Lang. Teach. (2014), **47.3**, 269–302 © Cambridge University Press 2014
doi:10.1017/S0261444814000056

State-of-the-Art Article

Plagiarism in second-language writing

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Plagiarism is a broad and multidisciplinary field of study, and within second-language (L2) writing, research on the topic goes back to the mid-1980s. In this review article we first discuss the received view of plagiarism as a transgressive act and alternative understandings which have been presented in the L1 and L2 writing literature. We then survey and identify salient themes in the growing body of work relating to plagiarism, primarily from an L2 writing/applied linguistic perspective. These themes include terminological distinctions; views of the role of textual plagiarism in language learning and a writer's development; a concern with students' and teachers' sometimes differing understanding of plagiarism; and disciplinary differences in perceptions of plagiarism. We review research into the role of the electronic media in changing orientations toward plagiarism, the potential role of culture as a cause of plagiarism in the work of L2 writers, and pedagogical approaches to guiding students away from plagiarism. Methodological issues in researching plagiarism are surveyed, and the article concludes by suggesting directions for future research.

1. Introduction

Plagiarism is a broad phenomenon which occurs in many human activities. Instances regularly emerge in fields such as literary publishing, music and art. Within the academic community, plagiarism has been treated from a range of perspectives. As one type of intertextuality, it has been investigated as a literary phenomenon (e.g. Tufescu 2008). It can, however, also be seen as a violation of rules and received standards, and as such has received attention within the wider literature on cheating and academic ethics (e.g. Ison 2012). Plagiarism is also a specific form of language use and has been investigated as a feature which characterises a stage of language development (Howard 1995) or masks the signs of language development (Ask 2007). Given that plagiarism arises in all academic areas, it has been studied in educational contexts both within the area of educational science generally (e.g. Breen & Maassen 2005) and within specific academic areas (e.g. Yeo 2007).

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Thus, while the focus of this review is on plagiarism in second-language (L2) writing, and it is therefore the body of literature on plagiarism as a linguistic and language-learning phenomenon which is most directly relevant, we inevitably draw to some extent on research from other areas. Importantly, however, research on intentional cheating, such as students buying papers online or using ghost-writing services, is not included, since these types of academic misconduct are not specific to L2 writers but apply to both L1 and L2 students (for a discussion of this phenomenon, see, for instance, Clegg & Flint 2006).

L2 learner status has frequently been identified as a causal or contributing factor in plagiarism, and the two reasons most frequently offered for this connection are the cultural differences (see section 6.1 below) and difficulties associated with L2 academic writing. However, to the extent that academic discourse skills require development even in the L1, the latter factor makes some of the work on plagiarism in L1 users or Generation 1.5 (Villalva 2006; Howard, Serviss & Rodrigue 2010) relevant to this review as well.

We begin by surveying the meanings traditionally attributed to plagiarism, go on to chart the entry of plagiarism into the literature on L2 writing, and the development of research interest in it, before moving on to identify recent reconceptualisations of the term within the field of L2 writing. A number of themes and trends in recent work on the topic are identified, along with their pedagogical implications. Methodological issues of relevance in researching plagiarism are then described, and the article closes by outlining promising directions for future research.

2. Plagiarism as transgression

One widespread understanding of plagiarism is that it is an act of wrongdoing. This understanding is so firmly entrenched that scholars who have wished to approach it as a feature of a writer's L2 development have adopted alternative formulations which, if not euphemistic, at least avoid the dysphemistic sense of the original, such as TEXTUAL BORROWING (Barks & Watts 2001) and NONTRANSGRESSIVE INTERTEXTUALITY (Chandrasoma, Thompson & Pennycook 2004; Borg 2009).

2.1 Definitions and conceptions of plagiarism

Dictionary definitions of plagiarism (e.g. 'the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own', as defined by the *Oxford English online dictionary*) are typically brief, and perhaps for that reason definitions in academic contexts are frequently elaborated to specify the varied types of intellectual property and textual material which can be appropriated in a way that constitutes plagiarism.

Apart from varying levels of detail, university definitions tend to be quite consistent (see section 2.3); the only significant exception to this is the question of intention. Both in policy, guidelines and similar documentation, and in the common understanding of teachers and others who employ the term, the status of intention is vexed, with some sources

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claiming that it must be a feature of plagiarism – if the writer did not intend to copy or intend to cheat by doing so, the act cannot legitimately be called plagiarism – and others (if a minority) maintaining that intention is irrelevant (Pecorari 2001; Sutherland-Smith 2011).

2.2 Plagiarism as cheating or academic crime

To understand how intention came to be linked to plagiarism, it is necessary to examine the origins of the concept. The word comes from the Latin *plagium* (theft, kidnapping), originally referring to kidnapping a child or a slave; in the seventeenth century it emerged in the meaning of 'literary theft', that is, appropriation of literary texts (Mallon 1989). Although textual appropriation was not a new phenomenon, it was the perceptions of and attitudes to it that began to change as mass-produced texts became widely available as a result of printing innovations. Texts and ideas expressed in written form came to be seen as their authors' intellectual property, leading to the emergence of the notions of authorship and originality, and resulting in the introduction of copyright laws in eighteenth-century England[1] (for a more detailed historical account, see Sutherland-Smith 2008 and Bloch 2012). The notion of plagiarism in the English-speaking world is thus historically linked with the issues of authorship, originality, ownership of texts and copyright (Scollon 1995). It is this understanding of plagiarism with its network of related concepts that was subsequently adopted by English-speaking academia.

The historical context is important for understanding the traditional view of plagiarism as theft, and thus a crime, which is still widely accepted in academic and media debates alike. Many definitions of plagiarism found in scholarly literature rest on this conception, describing plagiarism as 'literary theft, stealing (by copying) the words or ideas of someone else and passing them off as one's own without crediting the source' (Park 2003: 472). As noted above, this view is also reflected in university policies about plagiarism in English-speaking academia, which consider it as an academic crime deserving punishment (Pecorari 2001).

Plagiarism has long been used as an umbrella term covering various types of unacceptable behaviour, some of which, but not all, refer to textual activity. Poor referencing, inadequate paraphrase and inaccurate citation are sometimes placed in the same category as commissioning a paper from a commercial service and submitting another student's paper as one's own. Problems arising out of students' lack of knowledge of citing conventions and lack of skills in using sources are thus placed in the context of cheating. As cheating is inherently intentional and deliberate, all the practices to which the term plagiarism traditionally refers, including poor referencing, are therefore seen as dishonest and deceitful behaviour. As a result, plagiarism is considered a moral transgression and a reflection of moral decay. Various metaphors that have been used in connection with plagiarism vividly illustrate this

[1] Although laws protecting authors' rights emerged around the same time in France and Germany, they were based on different foundations. In France, it was the authors' MORAL rights rather than property rights over their texts that were emphasised, while in Germany the focus was on rights over the FORM of the work (i.e., words) rather than its content (i.e., ideas). For more information, see Sutherland-Smith (2008).

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view: plagiarism has been described as a sin, vice, disease, cancer, plague, stealing and a crime (Howard 1999; Park 2003; Bloch 2012).

Although it is commonly acknowledged (though not universally; see sections 2.1 and 2.3) that students may plagiarise inadvertently because of their lack of knowledge of citing conventions and poor paraphrasing skills rather than an intention to deceive, the traditional view nevertheless defines such textual behaviour as literary theft that needs to be punished. For instance, Park (2004) outlines an institutional framework for dealing with plagiarism, consisting of a four-level scale of sanctions and penalties. In recognition that 'a clear distinction must be drawn between inexperienced academic study and writing skills (especially among first-year undergraduates and international students) and wilful cheating and deception' (p. 301), the framework treats issues such as inappropriate paraphrasing and incorrect or incomplete citations, all of which may commonly occur in the writing of inexperienced writers, as a minor first offence. However, if the problem occurs again, it is treated as the second offence, resulting in a mark of 0 for the assignment, because '[a]fter a first offence it is assumed that a student who plagiarizes is more likely to do so consciously, which is why the ladder of penalties . . . rises steeply' (p. 302). The underlying assumption that mastering the use of sources is a matter of a quick fix, as we will show in section 3.2, has been criticised in recent years, particularly in reference to L2 writers.

2.3 Institutional policies

An analysis of the policies of 54 English-speaking universities in the United States, United Kingdom and Australia (Pecorari 2001) found definitions of plagiarism as an intertextual relationship (material is taken from a source and transferred to another), one which is not conventional or appropriate (because it is not acknowledged) and one which is not coincidental; it has been brought about intentionally by an agent who may (or may not) intend to deceive the reader about the inappropriate intertextual relationship.

