

LISTENING TO UNDERGRADUATE CHINESE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON
PLAGIARISM

BY

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT:

Chinese students represent a burgeoning international student population in Western higher education. The University of Illinois is no exception. In order to meet the needs of this new group, researchers are closely examining their educational culture and how it influences their ability to learn English for Academic Purposes (EAP). One issue that interests international educators is Chinese students' perceptions of plagiarism. Some scholars argue that as a Confucian heritage culture, Chinese students are more likely to plagiarize (Deckert 1992, Grimshaw 2007, Pennycook 1995, Sowden 2005). While others claim this characterization is reductionist and even racist (Liu 2005, Kubota 2004, Kumaravadivelu 2003). Many studies have focused on Chinese students' perceptions of plagiarism through surveys (Brennan & Durovic 2008, Maxwell et. al. 2008, Mohan & Lo 1985) or discussed individual anecdotal experiences (Pennycook 1995, Lund 2004, Sowden 2005), yet very few have included qualitative research.

This study started by surveying 29 Chinese students in an ESL academic writing course during the Fall 2015 semester. Based on these survey results, 8 students were interviewed to discuss their experiences writing in English and Chinese and their opinions on cheating and plagiarism. This study's aim is to listen to Chinese students' voices through these interviews. As a result, this presents a case study of undergraduate Chinese students' perceptions of plagiarism at the University of Illinois.

The case study found that Chinese students studying at the University of Illinois are highly motivated to not plagiarize and generally describe plagiarism as wrong. Moreover, most participants found language proficiency to be a bigger barrier to avoiding plagiarism. Although Chinese students found plagiarism to be wrong, they did not have a complete understanding of plagiarism as it is defined in Western academia. Equally important, although educational stud-

ies scholars frequently mention Chinese traditional culture's influence on Chinese students' perceptions of plagiarism, this was not explicitly mentioned by students and did not emerge during the interviews.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Motivation for Study

On the TESL-EJ Forum, a widely used ESL teaching discussion board, one popular topic is plagiarism and ESL learners. One commenter states:

I have found that in China, Confucianism still promotes the use of proverbs to carry on age old messages about morality and universal truths. In Korea, students are graded highly by their teachers if they imitate classic writers. Meanwhile, in the United States students are rewarded for their own creativity and fresh voice. (Graff, 2002)

In this online discussion, Chinese and Koreans are negatively construed as more likely to plagiarize based on their culture, while US students are thought to be encouraged to be “creative” and “fresh” (Graff, 2002). Although one comment on an internet forum, this is an all too common sentiment held by ESL professionals.

I started teaching ESL composition at the University of Illinois following teaching English in East Asia for three years and studying East Asian languages and cultures as an undergraduate. As such, I assumed I had a nuanced understanding of Asian educational culture. I had lived in Japan and Korea, and visited Taiwan and China several times. However, teaching ESL writing to Chinese international students challenged my expectations about their educational culture. For instance, the second day of class, I mentioned my love and respect for Taoism and many of my students looked at me quizzically. One of the more blunt students responded, “Kat, you said the word wrong and we don’t study that much. You sound kind of weird.” I was more ignorant than I thought. Prior to teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP) I thought international students, particularly Asian and Chinese students, were more likely to plagiarize on assignments. Based on my assumption they did not find copying text or improper paraphrasing inappropriate.

Though I cannot trace why I had that assumption, I had heard it many times from colleagues and classmates. However, anecdotal evidence from teaching over that first semester led me to believe Chinese students were not any less ignorant of the ethics of plagiarism than native born American students. Specifically, throughout the semester, I dealt with students who blatantly copied assignments, cited sources poorly, and struggled to properly paraphrase. Interestingly, as I heard about grading problems from colleagues who teach composition courses for native English speakers, I heard of the same issues. Although I had no concrete evidence, I began to wonder how much students' culture influences their perceptions of plagiarism.

With a growing Chinese international student population in the West and at the University of Illinois, many instructors, students, and staff are trying to better meet these students' needs. However, a superficial interest or understanding of Chinese culture and history is not enough. Rather, as Grimshaw (2007) states, "we should not allow ourselves to be led by our own preconceptions, but should instead pay attention to what those students actually do and say" (p. 308). This study will examine what Chinese students do and say through qualitative interviews.

