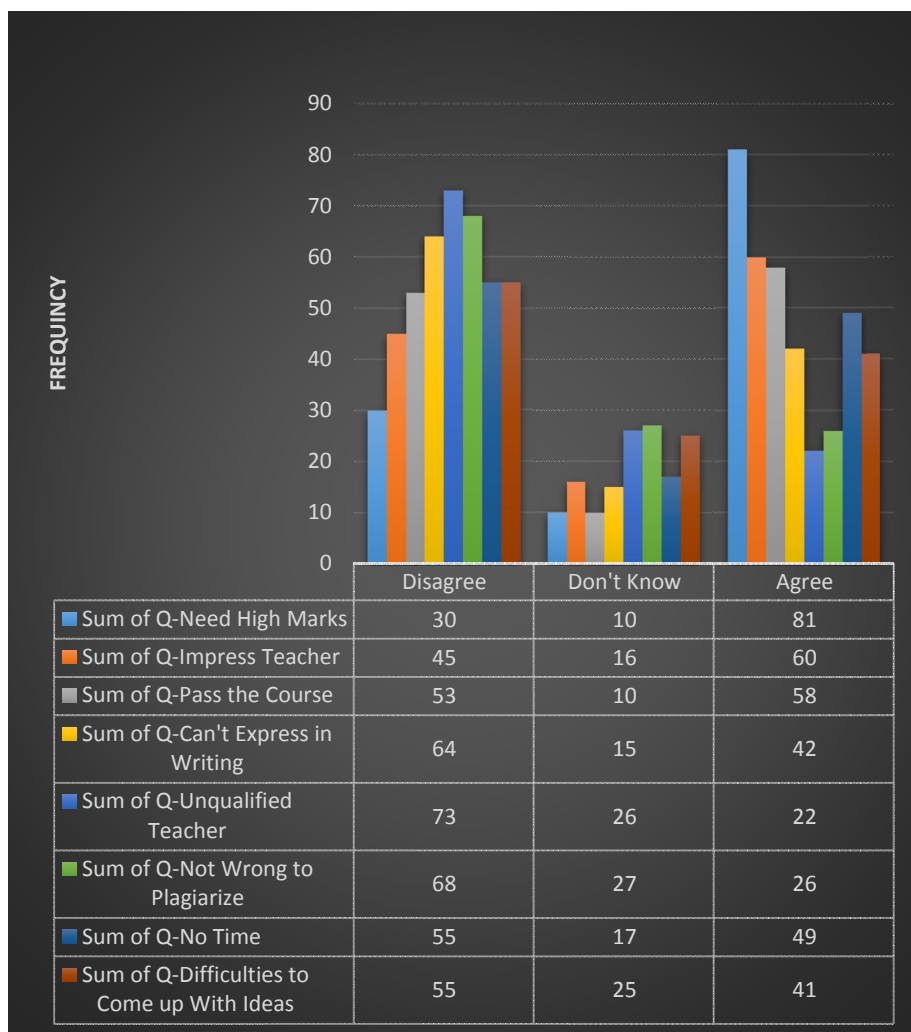


Figure 2. Students' reason for plagiarizing in writing

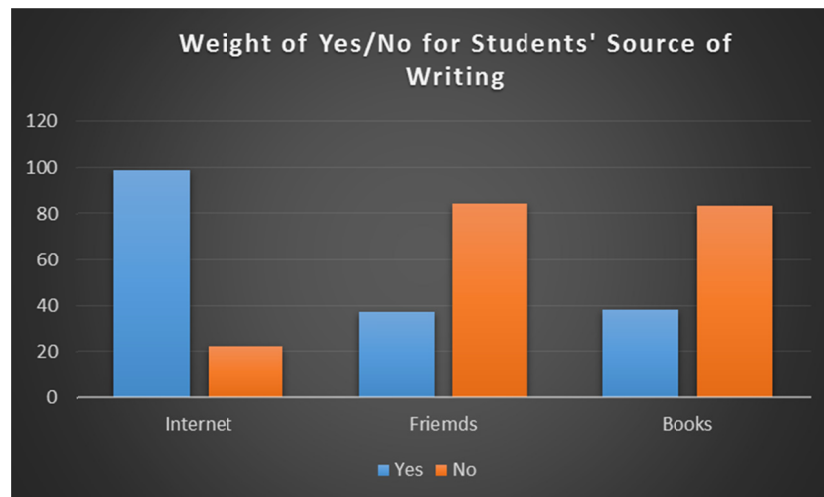


Figure 3. Sources for plagiarizing in writing

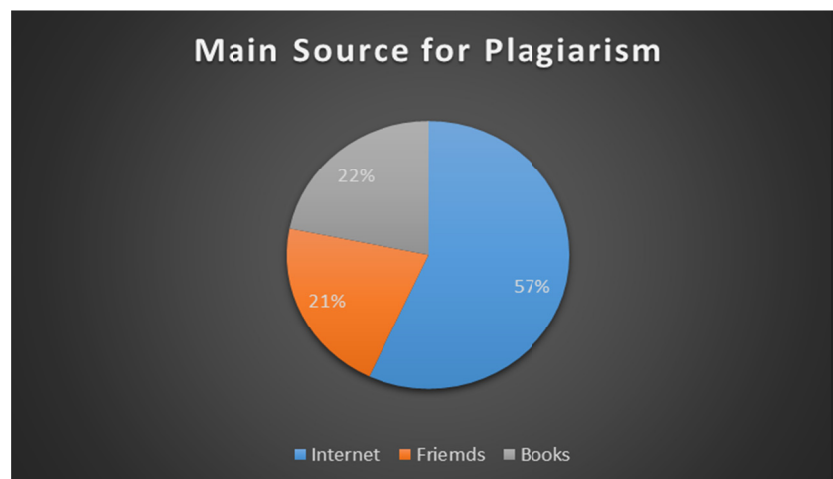


Figure 4. Percentage for each source

As shown in Figure 3 & 4, the vast majority of the participants' choice for plagiarizing in writing was mainly on the internet. This is because participants are not proficient in English, as well as the time limit and the free choice of topics, the process of cutting and pasting whole sentences or paragraphs from the internet was the easy way for them. Moreover, in Figure 3 & 4 using books and relatives was not as high as the internet.

Furthermore, as shown in Figure 3 & 4, one of the main sources for plagiarism is the internet and based on Table 4 when the researcher was correcting the FG assignments most of the participants of this group attributed their work to plagiarized items from the internet. These recognized plagiarized items were divided into two types, either sequences or whole paragraphs. All plagiarized words and sentences were exactly copied with no modifications. Accordingly, students' background on the basics of the English language that is needed for writing is weak because they come from a culture where all the anticipations and the shocking details come from the media which reflects plagiarism as a common issue and is diffusing quickly without control. Also, in this culture, there isn't an ultimate translation for the word plagiarism especially in a language that is not the mother tongue (Arabic). In addition, it turns out that the FG participants know the grammatical rules, but they can't transfer their knowledge and apply it into their writing.