This study, like that of Sutherland-Smith (2011), found that deceptive intent is not always specified and indeed that some definitions specifically state that plagiarism can occur unintentionally. However, an orientation toward deception is implicit in how plagiarism is defined and discussed. Although in the intervening years a growing body of research has shown that much language re-use has motivations other than an attempt at cheating, both of these analyses of policy found that definitions of plagiarism were couched in legalistic terms, that it was treated and discussed analogously to theft, and that the response to the act is punitive.

A further trend in institutional policies is for them to be neutral with respect to academic discipline. This is presumably due to a sense that the playing field should be level and that rules should not vary within the same organisation; at the same time, the differences between subject areas in terms of the features of writing which are conventional extend to the use of sources, and many academics perceive university policies as a poor fit for their own realities (Jamieson 2008).

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3. A need for alternative approaches to understanding plagiarism

Possibly because plagiarism has traditionally been viewed as an unqualified wrong, early references to it in the research literature were concerned with features, such as detection, that related to plagiarism as transgression (e.g., Ottenstein 1976; Glatt & Haertel 1982). In the L2 writing literature, on the other hand, it has been treated from a broader perspective. The intertextual act and the assumption of intentional cheating, often conflated, have been teased apart, allowing other features of plagiarism to be examined more closely. Importantly, this perspective (which developed roughly concurrently in the L1 writing literature) has allowed not only a deeper understanding but also an increased understanding of plagiarism to inform what is known about the development of writing skills and the nature of proficient and non-proficient writing in a range of contexts.

3.1 The emergence of plagiarism as a theme in L2 writing research

The earliest mentions of plagiarism in the L2 writing literature moved away from equating it with cheating and gave it as an example of behaviour which was neither norm-compliant nor openly norm-defiant, but simply in need of understanding. It was often mentioned in passing, to illustrate broader points about contrastive rhetoric, culturally varied awareness, or developing discoursal and linguistic abilities and their impact on the writing of L2 users (e.g. Ballard & Clanchy 1991; Pennycook 1996; Leki & Carson 1997).

In a frequently cited landmark article, Matalene (1985) argued a point, now generally accepted, that western teachers have a responsibility 'to admit the relativity of our own rhetoric, and to realize that logics different from our own are not necessarily illogical' (p. 807). She supported this conclusion with a number of episodes from her time spent teaching in China, in one of which her students adopted a strategy on a writing assignment which she saw as plagiarism but which they explained was a strategy they had been encouraged to use:

> After our teacher's explanation, we understand that in her country or some others plagiarism is forbidden. . . . However in our country things are [a] little different. We may perhaps call what our teacher calls 'plagiarism' as 'imitation', which is sometimes encouraged, especially for a beginner. (p. 803)

Accounts also appeared in the literature of L2 writers using plagiarism (a term not always used by these authors) as a way of populating their texts with accurate and idiomatic expressions:

> Several of the researchers adopt a 'jigsaw' approach. When writing the introduction, they sit down with all the relevant articles they have read. . . . The process of writing the introduction is then one of 'lifting' expressions from the papers and combining them and adding some of their own. (St John 1987: 118).

For these writers plagiarism was a textual resource (Shaw 1991), an academic survival skill (Currie 1998), or the by-product of the student's struggle, not yet won, to find her own authorial voice (Cadman 1997; Spack 1997).

By charting some of the sources of textual plagiarism, these early works provided an alternative to the understanding of plagiarism as an unethical and quasi-criminal act.

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If plagiarism in the writing of international students can be traced back to different understandings of what is valued in a text (Gregg 1986) or a collectivist background predisposing toward collaboration (Leki 1992), then alternative explanations to intentional deceit can be found.

3.2 Criticism of the traditional notion of plagiarism

Building on this broadened understanding, since the 1990s a growing number of scholars have criticised the traditional notion of plagiarism from a range of perspectives, particularly in relation to L2 writing. One strand of criticism focuses on the origin of plagiarism to show that it is not as universal a concept as the received view implies. The notion of plagiarism as literary theft emerged in response to a particular set of economic, social and technological conditions specific to eighteenth-century England, and is thus a historical and cultural phenomenon, which may not be applicable to writing cultures and rhetorical traditions marked by a different course of development (Scollon 1995; Pennycook 1996). Fundamental to the traditional view of plagiarism is the idea of the individual ownership of discourse; in other words, the view of texts as products with commercial value, which are owned as individual property. Scollon shows how this ideological position, which served as the basis for the emergence of copyright laws, is incompatible with current theories and research on the nature of communication (for discussions of plagiarism, intellectual property and copyright in today's world, see Buranen & Roy 1999 and Bloch 2012).

Another underlying assumption of the traditional view of plagiarism that has received criticism is the Enlightenment notion of the author as an autonomous individual who is a sole creator of original works through self-expression. The notions of unitary authorship and originality, both pillars of the received view of plagiarism, have been shown to be problematic (see, e.g., Scollon 1995; Pennycook 1996; Ivanič 1998; Myers 1998; Howard 1999). These scholars have argued that authorship, rather than resulting from an autonomous individual's expression of his/her original thoughts, can be seen as constructed in discourse through interaction and negotiation with other texts, and through the reuse of available linguistic and other resources. The current thinking, influenced by the Bakhtinian notion of the dialogic nature of language, is that writing is essentially intertextual: it always contains traces of other texts, either explicitly (such as through citation) or implicitly (through following a particular textual configuration), a distinction that Fairclough (1992) termed MANIFEST and CONSTITUTIVE INTERTEXTUALITY.

Chandrasoma, Thompson & Pennycook (2004) criticise the notion of plagiarism precisely because it oversimplifies textual relations. They consider intertextuality, which they define 'not as a mere manifestation of texts within a text but rather as multiple strands of knowledges within texts designed to produce desired meanings' (p. 175), to be essential in student writing. They distinguish between three intertextual modes: conceptual, which refers to appropriating concepts from sources; complementary, which 'complements the theme or themes of a text while reinforcing the writers' point of view' through examples and allusions; and metalinguistic, which includes 'linguistic resources (e.g., specific terminologies, stance markers) used in a text' (p. 175). Their analysis of cases of student writers and their texts

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shows that determining what constitutes plagiarism is complex and dependent on context, with factors such as what counts as common knowledge, student development, disciplinary conventions, authorial identity and others all playing a role. They therefore question the validity of plagiarism policies designed to apply to all disciplines, levels of study, courses, and to students at different levels of writing development.

The notion of plagiarism has also been criticised on pedagogical grounds as incompatible with theories of learning. The implied emphasis on individual originality does not allow for learning through imitation and appropriation, and is therefore detrimental to writing development (Howard 1999). The fact that extremely diverse textual practices, ranging from buying a complete paper to inexpert paraphrase, are lumped together under the plagiarism label has also been criticised as not only causing definitional confusion but also resulting in treating a stage of writing development as dishonest and ethically questionable behaviour (Chandrasoma et al. 2004; Valentine 2006). Finally, a growing body of research into L2 students' source-based writing has revealed language-related problems which may lead to inadvertent plagiarism. For example, limited linguistic repertoires and reading skills lead some writers to produce what they consider to be paraphrases or summaries, by virtue of small, local changes to the source. Other readers (such as teachers) may regard the limited changes as inadequate and therefore plagiarism. This situation has lead researchers to call for extensive pedagogical support for L2 writers rather than punishment.

These criticisms have led to efforts to reframe plagiarism in ways that more accurately reflect current knowledge about discourse, writing and learning, as discussed in the next section.

4. Recent reconceptualisations of plagiarism

Several different directions can be identified in the literature seeking to provide solutions to the problems inherent in the notion of plagiarism, ranging from distinguishing between different types of plagiarism, replacing the term with more appropriate terminology, and viewing some types of inappropriate source use as a developmental stage and a learning strategy. This section reviews current proposals for reconceptualising plagiarism in both L1 and L2 writing literature.

4.1 Types of plagiarism and alternative terms for different source-use practices

There is now ample evidence that students may plagiarise unintentionally, as a result of uncertainty about citing conventions, what constitutes common knowledge, or limited referencing skills and/or L2 resources (e.g., Sherman 1992; Currie 1998; Howard 1999; Errey 2002; Pecorari 2003; Petrić 2004; Flowerdew & Li 2007; Ellery 2008a; Shi 2010; Li & Casanave 2012). Although establishing intention is always problematic, the sheer volume of studies reporting that students are concerned to avoid plagiarism but lack the experience or perspective which would allow them actually to do so makes it virtually impossible to avoid

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the conclusion that not all plagiarism is intended to deceive. Concerns have been raised about unintentional plagiarism being treated as a form of deliberate cheating, leading to proposals for separating these types of source-use practices. Two approaches can be identified in the literature: distinguishing between different types of plagiarism and replacing the term 'plagiarism' by alternatives.