Definition of Terms

For the sake of clarity, key terminology is explained below. The meaning of some of these terms is controversial. My intention is not to categorically define these terms. Rather, I am using these particular definitions for the sake of this research.

Academic Writing-Academic writing refers to writing that is usually done for academic purposes, in this case at the university level.

China-Since the majority of Chinese speaking students studying in United States are from mainland China, China will mean mainland China.

Chinese-For the purposes of this thesis, Chinese refers to native speakers of Mandarin or Mandarin and Cantonese bilinguals.

ESL-Is an acronym for English as a Second Language. For the purposes of this thesis, ESL refers to non-native speakers of English studying at the University of Illinois.

International Student- In this thesis, international student refers to non native speakers of English who are not US citizens but are studying for an academic degree at the University of Illinois.

Plagiarism- An important definition for this thesis, plagiarism will be defined in detail during the literature review.

University of Illinois- There are three University of Illinois campuses, but for brevity this thesis will call University of Illinois to be University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

West-For the purposes of this thesis, The West refers to the United States and the commonwealth nations of the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia.

Structure of Thesis

This thesis consists of 6 chapters. In Chapter 1, I explained my motivation for this thesis and my general research questions. Chapter 2 is a literature review which details the relationship between rhetoric and culture, the Western discourse on plagiarism, the construction of the “Chinese learner,” and plagiarism practices by Chinese students in the West and in China. Chapter 3

explains the quantitative and qualitative methods used in this thesis. Chapter 4 is an explanation of the results from the survey and interview data coupled with a discussion of these results. Chapter 5 is a discussion of the analysis and its findings. Finally, Chapter 5 consists of general conclusions, pedagogical implications, research limitations, suggestions for further research, and final thoughts.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This literature review will start by considering the relationship between rhetoric and culture. Next, it will broadly explain the characteristics of the “Chinese learner” and Confucian Heritage Culture as described by researchers. Then, the literature review will detail the recent history of English education and the more general testing tradition in China. It will then discuss the reasons Chinese students are thought to plagiarize. Finally, the literature review will show how authorship is situated in Western rhetoric

Rhetoric and Culture

The relationship between rhetoric and culture may yield new insight into understanding how students understand plagiarism. Many scholars argue that rhetoric, identity, and culture are inseparably intertwined. In the case of ESL students learning to write in English, this relationship becomes even more important. Specifically, in a landmark article, Kaplan (1966) states, “The teaching of reading and composition to foreign students does differ from the teaching of reading and composition to American students, and cultural differences in the nature of rhetoric supply the key to the difference in teaching approach” (p. 1). In other words, students’ culture or cultures influences their writing style. Kaplan goes on to argue that logic and rhetoric are influenced by culture. Based on these assumptions, Matalene (1985) claims Chinese rhetoric or writing style is distinctly different from Western rhetoric and the focus is on gaining harmony, giving reverence to authority, and memorizing great thinkers. Matalene then concludes that expecting the individual voice from Chinese students is a eurocentric notion. In a similar vein, Shen (1989) explains how his own Chinese ideological and “logical” identities shape had to be adapted in order to write in English (p. 459). While Crew (1987) warns Matalene may be foster-

ing stereotypes, the idea of a so-called Chinese rhetorical style still influences pedagogical practices.

While Kaplan's view has been very influential, it is not without critics. For instance, Mohan & Lo (1985) found that Chinese students writing in English had more difficulty writing essays in a typically Western organization pattern because they had only been taught how to write sentences rather than paragraphs or essays. Moreover, Mohan and Lo found writing styles in China to be as varied as in English (1985). Similarly, Pery-Woodley (1990) pointed out that Kaplan missed "awareness of projected audience, writer-reader interaction, communication situation, text-type, and sociolinguistic factors" (p. 148). Furthermore, Korwal (1998) argues that delineating styles of writing is essentialist and ignores how language interacts. Overall, the relationship between culture and rhetoric remains controversial and unclear.