Table 2. Textual borrowing from the internet

Topic	Source
How to learn a new Language	<a href="http://www.ukessays.com/essays/languages/language-learning-fact">http://www.ukessays.com/essays/languages/language-learning-fact</a>
How to keep fit	<a href="http://www.english-test.net/forum/topic14009.html">http://www.english-test.net/forum/topic14009.html</a>
Fast food	<a href="http://www.md-health.com/disadvantages-of-fast-food.htm/">http://www.md-health.com/disadvantages-of-fast-food.htm/</a>
Planning for a wedding party	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/kwadwosweddingcinema/posts/612">http://www.facebook.com/kwadwosweddingcinema/posts/612</a>
How to improve your English	<a href="http://www.dreamessays.com/customessays/narrative%20essays/2034.htm">www.dreamessays.com/customessays/narrative%20essays/2034.htm</a>
Preparation for camping	<a href="http://www.jadelouisedesigns.com/camping-list-how-to-prepare-for-camping">www.jadelouisedesigns.com/camping-list-how-to-prepare-for-camping</a>
How to start a good relationship	<a href="http://www.learningandviolence.net/helpother/emotion.pdf">www.learningandviolence.net/helpother/emotion.pdf</a>
Planning to travel in summer vacation	<a href="http://www.nomadicmatt.com/travel-blogs/planning-a-trip/">www.nomadicmatt.com/travel-blogs/planning-a-trip/</a>
How to get ready for travel	<a href="http://www.ipatroltravel.com">www.ipatroltravel.com</a>