Howard (1999) introduced the well-known term PATCHWRITING, defined as 'copying from a source text and then deleting some words, altering grammatical structures, or plugging in one synonym for another' (p. xvii) to denote unintentional plagiarism, arguing that it should not be considered part of the plagiarism category. Although patchwriting has proved to be a useful and influential concept (see next section), distinguishing between intentional and unintentional textual behaviour is fraught with difficulty. Recognising this, Pecorari (2008) builds on Howard's work, introducing a two-level typology of plagiarism, with TEXTUAL PLAGIARISM, defined as 'the use of words and/or ideas from another source, without appropriate attribution' (p. 4), as a general term, further divided into two sub-types, prototypical plagiarism, where intention to deceive is present, and patchwriting, where no such intention exists. This classification allows for discussions of source use and textual analysis without reference to the writer's intention to deceive or the need to establish it, while at the same time opening up the possibility of taking intent into consideration if it can be established.

A different set of proposals, although with a similar aim, have been made by scholars such as Chandrasoma et al. (2004) and Petrić (2004), who have argued that the notion of plagiarism should be abandoned as imprecise and pedagogically detrimental, and replaced by terminology that would provide a more accurate description of source-use practices. The call for more precise and 'ethically-neutral language' (Petrić 2004) should not be seen as merely a search for a euphemism but rather as a way to shift the emphasis from crime and moral transgression to textual relations (Chandrasoma et al. 2004).

Various terms have emerged in the literature, including 'language re-use' (Flowerdew & Li 2007), 'mediated authorship' (Prior 1998) and 'textual appropriation' (Shi 2006, 2010), each of which highlights a slightly different aspect of source-based writing and relations between the cited and the citing text. The terms most commonly used are 'textual borrowing' (Currie 1998; Barks & Watts 2001; Shi 2004; Petrić 2012) and 'transgressive/nontransgressive intertextuality' (Chandrasoma et al. 2004; Abasi & Akbari 2008; Borg 2009).

The underlying assumption behind these terms is that explicit intertextuality is one of the essential features of academic writing. Unlike plagiarism, these terms do not have negative connotations – for instance, textual borrowing is defined as 'appropriate integration and documentation of other texts' (Barks & Watts 2001: 246) – but they can also be used to describe misuse of sources (e.g., illegitimate textual borrowing, transgressive intertextuality). In a recent study of faculty attitudes to student intertextuality, Pecorari & Shaw (2012) provide a typology of intertextuality, classifying it as acceptable or unacceptable, with some types likely to be subject to interpretation in context: indirect (e.g., formulaic phrases), conventional (e.g., signalled quotation or paraphrase), unconventional (e.g., a quotation is not signalled although the source is acknowledged) to deceptive (where the writer does intend to deceive).

These efforts to change the terminology about source use also represent a conceptual change, as new terms allow us to discuss textual practices from a different perspective without

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invoking the stigma inseparable from plagiarism. However, the proliferation of terms may also cause confusion outside the specific research areas where they are commonly employed, which may be one of the reasons why most scholars use these terms alongside plagiarism. Ultimately, both approaches reflect the need for more accurate descriptions of the complex issue of source use.

4.2 Patchwriting as a developmental strategy

That close reliance on sources may be a necessary stage in the development of students' academic writing was suggested as early as Campbell (1990); this argument has most notably been developed in Howard's (1995, 1999) patchwriting model. More recently, Abasi & Akbari (2008) have added a further distinction between LOCALISED PATCHWRITING, defined as 'close appropriation at the micro level of lexis and syntax' (p. 270) and GLOBAL PATCHWRITING, referring to 'ineffective appropriation at the level of ideas' (p. 271).

A growing body of research has provided empirical evidence of patchwriting in L2 students' writing (e.g., Currie 1998; Angélil-Carter 2000; Pecorari 2003, 2008; Chandrasoma et al. 2004; Villalva 2006; Flowerdew & Li 2007; Ouellette 2008; Li & Casanave 2012; Davis 2013; Li 2013). Recent studies have focused on tracing the development not only in students' source-based texts (i.e., the products of writing), but also in their conceptualisations of source use within a complex network of related issues, including their views of themselves as authors, their attitudes to knowledge, and the educational practices into which they were socialised. These studies show that L2 students at the patchwriting stage tend to be unaware of the potential problems involved in this practice, although they are concerned about committing plagiarism inadvertently. They also tend to hold naïve beliefs about source texts, which they see as authoritative containers of uncontested knowledge, while they regard citing as simply a matter of correct application of citation conventions (Abasi & Graves 2008). In a study of more and less experienced L2 academic writers, Abasi, Akbari & Graves (2006) found that while the more experienced writers had a sense of their own authorial identities and were able to create a representation of themselves as authors via intertextual links, the less experienced writers, whose texts exhibited numerous instances of patchwriting, did not perceive themselves as authors who could argue or disagree with other authors. Similarly, a longitudinal interview-based study of ten Chinese students at a UK university shows that developing academic literacy requires 'a CONCEPTUAL understanding of knowledge construction and conventions in the dominant academic community, rather than practice of mechanical aspects of citing and referencing' (Gu & Brookes 2008: 338, emphasis in the original). However, as Abasi & Akbari (2008) have shown, faculty practices may inadvertently encourage patchwriting by placing unrealistically heavy demands on students, who then resort to it as a coping strategy.

There is an awareness arising out of this body of research that while patchwriting is not an effective use of sources, it is a useful transitional stage that helps students develop as writers both in terms of raising their rhetorical awareness and in terms of their writing practices. Although this view is becoming widespread among researchers in the area of L2 writing, it is still not widely accepted by practitioners or by researchers in other fields.

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4.3 Appropriation as a way of language learning

While research suggests that patchwriting contributes to the development of source-use skills at a broader discoursal level, there is also evidence that language appropriation facilitates learning at a more micro level, resulting in the acquisition of academic phraseology, which is an essential element of academic literacy. Villalva (2006) traced the literacy development of two Latina bilingual high school students in the United States during a year-long writing project the students were required to complete. Her analysis of one of the students' multiple drafts identified extensive use of patchwriting, resulting in a mix of academic language taken from the source and informal language of the student's paraphrase. However, the final draft revealed another textual practice, consisting of original, rather than patchwritten, sentences crafted with the help of some lexical material from the source texts. For instance, the essay displayed effective topic sentences, which contained words such as 'unrealistic', 'strive' and 'depict', all of which occurred more than once in one of the source texts the student was drawing on for her project. In other words, the source text became a resource for extending the student's academic repertoire, which was necessary for the writing task. Interestingly, Villalva noted that the student later used the same words in an oral presentation of her project, showing that elements of academic literacy acquired from a source text became part of her own academic language. This case shows that patchwriting, followed by a more independent and creative use of building blocks acquired from source texts, is part of the process of development of both oral and written academic language.

This study thus provides empirical evidence of what Bakhtin (1981) described as the process of making unfamiliar and foreign words our own. Similar processes have been documented in the writing of students acquiring the discourses of their disciplines (Prior 1998). In a study of more and less accomplished L2 master's students, Petrić (2012) found what may be a more advanced stage in academic literacy development, in which the more successful writers used excessive quotation fragments in their writing to signal their language appropriations, a practice that can be still regarded as a learning strategy but one that reflects students' conceptual awareness of the difference between transgressive and nontransgressive intertextuality. It has also been shown that source texts are used as resources not only for acquiring academic lexis but also for acquiring knowledge about genre features (Tardy 2006), which echoes Chandrasoma et al.'s (2004) point about intertextuality playing multiple roles in student writing.

The findings of this body of research reveal that the anti-plagiarism dictum 'say it in your own words' oversimplifies the task for students encountering a new discourse, who do not yet possess the appropriate linguistic repertoire necessary for writing about academic or discipline-specific topics and who thus need to rely on source texts in order to acquire it.

5. Research on perceptions of plagiarism

As noted in section 2.1, intention is seen as an important component of understanding plagiarism, leading to the act being labelled in different ways in the research literature. A

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more nuanced supply of terminology is positive in that it permits distinctions to be made between appropriate and inappropriate intertextual relationships (although the variety and indeed inconsistency in terminology pointed to above is less positive). However, nomenclature is not the only source of difficulty in drawing those distinctions; it is becoming increasingly clear that significant variation exists in understandings of what is and is not appropriate source use.

5.1 Students' and teachers' views

If policy definitions are extensive at times (implying complexity) and partially contradictory (at least as far as intention is concerned) they are intended to be perceived as straightforward and definitive, their legalistic tone suggesting that, as Sutherland-Smith observes, they 'position members of the Academy either as right or wrong' (2011: 136). When asked about their own understandings of plagiarism, though, as a number of researchers have done, both students and staff are much more hesitant and much more varied in their constructions of the concept.