The Construction of the "Chinese Learner"

Based on the controversial argument constructed by Kaplan (1966), understanding students' culture is important in order to teach them writing, including how to avoid plagiarism. One way to understand students' culture is to understand their educational culture. According to the IIE, Chinese students in higher education are currently the largest international student populations in the West (2014). Consequently, many scholars have tried to understand Chinese needs by considering their educational culture. Educational culture or culture of learning is defined by Cortazzi and Jin (1996) as:

. . . much behavior in language classrooms is set within taken-for-granted frameworks of expectations, attitudes, values, and beliefs about what constitutes good learning, about how to teach or learn, whether and how to ask questions, what textbooks are for, and how language teaching relates to broader issues of the nature and purpose of education (p.169)

Using the framework of educational culture, a large body of research has constructed the idea of ‘the Chinese learner.’ That is, Chinese educational culture leads to a specific kind of learner. An academic conference (Rastall, 2006), numerous articles (Cortazzi and Jin 1996,1997; Flowerdew, 1998; Watkin and Biggs, 2006), and as well as entire books (Brick, 1991; Watkins and Biggs 2001) have attempted to help Westerners more effectively teach Chinese students by considering their educational culture. That is, these materials are targeted to instructors and administrators planning to work and/or teach Chinese students in the west or abroad. Cortazzi and Jin (1997) characterize the Chinese learner as having, “collective consciousness, hierarchal relations, passive participation, and dependence on authority” (p. 78). Similarly, Stephens (1997) describes the Western perception of Chinese international students as, “expressed in allusions to authoritarianism and a more communal approach to things, a lack of individualism and independent thought” (p. 114, 1997). Thus, an entire country of learners are thought to have a specific set of learning styles and preferences.

Similar to the “Chinese learner,” Chinese students are frequently characterized as part of Confucian Heritage Culture. Confucian Heritage Culture or CHC refers to students from Confucian influenced countries including China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan. This amalgamation of China with the rest of Asia is found throughout the pedagogical literature on Chinese students. For instance, Song-Turner (2008) in a study of plagiarism practices between students from different cultures has the category “Chinese and other Asian students” (p. 42). Likewise, Sowden (2005) claims the “communal ownership of knowledge” is found throughout East Asia (p. 226). Maxwell et. al (2008) describes this as, “cultural beliefs unique to Asian cultures, most notably the Confucian heritage” (p. 26). Similarly, Lund (2004) describes one per-

sonal experience teaching a Korean student and claims this is representative of Confucian Heritage Culture.

However, some researchers argue these characterizations are more harmful than helpful. As Holliday states, “It can be argued that this large cultural approach results in reductionist over-generalization and otherization of ‘foreign’ educators, students, and societies.” (p. 237). This lens is problematic because it essentializes and reduces students to the “other.” Zamel (1997) laments that these characterizations can be “deterministic” and when Chinese and Asian cultures are sharply compared inevitably one culture will be characterized as superior (p. 341). In a similar vein, Kumaravadivelu argues “the profession has shown a remarkable readiness to forge a causal connection between the classroom behavior of Asian students and their cultural beliefs even though research findings are ambiguous and even contradictory” (p. 74, 2003). More broadly, Kubota (2004) argues that these generalizations result in an otherization similar to the rhetoric found in colonization. In sum, students are not seen as individuals and broad generalizations are made about their educational culture.

These characterizations criticized are also frequently inaccurate. For instance, numerous studies stress Chinese students actually prefer interactive lessons (Cheng, 1992; Kumaravadivelu, 1990; Littlewood & Liu, 1996; 1997; Littlewood, 2000; 2001; Liu, 2005; Shi, 2004; 2006). Grimshaw (2007) found, in an ethnographic study of classrooms in Chinese universities, that classes were student-centered and students had the same if not more autonomy as Western students. Moreover, Stephens (1997) emphasizes that Chinese students’ studying in the United States may be reluctant to participate or express individual thought thanks to gaps in language proficiency rather than traits intrinsic to Chinese educational culture. Moreover, many pedagogical scholars ignore the positive facets of Chinese educational culture such as self-cultivation,

“educability for all,” and reflective learning (On 1996, p. 28-32). Overall, some aspects of the Chinese learner are at best to be inaccurate and at worst wildly wrong.