## 6.2 Journal Writing

Most of the students reported that writing had not been emphasized in the public school curriculum. They had enough basic knowledge in grammatical structure of the target language. One student remarked her journal, “We do know the grammatical rules imposed on us for 12 years, but we can’t transfer the knowledge we have and apply these grammatical rules in our writing”. Another student stated in her journal, “Our first serious writing task was the final exam when we graduated from high school at the age of 18 years old, which is quite late.” One reason for this frequent neglect of writing in high school may have been that the teachers were still focusing on vocabulary, spelling, and grammar deficiencies that seemed more crucial than writing.

Through the MG assignments, the researcher noticed a better improvement in the extent of writing task completion than those in the FG. However, through the fourteen week practice, the plagiarized writing assignments committed by the students in the FG were really high compared to the MG. The MG were encouraged to support their writing with resources.

Through the journal writing practice, the policy of free choice of topics evoked divided reactions from students. The MG and FG students were fairly evenly divided between those who tended to like the policy of free topic choice, which they felt made the task of composing simpler or more interesting, and those who tended to dislike it as an extra burden which led them to plagiarism. Some students may have seen pitfalls in making a choice the teacher might not like. Others were likewise motivated by choosing topics that interest them and not their teacher.

Also, the MG students’ motivation for writing revealed that they are getting accustomed to journal activity by producing short sentences. In addition, the journal writing helped them to expose their feelings or to reflect on certain problems facing them while writing. For example, one student stated in her journal that the instructor (researcher) didn’t make the writing course interesting. She explained that the instructor (researcher) didn’t work on the students’ needs and help them improve their writing, which in turn she used plagiarism to accommodate her writing. Similarly, some of the FG students left blank pages of their daily writing journals and sometimes wrote in Arabic, (first language), their complaint and constraints for writing which influenced them to implement plagiarism. Some students wrote in their journal comments which expressed deeply on the assumption that instructors in the previous course, Basic Writing Course, didn’t check up on their writing if it was plagiarized or not. Furthermore, they assumed that the instructor (researcher) won’t check up on them at present.

Moreover, a number of students in both groups commented in their journals on having a different voice in Arabic and in English, due to lack of English vocabulary and because they found English to be more formal. They often



saw lack of vocabulary as a major constraint in trying to find a personal voice in English. The students also added that the importance of teaching writing is when they have to use it in their career. However, to be an EFL teacher in elementary schools after graduation, this type of writing would not help the young learners. A student noted, "I plagiarize because I don't value what I am doing".

When EFL teachers teach writing skill, they should often avoid the correction of errors in order to avoid discouraging students. In addition, it puts off accuracy until fluency and confidence have been achieved, which should make writing in a foreign language a less fearful undertaking (Cheng, 2006; Hudelson, 1989; Ivanic & Simpson, 1992; Rivers & Temperley, 1978; Silva, 1997; Tchudi & Mitchell, 1989). Through the MG and FG writing assignments, the researcher kept strict profile of each student's progress in terms of accuracy, fluency and the authenticity of their writing. At the end of each week, the researcher collected the two groups' assignments and returned them to the students at the beginning of the following week conveyed by elaborated and encouraging comments and feedback. Toward the end of the semester, the MG students increased in the length of their essay writing assignments with interesting and personal ideas and decreased in the number of errors. As for FG students, found writing assignments very difficult and the easy access to the internet helped them to plagiarize which in turn they didn't improve their writing skills.

### 6.3 Monitored Group Responses

As for the MG which was teacher led instruction, the participants in this group became more aware of writing academic text independently and on different topics. Also, the researcher's support and feedback helped the participants in the MG to become more aware of writing tasks, as well as the positive effect of curiosity in writing without plagiarizing. Similarly, the change in the writing motivation aroused through class discussion and drafting tasks in the MG. Nevertheless, the simple questionnaire provided some insight into students' perceptions of plagiarism. The quotations that follow from students writing assignments and the journal have been cited with no attempt on the researcher's part at correcting spelling, vocabulary, grammar, and style.