The meaning of plagiarism for individuals has been investigated by means of interviews with staff (Sutherland-Smith 2005a; Borg 2009) or students (Ashworth, Bannister & Thorne 1997; Ashworth, Freewood & Macdonald 2003; Flint, Clegg & Macdonald 2006; Blum 2010). It has also been investigated in a text-based format, with specific instances of intertextuality used to stimulate participants' responses (Pecorari & Shaw 2012, who researched staff). Text- or scenario-based questionnaire studies have been conducted by Julliard (1994; students, staff and editors); Barrett & Cox (2005; staff and students); and Roig (1997; students and 2001; staff).

An overarching theme of these studies is the variety of responses to, experiences of, and meanings attributed to plagiarism. Students' understandings of plagiarism differ from those of staff, or from a received understanding of what is conventional and appropriate (Deckert 1993; Julliard 1994; Roig 1997; Barrett & Cox 2005; Blum 2010). In one survey, only 30% of students identified the act of repeating language from a source without signalling it as quotation (but with a reference to the author) as serious plagiarism (Löfström & Kupila 2013), a finding confirmed by Li's (2013) case studies. Importantly, though, two studies (Ashworth et al. 1997; Ashworth et al. 2003) have shown that this is not entirely either ignorance or a flouting of accepted principles; rather, students are attuned to issues of honesty, ethics and developing as academic writers but apply those values in ways which may surprise more experienced academic writers. This is echoed in Petrić's (2004) case study, which showed a broad cleft between a student's understanding of her writing and that of her teacher.

Indeed, academic staff and other gatekeepers have a variety of understandings of what plagiarism is (e.g., Crocker & Shaw 2002; Shi 2012). Sutherland-Smith's (2005a) respondents disagreed about whether intention is a necessary component. While most believed the distinction between intentional and inadvertent plagiarism was important, two thought that 'all acts of copying are plagiarism, and intention is therefore automatically proven' (p. 89). Roig (2001) asked university teachers from a variety of disciplines to comment on rewritten versions of an excerpt from an academic text, and to decide if they represented plagiarism, and found a range of responses. He then asked a smaller sample from the same group to

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produce their own paraphrases, and found that some re-used language from their source to an extent which 'could be interpreted by others as possible plagiarism' (p. 215).

The hedging in that conclusion is not surprising given the findings of Pecorari & Shaw (2012), who showed eight university teachers from the disciplines of natural sciences, engineering and medicine five examples of source use. The teachers found it very difficult to reach a decision and ultimately disagreed with each other in most cases. Although they invoked definitional criteria in their explanations – whether there was an intertextual relationship, whether it was appropriate and whether there was intention to deceive – the individuals weighed up different pieces of evidence in different ways to arrive at their conclusions. Borg (2009) confirms that while the lecturers he interviewed had thought about plagiarism a great deal, 'personal experience affected [their] perceptions' (p. 418).

5.2 Disciplinary differences in conceptualising plagiarism

Some of this variation may be due to the disciplinary background of respondents. Several studies have investigated frequencies in plagiarism in particular academic disciplines. McCullough & Holmberg (2005) examined master's dissertations in a range of disciplines and found that engineering students were more likely to have copied language from sources than other groups, and Selwyn's (2008) survey of self-reported student behaviour confirmed that students in engineering and technology were the most likely to have copied small amounts of text, though other groups were more likely to have copied larger amounts. Julliard (1994) showed examples of source use to four groups: university teachers in medicine and in English (as well as journal editors and medical students) and found differences between the views of academic staff, with those from medicine more accepting of language repeated from the source. Rinnert & Kobayashi's (2005) survey of Japanese students found that those in the arts were more likely than those in the sciences to report that their teachers would object to plagiarism.

While these differences could in principle reflect differing degrees of proclivity to cheat, it is clear that other explanations exist as well. Jamieson (2008) relates the comments of her colleagues across disciplines: 'Most of these rules about how to use and cite sources don't actually apply in my discipline' (p. 77); this has to do with the well known and frequently observed differences in how textual practices are valued across academic disciplines. Pecorari (2006) showed that textual plagiarism was more common in the works of students in the STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), in other words, precisely those disciplines which do not 'permit' explicit, signalled quotation (in the sense that it is vanishingly rare and thus highly unconventional).

Borg's interview participants also revealed both differences in perspectives and a disciplinary grounding for those differences. For example, a historian observed

> For a long time I worked with colleagues in English literature, and indeed still do, and I've found that there is a difference in perception between historians and literary critics, in the sense that literary critics regard any kind of copying as an ultimate sin. Historians recognise that to a certain extent whatever students are doing, they are going to be repeating material, reorganising material that they found from elsewhere, as

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> indeed practising historians do, ... but we also recognise a lot of the time we are using other peoples' work, and, for that reason, again, we tend not to regard it with such a severe eye. (2009: 419)

In the eyes of writers and their evaluators, then, plagiarism is highly contextual. Definitions with regulatory force in universities treat it as a legalistic and relatively straightforward matter: there may be a question in specific cases about whether plagiarism occurred, but when it has, it is always wrong. The literature on L1 composition and L2 writing has, however, produced descriptions of an act which appears to be plagiarism in terms of intertextual relationships but does not carry the same implication of moral failing. Studies to date have demonstrated not only that teachers and students perceive the degree of complexity in the notion of textual plagiarism which is hidden by institutional definitions, but also that because of that complexity, individuals' understandings of plagiarism are sharply divergent.

6. Current themes

In the context of a demonstrated need to understand the causes of non-deceptive textual plagiarism, three factors have received particular attention: the use of electronic media; the role of cultural backgrounds and culturally grounded perceptions; and the development of language and discoursal skills.

6.1 Plagiarism and the electronic media

The spread of the Internet and the development of new information technologies have made a vast range of sources readily available to student writers. Recent research shows that both L1 and L2 students are increasingly likely to turn to the Internet for sources for their academic assignments. For instance, 91% of 186 students in Sutherland-Smith's (2008) study at an Australian university reported using the Internet as a source of information when writing assignments. Given this trend, concerns have been raised about the growth of online plagiarism due to the ease with which students can appropriate texts from the Internet by using copy and paste, as well as engaging in other types of academic dishonesty such as purchasing essays from online paper mills (e.g., Szabo & Underwood 2004). In this section, we review studies dealing with the relationship between the Internet and plagiarism, focusing specifically on three issues: (i) the extent of Internet plagiarism, (ii) the role of electronic resources in the writing process of L2 students, and (iii) the changing notions of textual ownership as a result of new information technologies.

6.1.1 The extent of Internet plagiarism

Whether the Internet has caused an increase in plagiarism has been the subject of a great deal of commentary in the media and in the research literature, though the subject of considerably less research. Historical studies of student writing and writing instruction show that plagiarism

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is not a new phenomenon at universities. Carter Simmons (1999) traced discourses about plagiarism in textbooks and student magazines to the nineteenth century, when American universities started to require students to produce written assignments. However, studies investigating the extent of plagiarism over time, particularly before and after the advent of the Internet, with similar populations, are rare. Instead, there is a growing body of research comparing the extent of plagiarism from the Internet as opposed to printed sources. McCabe (2005) provides a meta-analysis of a series of studies he and his co-researchers conducted at US and Canadian universities. Data from a total of over 70,000 students show that similar percentages of students report copying/pasting a few sentences without referencing from both printed and Internet sources, with 38% undergraduate and 25% postgraduate students reporting copying from printed sources, 36% undergraduate and 24% postgraduate students copying from Internet sources, and the majority (about 60%) reporting copying from both types of sources. McCabe concludes that the Internet facilitates plagiarism for students who already copy from printed sources, rather than leading to more students plagiarising.

A similar conclusion that the availability of Internet sources *per se* does not lead to an increase in plagiarism was reached by Selwyn (2008) and Scanlon & Neumann (2002). Based on self-report data from 1,222 undergraduates in the UK, Selwyn found that the majority of students (about 60%) reported copying a few sentences from the Internet into their assignments without acknowledgement in the previous 12 months, with progressively lower percentages engaging in copying larger stretches of text without acknowledgement. However, no difference was found between online and 'offline' plagiarism, with an almost identical percentage of the population reporting copying from both types of sources. In contrast, statistically significant differences were found within the student population, with male students, more expert Internet users, lower achievers, and students from certain disciplines (e.g., computer science and mathematics) more likely to engage in unacknowledged copying from online sources. Scanlon & Neumann (2002) also found a similar percentage of students reporting copying from printed (28.6%) and online (24.5%) sources in their survey of 698 undergraduates at US universities.

Interestingly, these and other survey-based studies, conducted in different countries, have found strikingly similar percentages of students who report having copied from sources (online or offline) without references. Figures from studies conducted in Australia (32% of 186 students in Sutherland-Smith 2008) and the UK (32.2% of 291 students, Szabo & Underwood 2004) are almost identical to the figures from US studies reviewed above. The only exception is Selwyn (2008), who reports much higher figures; however, this may be due to the difference in the phrasing of the response options in the survey, since Selwyn used a definite time frame (e.g., once or twice in the past 12 months) rather than the frequency scales (never, sometimes, frequently) used in other studies; this may account for the apparent difference in students' responses.