Another important component of Chinese educational culture is the importance of standardized tests. Imperial examinations were developed during the Tang Dynasty to fairly choose Chinese government leaders. Thus, standardized testing was arguably invented in China (Elman 2000). The exams evaluated knowledge of literature, history, the Chinese classics through rote memorization and recitation. The examination system was dismantled during the Cultural Revolution, but promptly returned once leadership in China changed. While many inside and outside of Chinese society criticize the exam system, it is still a large part of education. Currently, exams are used to decide admission for high schools and universities. The university entrance is informally called *gaokao* or high test and lasts approximately two days (Zoninstein 2008). Unlike in the west, *gaokao* results are the sole factor in admission to Chinese universities. Consequently, Chinese students spend most of their time in high school preparing for the challenging exam.

English Education in China

English education began in the 1970's, after China was opened up to the West (Hu 2004). According to Adamson & Morris (1997) new Chinese leadership following the Cultural Revolution believed science and technology were most important for China to develop. Since English is the *lingua franca* in science research, English proficiency was also deemed necessary for modernization. However, this was challenging, since English education had been essentially illegal during the Cultural Revolution (Hu 2004). Since few teachers had the proper training to teach English, education standards were “deplorably low” (Hu 2004, p. 8). Therefore, English education has only started in China very recently.

During the 1980's, English education was offered primarily to students who were thought to most benefit from instruction. That is, the more elite the student's background, the more thorough and developed the student's English education (Ross 1993). In the 1990's, English education was described as integral to a broad education, but language classes did not begin until middle school (Hu 2004). In 2001, the Chinese Ministry of Education began to mandate that English education begin in primary school partly due to the Beijing Olympics and China's hopes to join the World Trade Organization (Hu 2004). However, the majority of English education in China remains focused on rote memorization of grammar and vocabulary (Hu 2004).

In addition to English education in regular school, there are many for profit "cram schools" also known as *buxiban* that are wildly popular throughout China. Cram schools offer study in many subjects including English. As a result, Chinese students are frequently in school for at least 12 hours a day. In addition to cram schools, many Chinese students are attending boarding schools in the West. The number of students rose from 100 in 2005 to 6, 7225 in 2010. (Gao 2012). Therefore, Chinese students are getting more and more contact with English and the West.

Reasons for Plagiarism by Chinese Students

Chinese students are often depicted as more likely to plagiarize than Western or domestic students. For example, Deckert claims "The habit is especially widespread among tertiary-level ESL students" (p. 94, 1992). Deckert then goes on to describe the plagiarism by Hong Kong university students. More broadly, some claim that Chinese students plagiarize due to their culture. According to researchers, Chinese students plagiarize thanks to societal collectivism, a different understanding of authorship, reverence for the author, language proficiency, and pressure for academic success.

Scollon (1996) argues Chinese students plagiarize out of complete ignorance of the concept. In an anecdote about his own teaching experiences in China he states:

When I was grading these [essays] I come across one toward the bottom of the pile that had a strange quality to it. It was a short piece of Abraham Lincoln written in rather simple but perfectly 'correct' prose: 'Abraham Lincoln was born in a log cabin in 1809. It had the ring of a text from elsewhere, of language borrowed and repeated. Because I was at the time supervising my fourth-year students' teaching practice in Yiyang, a small town in the north of Hunan, I asked one of them what he thought about this text. He looked at the first two lines and smiled. The text, he explained, was from one of the high school textbooks. So did that mean, I asked, that it had been copied? Well, not necessarily, the student replied, and then demonstrated that he too knew the text by heart (p. 201)

In this anecdote, the student committing plagiarism seems ignorant of what he is doing.

According to some researchers, Chinese students misunderstand plagiarism because of their country's different understanding of authorship and intellectual property. For instance, Scollon (1992) argues students from Hong Kong are more likely to plagiarize since intellectual property violations are more rampant in their country with, "Yet the lack of a strong voice and enforcement agency against the less ambiguous issue of copyright violations in effect gives license to students to avail themselves of the words of others on many levels" (p. 98). Lund (1994) agrees by arguing the Western definition of intellectual property is completely foreign to Chinese students. Similarly, in one Harvard professor's lament on teaching at Beijing University in China, he compares the plagiarism he saw among his students to intellectual property theft (Searns, 2013). Chinese students are frequently construed as ignorant of plagiarism.