The comments that the participants in the Monitor Group responded to the researcher's only one question were different. The following are some of the MG participants' comments on their understanding for the word "plagiarism":

- "Is like taking someone's hard work just like that".
- "An easy way to pass and how we delay our homework until the last minute".
- "We plagiarize because we don't have the right words to express our ideas. Also, it takes short time. I know it's stolen from someone, but it helps to impress others with our writing".
- "Plagiarizing is wrong because you will get high marks that you don't deserve".
- "Plagiarism is bad because the teacher can't teach".
- "Plagiarism is taking someone else idea and cheating on an exam".
- I think it's ok to get inspired by a certain source from the internet, but not just copying it as the way it is".
- "It is stealing someone's work and writing my name on it".

## 7. Conclusion

This study demonstrated some intertwining factors that play a role for EFL students to commit plagiarism in writing. When EFL students write an essay, it is more important to demonstrate their thinking skills than to be exactly right. Think of an instructor sitting down reading forty or more essays on basically the same subject, but has been confronted by cases of cheating where students submitted identical essays from other sources and not their own. When EFL students plagiarize in their writing, this is because those students' linguistic competencies not sufficient to address the assignments they have been assigned to, as well as their eagerness to graduate. For both the student's sake and the instructor's, it's a good idea to make the essay interesting and build on each other to help students avoid plagiarism in writing. In this paper, the researcher found out that there should be plenty of in-class work time, allowing the instructor to circulate and read the EFL students work as they are going through various drafts and revisions. By working in class and requiring from students to hand in several drafts will assist the instructor to measure the students' writing progress; as well as to insure the students are doing the work themselves and not plagiarizing.

When college students choose their own topics, then students can expect more of their writing without even approaching plagiarism. However, some respect for authority is natural and unavoidable in the classroom, giving them freedom for topic choices, students were encouraged to think for themselves without plagiarizing, and

particularly in writing classes. Consequently, the emphasis on writing on topics of the student's choice deepens the student's self-understanding, and should free the students to pursue their personal interests and express their own opinions by minimizing the use of other sources for plagiarism. How easy it is to teach our college students to write dishonestly to fulfill curriculum requirements (Graves, 1994), but this in turn doesn't increase the students' enjoyment of writing and weakens their motivation to communicate more effectively.

Even when the topic is highly accessible, the author's experience suggests that if it is assigned to the entire class, they will not approach the task with eagerness, and doesn't encourage them to share ideas with each other. On the contrary, if students are allowed to choose their own topics their motivation to communicate may be far more intense and away from plagiarizing. Young people bubble over with ideas and experiences they want to share with one another and with adults, and yet, when given a formal writing assignment, they often claim they have nothing to say and most of the time they try to find easy ways to transcribe few words from other sources. Therefore, when we show students the different range of practices to writing skill and assist them to understand the why in avoiding plagiarism, then students will acknowledge that plagiarism doesn't violates their assessment of learning, it violates the individual contribution to the academic community.

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**Appendix A**

Students' Questionnaire

Based on the Basic Writing Course you completed, rate yourself according to the following scale:

5 Strongly Agree, 4 Agree, 3 Don't Know, 2 Disagree, 1 Strongly Disagree.

(A) The reason you plagiarize because:

- ( ) 1. You need high marks.
- ( ) 2. You can't express in writing.
- ( ) 3. You want to impress your teacher with your writing.
- ( ) 4. You just need to pass the course.
- ( ) 5. Your teacher is not qualified to teach this course.
- ( ) 6. You don't feel it is wrong to plagiarize.
- ( ) 7. You don't have enough time to search and support your own idea by paraphrasing.
- ( ) 8. You have difficulties to come up with appropriate ideas for your own writing.

(B) The 'Information in your writing assignments came from

- (1) The Internet.                    ( ) Yes            ( ) No
- (2) Friends & Relatives.        ( ) Yes            ( ) No
- (3) Books.                         ( ) Yes            ( ) No
- (4) Any other sources (specify)

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