While interesting, the findings of these studies should be taken with caution, since they rely on self-reported behaviour and thus may not accurately reflect actual writing behaviour (for a discussion of questionnaire surveys as a method in research on plagiarism, see section 7.1.5). They also tell us little about the respondents' writing processes, the reasons that led them to copy without acknowledgement and the contexts in which copying is likely to occur. Ellery's (2008b) study, conducted with first-year students in South Africa, makes a step in this

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direction by adopting a mixed-method approach, which combines questionnaires with textual analysis of students' assignments and individual face-to-face consultations with 16 students whose assignments were found to contain instances of plagiarism from online sources. Ellery identified several factors specific to misuse of electronic sources, such as students' lack of knowledge about referencing such sources and their differing perceptions of the status of printed and Internet sources. Some of the students believed that Internet sources did not need to be cited since they were readily available; as one of the students in the study explained: 'they are there for anyone to use' (Ellery 2008b: 612). Sutherland-Smith (2005b) found a similar attitude towards Internet sources among first-year ESL students in Australia, some of whom believed that because the Internet was – in the words of one of the interviewees – 'a free zone' (p. 23), the information obtained from it was common knowledge and therefore did not need to be cited. Another misconception was that copying and pasting information directly from the Internet was permissible as long as it was allowed by the website. This shows that students may mistake public domain for common knowledge.

6.1.2 Problems in L2 students' writing from electronic sources

The majority of the studies above (with the exception of Sutherland-Smith 2005b; 2008) do not distinguish between L1 and L2 writers, although it can be assumed that the problems identified by this research are likely to apply to both groups. Studies specifically investigating the prevalence of Internet plagiarism in L2 writing have revealed that L2 writers face additional difficulties when using Internet sources, as effective searching and critically evaluating Internet sources requires, among other skills, sufficient language proficiency. L2 writers are therefore more prone to rely on academically questionable Internet sources such as personal web pages and commercial sites, and to source Internet information in an unsystematic manner (Slaouti 2002; Stapleton 2005; Radia & Stapleton 2008).

There are several case studies in the recent literature that provide an insight into L2 students' use of electronic sources and the types of problems they encounter which may lead to misuse of sources. Li & Casanave's (2012) study of two L2 first-year students in Hong Kong writing from sources provides evidence of some problematic strategies that novice students employ when writing from electronically available texts. Responding to an assignment requiring students to locate three sources relevant to their chosen topic and write a 500-word essay, one of the students in their study, Iris, approached the literature search for the task by typing the keywords from the assignment title into the university's electronic database search engine and selecting two articles that were among the first in the output. She then copied two passages from one and the abstract from another into a Word document, which became the basis for her assignment, together with PowerPoint lecture slides. Her textual interventions included deleting sentences she did not understand or find to be relevant, and minimal editing (e.g., changing active to passive voice). In the subsequent conference session with her tutor, when questioned about her source-use practice, it transpired that Iris did not understand the texts. This case illustrates a range of inefficient source-use practices students may be using, and points to the need for more support for students at this stage of study,

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in terms of both providing reading lists with suitable texts and offering training in literature search and source selection techniques in addition to source-use instruction.

Stapleton's (2010) case study of an advanced L2 student writing from electronic sources shows that problems with use of such sources may persist even at more advanced levels of study. Andrea, a Chinese student who had recently completed her M.A. in TESOL, was asked to write a 3,000-word assignment as part of the study. Although her paper did not contain instances of plagiarism, analysis of her writing process revealed various problems in her use of electronic sources, such as poor search techniques (e.g., use of non-academic search engines and inefficient keywords), reliance on inappropriate Internet sources such as forums, and copying and pasting text directly from sources, which she then partially changed to create her own text. A related study by Radia & Stapleton (2008) also revealed that L2 students may have more difficulty than L1 students in differentiating questionable unconventional Internet sources (such as personal web pages or commercial sites) from credible academic ones, due to their limited language proficiency. These studies show how easy access to a wealth of electronic sources does not necessarily make the writing task easier for students, since they need to develop a new set of skills, such as selecting appropriate key words and relevant sources, in order to use them effectively. Lack of such skills leads to source-use problems, including Internet plagiarism. As Stapleton (2010: 304) concludes, 'new tools and resources come with caveats'.

6.1.3 Changing notions of textuality and textual ownership

Authors such as Howard (2007) and Bloch (2001, 2012) place the current widespread fears of the spread of Internet plagiarism in a historical context by comparing them to similar anxieties following the invention of the printing press and the increased access to texts it enabled (Howard 2007) and by tracing the development of intellectual property from its origins in the eighteenth century to the digital age (Bloch 2012). Howard (2007) argues that instead of focusing on increased access to texts, we should explore how the Internet has changed and continues to change textual relationships, that is, relationships between writers, readers and texts. Bloch (2001, 2012) similarly argues that the discussion of Internet plagiarism should be broadened to include the fundamentally different ways in which information available online is used and shared in comparison to printed texts. Both authors argue that plagiarism policies and pedagogy need to draw on a deeper understanding of these issues.

As noted above, the perceptions of teachers and students frequently diverge, and the electronic media provide great scope for such divergence. Belcher (2001) shows that hypertext and other features of electronic media can make it harder for inexperienced writers to identify the boundaries of authorship and ideas needing attribution. Crucially, it is not simply the case that electronic media cause students to form 'wrong' impressions about authorship; 'digital natives' have a set of orientations toward the ownership of ideas and texts which is at odds with traditional academic assumptions, but they are deeply and genuinely held (Blum 2010).

As the overview of these three bodies of literature above shows, there is a need for further research, particularly because of rapid developments in information technologies and the

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speed with which student writing practices are changing. Studies specifically investigating L2 students' writing processes, difficulties and strategies are particularly needed.

6.2 Plagiarism and culture

As noted above, the connections often asserted between culture and plagiarism were in large part responsible for the appearance of the topic on the L2 writing research agenda. A rapidly growing body of work has sought empirical evidence for the proposition that culture may explain some textual plagiarism, using approaches such as case studies; questionnaires, interviews or focus groups with teachers and/or students about understandings and attitudes; text-based interviews; and comparisons of student writing with its sources. The findings from these studies are summarised below.

- Earlier anecdotal accounts of a tendency towards source-based writing strategies with inadequate attribution have been amply confirmed; this is a common strategy for L2 writers (Campbell 1990; Currie 1998; LoCastro & Masuko 2002; Pecorari 2003; Petrić 2004; Shi 2004; Abasi et al. 2006; Chatterjee 2006; Flowerdew & Li 2007; Abasi & Akbari 2008; Oullette 2008; Li & Casanave 2012).
- L2 writers view a source text as a 'language repository' (Plakans & Gebril 2012: 30) and copying is sometimes mediated through the practice of recording potentially useful phrases in a notebook for later use (Flowerdew & Li 2007; Gu & Brooks 2008).
- It may not be identified by the teacher (Currie 1998; Pecorari 2008; Li & Casanave 2012).
- In tasks asking them to judge the acceptability of examples, scenarios or descriptions of source use, L2 writers often give unexpected answers (Deckert 1993; Chandrasegaran 2000; Shi 2006); in direct comparison, some source-use strategies are more frequently identified as plagiarism by L1 than by L2 writers (Hayes & Introna 2005; Marshall & Garry 2006; Sivasubramaniam 2006).
- Teachers express a belief that cultural differences explain some plagiarism (Bretag 2004) and some L2 writers perceive differences between the rules and practices that are acceptable in their new educational context and those of their home countries (Shi 2006; Abasi & Graves 2008).

Explanations offered for differences in source-use practices with special applicability to L2 writers include

- limitations on students' linguistic and discoursal skills (Currie 1998; Hayes & Introna 2005), on their prior experience of assessment writing tasks (Hayes & Introna 2005, 2006; Chatterjee 2006), or on their exposure to explicit instruction in writing and/or source use (Rinnert & Kobayashi 2005; Shi 2006)
- experience of and facility with memorisation, because of an educational background which has placed emphasis on memorisation and rote learning
- delays in developing an authorial voice (Currie 1998; Ouellette 2008), possibly due to an educational background which did not involve extensive writing for assessment and/or did not place an emphasis on self-expression in writing

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- confusion as to what is required (Evans & Youmans, 2000; Gu & Brooks 2008) or a belief that inappropriate strategies were in fact legitimate (Pecorari 2003; Lankamp 2008; Li 2013), or declarative knowledge about what university rules say about plagiarism combined with insufficient procedural knowledge to avoid it (Pecorari 2003; Li & Casanave 2012)
- a need for survival or coping skills (Currie 1998; Rinnert & Kobayashi 2005) when confronted with the challenges of adapting to a new academic context and negotiating it through the medium of an L2
- uncertainty about distinguishing between one's own and others' ideas (Rinnert & Kobayashi 2005; Shi 2006).