However, even the Western world's use of authorship and intellectual property is ambiguous. For example, Pennycook characterizes the number of famous, accused plagiarizers as "long and prestigious" (1996, p. 206). The list includes Helen Keller, Martin Luther King Jr., Edgar Allan Poe, and Norman Mailer. According to Pennycook, even the famous quote, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself," appears to have been originally said by Montaigne and then restated, over three centuries, by a series of great thinkers. The saying eventually gained its modern fame from Franklin Roosevelt, but the idea was not his own. (p. 207). Thus, even the West has an ambiguous sense of what could be considered an individual idea.

Some researchers argue Chinese practice improper citation and paraphrasing out of respect for the author and more broadly authority. For example, Matalene (1985) describes a student who copied his grandfather's writing style out of respect rather than an intent to plagiarize. Similarly, Fox (1994) emphasizes many students outside of the West, including in East Asia are primarily interested in giving respect to the material they have read with, "the traditional task of the students in such societies [outside of the West] is to study various interpretations of these fundamental truths, to reflect on their meaning, and apply them to their own lives and society" (p. 48). Building on this notion, in a book intended to foster intercultural understanding between Western teachers and Chinese students, Brick & Brown imply that Chinese students are more inclined to plagiarize: "...with specific regard to plagiarism many Chinese students do not feel any great need to meticulously cite all their sources as they feel their task is to master a body of knowledge; that is, to merge their voice with that of the literature" (p. 158, 2004). Thus, according to Brick and Brown, Chinese students are so interested in understanding the knowledge and identify with the writing that they are not interested in expressing their own ideas. Similarly, Lund (2004) claims "Confucian Heritage Culture" students directly copy answers out of respect

for the author. He gives anecdotal evidence by describing his experience with a Korean student who directly copied an answer from a book. In a qualitative study of 68 students at an Australian university, Song-Turner concluded that Chinese students have “a view that one should quote the foreign expert verbatim to show respect and honour” (2008, p. 49). According to some researchers Chinese students avoid citation and paraphrasing to show reverence to the author.

Overlapping with reverence for the author, Chinese and Confucian Heritage learners are also thought to lack critical thinking skills compared to Western students. That is, Chinese and Confucian heritage students are less likely to look for flaws in an argument out of respect for the author. Lund (2004) claims Chinese students are reluctant to critically discuss text in order “to fulfill the ethical obligations of their cultural heritage” (p. 97). According to Lund (2004), since Confucian heritage students are reluctant to be critical they are more likely to directly copy sources. In other words, Chinese students’ interest in rote memorization is thought to contribute to a disinterest and/or inability to think critically. However, Bloch & Chi (1995) found, in a comparative analysis of American English and Chinese citations that Chinese writers were just as willing to cite sources critically, but the style was different. Thus, whether Chinese writers are taught to critically analyze sources is controversial.

Indeed, rote memorization has been one of the foundations of education in China for over 2,000 year (Kipniss 2014). Consequently, the emphasis on rote memorization is thought to lead to Chinese studying copying and plagiarizing. Song-Turner (1998) proposes students from “Asian countries” frequently find plagiarism to be acceptable as long as they have mastered the text (p. 44). In a reflection on his own teaching experiences in mainland China and Hong Kong, Pennycook (2006) claims: “Because all language learning is, to some extent, a practice of memorization of the words of others, on what grounds do we see certain acts of textual borrowing as

acceptable and others as unacceptable?” (p. 202). Pennycook goes on to argue that since Chinese students frequently memorize a great deal of language in order to learn English, they are more likely to copy answers. Similarly, Sowden (2005) claims the importance of memorization can lead to plagiarism even being seen as a “virtue” in Chinese educational culture (p.227). Bloch (2007) cites the Chinese saying, *Wen gu ru xin* or review the old materials to gain a new perspective to argue Chinese learners believe “imitation can lead to originality rather, as we sometimes believe, is a hindrance” (pp.144-145). However, this may be a misunderstanding of the value of memorization, since materials may need to be memorized in order to be then more understood.