Yet despite this seemingly clear indication that source use is a problematic area for L2 writers, and the temptingly plausible explanations for it grounded in their linguistic and educational backgrounds, there is evidence to challenge the idea that L2 writers are different in this respect from their L1 peers. Three studies which looked at the source-use behaviour of L1 and L2 writers found no significant differences between the two groups (Hyland 2009; Martin 2012; Weigle & Parker 2012), and some studies of attitudes and ability to recognise problematic source use have similarly found L2 and L1 users broadly in line (Evans & Youmans 2000; Maxwell, Curtis & Vardenega 2008).

What is the source of this disagreement? Part of it is likely to be traceable to differences in methodologies and approach. Many of the studies addressing this question have compared L2 writers not with L1 writers but with what the researchers assume to be the received view of good practice. However, as noted above, there is ample evidence that experienced academic gatekeepers differ in their view of what is and is not appropriate, so studies using a nominal received view as a baseline for comparison run into an immediate methodological difficulty.

Others have not attempted such a contrast directly, but have simply described the L2 writer situated in new environments. It may be, therefore, that the issues above are pertinent but not unique to the L2 writer. Indications that this may be the case come, for example, from Shi's (2006) interview study in which both L1 and L2 respondents expressed uncertainty about defining the boundaries of intellectual property, and Howard et al.'s (2010) analysis of L1 student texts, which showed patchwriting to be a common strategy among that group as well.

Even if the evidence showed unanimously that L2 and L1 writers use sources in clearly different ways, making the connection to culturally grounded explanations would be much more difficult. If our home culture predisposes us to think, and therefore to act, in a particular way – an assumption which is itself contested – it is not the only influence on our actions. Furthermore, our home culture consists of a set of predispositions which do not always pull in the same direction. These observations – which are essentially about the notoriously slippery nature of any culturally grounded explanations for behaviour – may account for the fact that the body of informed commentary on plagiarism and culture is as fragmented and contradictory as the body of empirical evidence.

Assertions of cultural differences come not only from Western observers but from individuals steeped in some of the cultures discussed in the literature. From the Korean perspective, Moon (2002) argues that while the situation may be changing, 'Korean students copy ... and it has been allowed. More precisely, it has been ignored because plagiarism is

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not a concern of teachers in academic settings in Korea' (p. 1351). This view was taken up in a reflective piece on cultural differences as an explanation for plagiarism (Sowden 2005) which stimulated disagreement in print from academics from Vietnam and China: 'the Vietnamese terms for plagiarism . . . have the same or even more negative connotations [than the English word]' (Ha 2006: 76); 'all my teachers warned us not to copy others' work. In fact, the concept of "plagiarism" as an immoral practice has existed in China for a very long time' (Liu 2005: 235). As one of the participants in Tang's (2012) study of junior EFL researchers explains, although the practices of Chinese writers' language reuse that have been described in the literature reminded him of his own experiences of learning English at a Chinese college ('i.e., noting down useful expressions in a notebook and using them in my speaking and writing', p. 214), he strongly disagreed with claims in the literature about plagiarism being acceptable in Chinese culture, which he considered essentialist and 'largely based on assumption of the cultural acceptability of plagiarism rather than solid evidence' (p. 215).

The role of culture as an explanatory factor in plagiarism in the work of L2 writers is thus far from clear. If an answer is discoverable, it will require more research based on direct comparisons. However, it may not be possible, or worthwhile, to unpick cultural values from the web of language skills, discoursal adjustments and individual perceptions and practices in which they are embedded. Taking plagiarism as an example of a problem which has controversially been pursued from a contrastive rhetorical perspective, Bloch (2008) acknowledges that temptations toward moralising, essentialism and reductionism are present but argues that it is possible to resist them and that by making the effort, rich understandings can be achieved. Perhaps the real take-home message is that while understanding our students' backgrounds may inform us about their plagiarism, a more fruitful enterprise may be studying their plagiarism for what it can teach us about their experiences as writers.

6.3 Plagiarism and pedagogy

As Wette notes, the literature on plagiarism tends to be 'more problem-oriented than solution or practice-oriented' (2010: 159). There is, however, a growing awareness among scholars and practitioners alike that the solution to problems relating to plagiarism lies in education rather than punitive measures. Recently there have been numerous descriptive accounts of, and suggestions for, plagiarism pedagogy, which can be grouped into two broad approaches: (i) educating students explicitly about plagiarism and (ii) teaching source use and referencing in greater depth. The two approaches are not seen as mutually exclusive; in fact in many accounts they are combined (e.g. Barks & Watts 2001; Bloch 2012). In this section we first summarise these two foci of pedagogical activity and advice before reviewing empirical research on the effectiveness of pedagogical interventions aimed at preventing plagiarism.

6.3.1 Explicit teaching about plagiarism

Although many universities, particularly in English-speaking countries, customarily provide written advice and workshops aimed at familiarising students with policies on plagiarism, such

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measures have been criticised as inadequate and insufficient. They rest on the assumption that avoiding plagiarism is simply a matter of being informed about university policy (Wette 2010: 159) and that students can develop referencing skills from abstract rules (McGowan & Lightbody 2008: 23), outside the context of writing (Bloch 2012: 156). Providing information only, without instruction and practice, has also been criticised for tending to make students anxious and afraid of committing inadvertent plagiarism (e.g., DeVoss & Rosati 2002; Abasi & Graves 2008).

It has therefore been argued that education about plagiarism should go beyond general advice and engage students in tasks and discussions that will lead to a deeper understanding of what constitutes plagiarism. This approach often situates plagiarism within a larger framework of issues related to academic integrity, including authorship, copyright and intellectual property, and is aimed at both L1 and L2 students. For instance, discussions of plagiarism cases reported in the media are often suggested as useful classroom activities, particularly if they are chosen from the students' own discipline so that they can engage in subject-specific issues relating to legitimate source use (Fountain & Fitzgerald 2008; Robillard 2008; Bradley 2011; Bloch 2012). Other examples of activities and assignments suggested in the literature include discussions of academic papers about plagiarism (Casanave 2003; Bloch 2012), student participation in developing a plagiarism policy for the course (Price 2002), analysis of the university's academic integrity policy (Fountain & Fitzgerald 2008), writing a literacy autobiography (Robillard 2008) and creating and copyrighting a digital story (Bloch 2012). Writing courses are seen as the most appropriate pedagogical framework for such activities, although there are also suggestions that plagiarism awareness sessions should be led by librarians (Bradley 2011). Time allocated to issues related to plagiarism in courses varies widely depending on the institutional context, from a single session within an EAP course (Casanave 2003) to a ten-week academic writing course with plagiarism as the main theme (Bloch 2012).

6.3.2 Teaching source use and referencing

As research evidence about students' difficulties mastering writing from sources accumulates, so too do ideas about how students can be helped to overcome them. Most recent studies on source use offer pedagogical recommendations for the development of this aspect of academic literacy. There is general agreement that a comprehensive approach to teaching source use should not be restricted to the technical aspects of using a particular citation stylesheet but instead focus on a range of skills and strategies, including text comprehension strategies, effective note-taking, paraphrasing, summarising, quoting and synthesising from multiple source texts. The importance of providing ample opportunities for practice in a supportive learning environment in which students are not accused of plagiarism for making errors in the process of learning has also been emphasised. It is often recommended that source-use instruction should combine awareness-raising activities with practice. For instance, in addition to teaching students how to cite, attention should also be paid to raising their awareness of why writers cite, the purposes of citation (Angélil-Carter 2000; Petrić 2007; Harwood 2010) and the rhetorical effects which can be achieved with different forms of citation (Pecorari 2013).

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Another common recommendation is that, where possible, the teaching of source use should be embedded in students' fields of study (for examples of activities and assignments for students of businesses studies and accounting, see Jameson 1993 and McGowan & Lightbody 2008, respectively), while in general academic writing classes for students from diverse disciplinary backgrounds, teachers should engage students in small-scale ethnographic projects, with the aim of exploring citation conventions and practices in their own discipline through tasks such as interviewing academics or compiling reports on citation use in discipline-specific journal articles (Barks & Watts 2001). Further examples of classroom activities and materials for teaching source use are available in, for example, Swales & Feak (1994, 2000), Barks & Watts (2001) and Harwood (2010).