Some scholars think Chinese learners think more collectively and as a result they struggle to create an individual voice. Fox (1994) devotes an entire chapter of her book, *Listening to the World: Cultural Issues in Academic Writing* to explaining how collectivism leads to not understanding the Western standards of individual authorship. Moreover, she argues that collectivist culture leads to difficulties with accurate citation with, “this effect of culture manifests itself as a formidable resistance to correct documentation” (p. 57). Similarly, Ramanathan and Atkinson (1999) stress that the “ideology of the individual” (p.330) is so ingrained in academic English writing that many international and consequently Chinese students struggle to develop an individual voice. Although Sowden (2005) admits stereotypes can be “dangerous” (p. 228), the author still states that Asian students are more likely to plagiarize based on their sense of individuality. Similarly, Russikoff et. al claim:

In the U.S.A., where social sanctions are stronger, there is less evidence of plagiarism; in China and Lithuania, where communal values support collectivism, students do not recognize the moral or ethical connotations inherent in the western interpretation of plagiarism. (p.139, 2003)

Thus, Russikoff et. al. argue that collective values result in a different attitude towards plagiarism. Thus, a broad and ambiguous concept like collectivism is used to explain Chinese students' motivation for plagiarizing.

One barrier to avoiding plagiarism that is rarely discussed in the literature is language proficiency. However, some research implies even advanced non-native speakers of English struggle to properly process and paraphrase texts. Kolich (1983) argues Chinese and international students commit academic dishonesty and plagiarism because they believe they are not capable of doing academic writing. Deckert (1993) noted 3rd year Hong Kong university students were better than 1st year students in identifying plagiarism in English writing. Although Deckert did not control for language proficiency, most language learners progress with time. Indeed, a few studies (Bamford and Sergiou, Marshall and Garry (2006) found that *all* non-native speakers of English were more likely to plagiarize than native English speakers. Similarly, Song-Turner (2008) concluded that a lack of academic skills and language proficiency most strongly correlated with plagiarism. In a case study of a Chinese student studying English in his home country, Mu (2010) found the participant was inclined to plagiarize because as he states in the interview, "I do not think I have the ability to write a stylistic paper" (p. 123). As mentioned by Liu, Sowden (2005) even argues that the best way to help students avoid plagiarism is to help them improve their language skills.

Moreover, Chinese students may directly copy words because they feel the answer is more accurate than writing in their own words. For example, in a case study analysis of Cantonese native speaker "Diana," Currie (1998) found Diana directly quoted and copied excessively from a textbook as a "survival strategy" for the sake of "staying out of trouble" (p. 369). Interestingly, native speakers of English studying remedial composition may also directly copy for

accuracy. For instance, in a case study of a remedial English student named “Mary,” Hull & Rose found she used poor citation practices in order to show her knowledge (1985). In an interview Mary states:

I have practice from when I try not to copy. When I get a little bit from there a teacher’ll really know what I am talking about. Then if from some parts there I change a little bit, they know I’m really not the kind of student that would copy ‘cause another student would copy. (p.147)

In this quote, Mary wants to avoid plagiarism, but still struggles to use appropriate citation. Similarly, Campbell (1987) found direct copying was the primary strategy for working with outside sources by non-native and native speakers of English. Therefore, knowledge of academic English, particularly academic vocabulary, may contribute to how students avoid plagiarism in their writing.

According to Kipniss (2014), a few factors have led China to value education and academic success. First, “rapid industrialization” has led to a devaluation of working class jobs (p.140). In other words, a college education is necessary to be part of the middle class. Second, due to China’s one child policy, the vast majority of families only have one child. Thus, parents invest all their financial and emotional energies in one child. Conversely, they are expected to provide for their parents during their retirement in return for their parents’ investment in their education.

For instance, Robinson and Kuin (1999) under a problem-based analysis of international Chinese students already caught plagiarizing concluded that the students’ primary motivation for plagiarism was to earn a better grade. Similarly, Cogee (2010) speculates that international students may plagiarize or commit other academic dishonesty so to earn good grades and keep their resident status.