6.3.3 Research on the effectiveness of pedagogy for plagiarism

In contrast to the numerous publications offering recommendations for, and descriptive accounts of, classroom activities and assignments aimed at preventing plagiarism, there is a dearth of empirical research on their effectiveness[2]. One of the few studies is Wette (2010), an action research study conducted at a university in New Zealand, which used a pre-test/post-test design to assess gains in students' declarative ('knowing that') and procedural knowledge ('knowing how') about source use as a result of an eight-hour unit on teaching sources. Seventy-eight undergraduate students attended the sessions, which included explanations, practical activities for paraphrasing, summarising and quoting, and discussions regarding source use and citation. The findings show that both declarative and procedural knowledge increased as a result of the pedagogical intervention. However, although unacknowledged copying from sources decreased considerably, other source-use problems emerged in the post-task, such as partial and/or inaccurate paraphrase, failing to distinguish between an author's opinion and research results, failing to signal the use of secondary sources, citing general knowledge, omission of page numbers and others. In sum, while students benefited from the instruction, their source use did not become fully effective, showing that acquiring an advanced level of source use is a gradual process. Nevertheless, the study supports a pedagogical approach that combines awareness-raising activities (e.g., discussion) with activities aimed at developing paraphrasing, summarising and technical aspects of referencing.

A similar conclusion had already been reached by Ellery (2008a), who describes a pedagogical intervention consisting of small group tutorials for first-year undergraduates at a South African university, which explicitly addressed plagiarism and provided practice in referencing over a semester. Despite the instruction, inappropriate source use was found in a quarter of the end-of-term assignments. The follow-up interviews with students revealed that this was mainly due to poor understanding of plagiarism and referencing conventions (e.g., many students believed that changing a few words is sufficient for a good paraphrase)

[2] There is a considerable body of empirical work in psychology reporting on assessments of the effectiveness of short-term pedagogical interventions (e.g., Landau, Druen & Arcuri 2002; Belter & du Pré 2009; Elander et al. 2010). This research will not be reviewed here since the interventions tend to focus on students' understanding, attitudes and beliefs, while their actual writing behaviour is rarely considered. Where writing is taken into account, it is often restricted to tasks requiring limited, and typically decontextualised, source use, such as paraphrasing a single sentence.

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and a lack of understanding of the importance of referencing in source-based writing. Ellery concludes that although the students benefited from the pedagogical intervention, it was not sufficient by itself, since 'acquiring attitudes, values, norms, beliefs and practices is an ongoing and long-term process' (2008a: 514).

In contrast to Wette and Ellery, Fiona Hyland's research (2001) on how teachers deal with instances of student plagiarism in written feedback shows the other side of the coin, in other words, what happens when teachers avoid tackling plagiarism directly, fearing that a more direct approach would offend or hurt their students as it could be seen as an accusation of deceptive behaviour. Using interviews with writing teachers and their students, Hyland found that while the teachers used indirect comments and questions to alert their students to the dangers of plagiarism (e.g., 'Is this your idea?'), the students misunderstood their teachers' intentions. As a result, they failed to realise that their source use was inappropriate, and the instances of plagiarism often remained unchanged in their revised essays. The findings of this study therefore provide indirect support for explicit teaching about source use and plagiarism.

Two conclusions can be drawn from these studies: first, that explicit teaching about source use and plagiarism, even in the form of relatively brief pedagogical interventions, contributes to students' increased understanding of plagiarism, more effective source-use skills and a decrease in unacknowledged copying in their writing; and, second, that even longer teaching programmes may not succeed in eradicating all source-use problems. However, this is clearly an area where more research is needed to reach more definite conclusions.

7. Researching plagiarism: Methodological issues

We have seen so far that plagiarism has two essential components: a relationship between a new text and one or more sources, and features which cause that relationship to be viewed as non-normative. Researching plagiarism thus involves both identifying intertextual relationships and understanding how those relationships are viewed by writers and gatekeepers. In this section we review methodological approaches adopted in the literature to investigating plagiarism, and discuss some areas of difficulty.

7.1 Methods in plagiarism research

As plagiarism is of interest to researchers in a range of disciplines (applied linguistics, education studies, psychology and library and information studies), the foci and methods in this area of research vary considerably. This section primarily focuses on methods used in applied linguistics: more specifically, L2 writing research. However, given the complexity of plagiarism, a wide variety of methodological approaches have been used even within this disciplinary area, making plagiarism research a site of considerable methodological innovation.

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In recent years, there has been a tendency in L2 writing research on plagiarism towards multiple and mixed-method research designs, which employ triangulation to explore the many facets of this phenomenon. Also notable is a preference for qualitative methods, in contrast to, for instance, plagiarism research in psychology, where quantitative approaches are more common. Not all studies in this area focus exclusively on plagiarism, as most researchers are interested in students' source-use practices and the difficulties they encounter when writing from sources in general, including plagiarism.

In what follows we review the most commonly used methods in plagiarism research from an L2 writing perspective, with examples.

7.1.1 Textual analysis

Studies of plagiarism in L2 writing research typically employ textual analysis in order to examine the level of similarity between source texts and students' writing. Two methodological approaches can be identified in the literature: (i) studies in controlled conditions, where participants are required to complete a writing task using sources selected by the researcher, and (ii) studies of students' authentic writing from sources, where source selection is not controlled by the researcher.

A classic example of the first group is Campbell (1990), who asked L1 and L2 students of different proficiency levels to write an essay on a set topic with reference to a set source text. She then examined students' references to the source and classified their source-use strategies into quotations, exact copies (i.e., plagiarism), near copies, paraphrases, summaries and original explanations. More recently, Shi (2004) explored how L1 and L2 students use two assigned sources when completing two different tasks, a summary and an opinion essay task. The main advantage of using set sources in controlled conditions is that it enables the researcher to compare students' source use, including instances of textual plagiarism, on a range of dimensions, such as whether students are writing in their L1 or L2, their level of proficiency or disciplinary background, or the task they are completing. However, the limitation of this method is that it does not reveal how students use sources under naturalistic conditions.

Studies of plagiarism in authentic student writing (e.g., assignments written for courses, theses and dissertations) start by selecting passages with high citation density. The researcher then locates the corresponding source texts and examines the level of similarity between them in quantitative and qualitative terms. This approach was first used by Pecorari (2003, 2006, 2008), and more recently by Howard et al. (2010) in L1 writers and by Davis (2013) in a longitudinal study of student writing over a period of 15 months. The advantage of this method is that it can uncover textual links which are not transparent and which would otherwise not be identified, such as appropriations of progressions of ideas from source texts and of content from unacknowledged secondary sources (Pecorari 2006).

Textual studies such as these face several inherent difficulties. Gathering source texts and comparing them is laborious and the more the process is automated, the more likely it is that relevant factors will be missed. Establishing that similarities between texts constitute plagiarism requires a degree of certainty that one text was copied from another (i.e., that

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the similarities are not coincidental), yet there is no clear threshold indicating when this conclusion may be safely reached. Plagiarism also implies that the copying was not appropriate but, as noted above, reaching that conclusion is often uncomfortable even for experienced gatekeepers.

7.1.2 Interviews with student writers and teachers

With the growing realisation that what counts as plagiarism is contextually dependent or, as Polio & Shi (2012) have argued, that 'plagiarism can be defined only through perceptions and beliefs about what types of textual borrowing are transgressive' (p. 95), it is not surprising that interviews are becoming the most popular method in plagiarism research. The most common format is the semi-structured interview, which typically contains a text-based part, in which respondents are asked to comment on their own writing or selected texts (see section 7.1.3 below). Most studies combine interviews with textual analysis (e.g., Pecorari 2003, 2006, 2008; Flowerdew & Li 2007; Shi 2010; Davis 2013), as they provide insights into student writers' motivations for their source-use practices, which cannot be deduced from their texts. For instance, interview-based studies have revealed students' anxieties about inadvertent plagiarism, and that unintentional copying may result from their misconceptions about (un)acceptable source use. Interviews have also been used in longitudinal studies, such as Gu & Brookes (2008), who used repeated rounds of interviews with students over a period of 15 months to trace changes in their perceptions of plagiarism.

7.1.3 Judgement elicitation tasks

Judgment elicitation tasks present respondents with an original passage and its rewritten versions, including both acceptable paraphrases and varying forms of problematic source use (e.g., absence of citation, few surface-level modifications) and ask them to judge their acceptability. The use of this method was crucial in establishing that neither L1 nor L2 students fully understand what constitutes plagiarism (Deckert 1993; Roig 1997), and that university teachers from different disciplines differ in their judgments about what is acceptable source use (Roig 2001; Pecorari & Shaw 2012).

Various versions of judgement tasks have been used in more recent L2 writing research (e.g., Chandrasegaran 2000; Wheeler 2009; Hu & Lei 2012; Pecorari & Shaw 2012; Shi 2012). Wheeler (2009) developed a three-stage judgement elicitation task to determine Japanese university students' ability to recognise plagiarism in texts written in English and to elicit their judgments on its acceptability. The participants were first asked to rate a paragraph written – they were told – by a Japanese student as an assignment, on a scale from 1 to 10. The paragraph was written in correct English, and contained no citations. They were then presented with an identical paragraph from a supposedly published article, written at an earlier date than the student's text, by an author with an English name. In the next stage they were asked to re-evaluate the initial paragraph by the Japanese student. Finally, they were asked to rate another Japanese student's paragraph, which paraphrased the published text

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but did not acknowledge it. Each judgement elicitation stage also included an open-ended question requiring the participants to justify their ratings.

In contrast to the studies using passages constructed by the researchers, Pecorari & Shaw (2012) and Shi (2012) used authentic examples from L2 students' source-based writing to develop materials consisting of pairs of passages from students' texts and the matching excerpts from source texts. These pairs were then used as prompts in interviews with instructors (both studies) and students (Shi 2012) to elicit the criteria they used when making judgments about the acceptability of source use.

Judgement elicitation tasks have a built-in methodological challenge: it is difficult to present a full set of facts to participants. The shorter the units of text used as prompts, the greater the likelihood that important contextual information is not available, while if longer text extracts are used, respondents suffer fatigue sooner and may miss elements which would have been important in their decisions.

7.1.4 Case studies and ethnographies

Case studies and ethnographic studies of L2 student writers offer substantial accounts of instances of plagiarism in student writing using multiple sources of data and providing rich contextual information that helps explain the wider factors and student motivations leading to source misuse. Focusing on single cases (Currie 1998; Starfield 2002; Oullette 2008) or multiple cases of L2 students (Abasi et al. 2006; Li & Casanave 2012), this body of research has uncovered the complexity of relations and factors behind students' transgressive textual practices, such as the effect of assignment tasks, university policies, students' language proficiency, learning processes, disciplinary enculturation, cultural backgrounds and emotional tensions (e.g., fear of inadvertent plagiarism and writing anxiety), as well as issues of knowledge, authorship and identity, among others. Case studies have contributed a great deal to our understanding of plagiarism as a developmental issue. They have also extended our knowledge about students' intentional unethical behaviour and underlying cynical attitudes towards learning, shedding light on how they relate to other attitudes, values and contextual factors (e.g., Jan, an L1 undergraduate student in Leki's 2007 study). Another important contribution of case study research is that it provides insight into students' changing behaviour and attitudes, as case studies are typically conducted over time.

7.1.5 Questionnaires and surveys

Questionnaires and surveys of students' attitudes towards and self-reported practices relating to plagiarism are commonly used in psychology and mainstream education studies, but less in L2 writing research (e.g. Deckert 1993). These studies use instruments such as the Student Authorship Questionnaire (SAQ, Pittam et al. 2009) and the Academic Practices Survey (Roig & DeTommaso 1995), which consist of statements relating to plagiarism using a Likert scale (e.g., an item from the SAQ: 'I know how to show which parts of my assignment were not written by me'). While surveys, typically used with large populations, can provide useful

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information about general trends and patterns, this method has numerous limitations from the perspective of L2 writing research. First, the respondents may under- or over-report their plagiarism-related practices; they may also misunderstand the meaning of the survey items. Second, the respondents are asked about their attitudes and practices in a decontextualised situation, without reference to types of assignments, source texts and other factors, which – as we saw earlier – is problematic, since plagiarism is a context-dependent phenomenon. Finally, surveys do not provide information about students' motivations or the rationales behind their writing, nor about their writing processes, all of which are of particular interest to L2 writing researchers. L2 writing studies using questionnaires therefore tend to combine this method with other methods, such as interviews (e.g. Sutherland-Smith 2005a).

7.2 Research ethics

One concern shared by studies in this area, whatever their methodology, is research ethics, of particular importance when dealing with such a sensitive issue as plagiarism. Not only is it essential to protect the identity of participants, but a series of additional measures need to be taken. Researchers tend to avoid using the term 'plagiarism' in research instruments not only because it may be understood in different ways by different individuals but also because of the stigma surrounding it and the potential offence it may cause. When interviewing students and teachers about potentially unethical behaviour, researchers ensure that questions are asked in a non-judgmental and non-threatening way. However, researchers may themselves face ethical dilemmas, such as when they discover instances of unacceptable source use in student writing that was not discovered by markers, and where marks have already been awarded, particularly in the case of high-stakes genres, such as dissertations and theses.

8. Summary

We have seen that plagiarism is a research topic in a variety of fields and the field plays a role in determining the approach taken. For example, in education studies generally, or in the pedagogy of specific subject areas, plagiarism is seen as a problem in that it is a violation of academic rules, and has thus tended to be investigated from a regulatory perspective. In the areas of L1 and L2 writing, fields characterised by a natural concern for texts and the processes which produce them, a common focus of interest has been writers' development, and language skills have been a lens through which plagiarism is frequently viewed.

Within the L2 writing literature, plagiarism was first used sporadically to illustrate the need for an informed awareness of the diverse backgrounds which produce L2 writers, but became a research topic in its own right. Given the applied nature of most L2 writing research, practical questions related to the causes of textual plagiarism and pedagogical interventions to address it have been very much in focus.

The existing research has established that textual plagiarism often has non-deceptive origins, and that its causes include divergent understandings of what sorts of source use

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are or are not acceptable, as well as a set of pressures on L2 writers which cause them to view source-dependent writing as a resource. Other factors, such as the role of culture and electronic media, have been implicated but their status is unclear and, as noted above, further research is needed. In the final section of this article we identify further directions for this research.

9. Future directions

In this section, future research directions of two sorts are considered. For several important questions, empirical evidence is either lacking or has not yet led to a clear conclusion. In addition, there is a need to situate this work in a broader context.

To the extent that plagiarism is a matter of language development, its manifestations in the development of any first or second language ought to be reasonably consistent. That is, there is no reason to suspect that writers in Spanish (say) are more or less likely to regard textual plagiarism as a linguistic and discoursal resource than writers in (for example) French. However, the vast preponderance of research literature on plagiarism has been published in English and with L2 writers of English in mind. This situation simply mirrors the dominance of English in the L2 writing literature generally, but investigations from other perspectives would be welcome.

Another area in which research is needed is detection. The use of text-comparison software – often misleadingly called 'plagiarism detection software' – is widespread and increasing. The popularity of such tools is based on the assumptions that automating the task of identifying plagiarism can save valuable teacher time and produce more consistent results (to the extent that ALL student work can be screened, not just that which gives rise to suspicion). However, given the limitations on the efficacy of text-comparison tools – for example, the fact that they produce both false positives and false negatives (Hayes & Introna 2008) – both assumptions are questionable. As with any tool for assessment and evaluation, success depends on teachers using it well and wisely, but it is not clear to what extent this occurs; that is, whether the potential of such tools is realised in practice. A further unknown, and an important one in times of limited resources, is whether the cost–benefit relationship is an effective one, or whether other interventions, such as writing centres and classroom time to work on writing skills, would bring a more favourable return on investment. For teachers and educational administrators to make principled choices about adopting and using detection systems, further research is needed.

Another question about which too little is known is the role of source-dependent writing in the development of academic writing abilities. There is some evidence that textual plagiarism may be a strategy especially favoured by weak writers. For example, Plakans & Gebril (2013) found that verbatim repetition of source language correlated negatively with the score on an integrated reading, listening and writing task. Patchwriting, as initially posited by Howard (1995), is a developmental stage, a form of mimesis which facilitates learning. That intertextual borrowing can in some cases lead to greater accuracy and idiomaticity in the finished work

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is clear; some studies (Villalva 2006; Harman 2013) suggest that it can also lead to the development of writing skills. More research on this question is needed.

Finally, as a solid body of evidence begins to accumulate around the incidence and causes of textual plagiarism, there is a concomitant need to situate these findings within the wider framework of student source use (Polio & Shi 2012; Shaw & Pecorari 2013). A number of studies from this more positive perspective have recently been carried out. For example, Petrić (2012) found a relationship between students' success in academic writing and their proclivity to use quotation, and showed that a desire to adhere to academic conventions, including – but not limited to – avoiding plagiarism, was a factor shaping their use of quotation; other studies connecting plagiarism to wider source-use issues have recently been published (e.g. Harwood & Petrić 2012; Hirvela & Du 2013; Li 2013; Petrić & Harwood 2013), and more work in this direction is needed.

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444814000056 Published online by Cambridge University Press

to avoid student plagiarism by enabling students to become more confident, proficient readers and writers.

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It is with great regret that the Editor and Board of Language Teaching has learned of the passing of Dr. Cem Alptekin (Boğaziçi University, Turkey). Cem was a prolific researcher and published widely in journals such as Tesol Quarterly, ELT Journal, System and Applied Psycholinguistics. He was a much sought-after reviewer for this journal and co-authored an insightful review of recent SLA research in Turkey for our Country in Focus series in Volume 44.3.

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