Ethics of Plagiarism According to Chinese Students

Some research indicates Chinese students perceive plagiarism negatively. For example, Brennan & Duvovic (2008) found that learning style rather than culture influenced the likelihood or acceptance of plagiarism. Maxwell et. al. (2008) in their study of 247 students found little difference between Asian and Australian students in their understanding or acceptance of plagiarism. Furthermore, Hu & Lei (2012) concluded in a study of 270 undergraduate students from two Chinese universities that the majority of students took a retaliatory attitude towards detected plagiarism. Equally important, Liu (2005) asserts plagiarism is just as unacceptable in China as it is in the West. Liu surveyed several popular Chinese composition textbooks and found all mentioned that sources need citation.

Nonetheless, some studies have found international students and particularly Chinese students are more likely to accept plagiarism or to plagiarize abroad. Pickering & Hornby (2005) in a comparative questionnaire of 31 Chinese students studying in New Zealand and 63 New Zealand students, that Chinese students were more likely to see plagiarism positively than New Zealand students. However, this sample size is small for a quantitative study. Similarly, Walker (2010) found international students were more likely to plagiarize and the extent of plagiarism in their writing was longer. However, the 529 participants in the study were all in the same academic program and their country of origin was not specified. Elrich et. al. (2014) discovered, in a detailed psychometric study, Chinese students studying in Australia were more likely than Australian students to have an accepting attitude towards plagiarism, but still usually considered plagiarism wrong.

Furthermore, many believe, including Chinese, plagiarism is a problem in Chinese academia. For example, one major Chinese scientific journal, *Journal of Zhejiang University*–

Science, found over 30% of all submissions had been plagiarized (Zhang 2010). After using the plagiarism detection software CrossCheck as part of their article review process, journal editors found 222/600 submissions had been at least partially plagiarized. Indeed, Liu (2004) also concedes that plagiarism and general academic dishonesty are a problem in modern China. In TESOL research, Deckert (1993) interviewed 170 first year students from a Hong Kong university and concluded the first year students did not see plagiarism as harmful to others and could not define plagiarism. Similarly, Hu & Lei (2012) noticed that Chinese students studying at a major Chinese university struggled to recognize plagiarism in English academic writing. Nonetheless, this may be related more English language proficiency rather than indifference to plagiarism. Overall, these studies indicate there may be some differences in attitudes between Western and Chinese students, but the difference is less pronounced as is implied by other researchers.

While plagiarism may be common in Chinese academia, it is not necessarily condoned. For instance, many administrators and educators in Chinese universities are trying to combat plagiarism for the sake of scientific development (Hertling 1995, Xiguang and Lei 1996, cited by Decoo 2010). More generally, a countrywide commission was developed in 2004 to combat nationwide plagiarism and academic dishonesty (Liu 2004). Overall, plagiarism may be common in China, but many leaders are trying to discourage the practice.

Many international students outside of China have also been construed as plagiarizers. For instance, Sherman (1992) claims, based on experience teaching in Italy, that Italian university students are more likely to cheat due to their educational culture. Chandrasegaran (2000) found in a survey of 35 Singaporean students that they were unable to notice plagiarism in poorly paraphrased texts and argues this was caused by their educational culture. Introna & Hayes (2005) note the plagiarism habits of Greek students writing in academic English in the UK im-

plying Greek educational culture influences the students' plagiarism habits. Therefore, the perception that a student population is more likely to plagiarize is not limited to Chinese learners of English.

Plagiarism in the West

In most of Western academia, plagiarism is thought to be, as described by Robinson and Kuin (1999), "morally and educationally reprehensible" (p. 193). Howard describes being caught plagiarizing in the West as the "academic death penalty" (1995, p.788). Park (2003) calls plagiarism "a moral maze" (p. 474). Words like "wrongful," "stealing," "falsely representing" and "taking" have been used to describe plagiarism (Sutherland-Smith, 2003, p.) According to Park (2003), the moralistic word "sin" is often used as well. Therefore, as Swales and Feak (1994) state, "the concept of plagiarism has become an integral part of North American and Western European academic cultures" (p.125). In sum, plagiarism is considered deplorable by most of academia.

Although plagiarism is widely derided, a concrete and clear definition of plagiarism itself is more ambiguous. In the West, plagiarism is defined with varying terminology. The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines plagiarism as, "The act of using another person's words or ideas without giving credit to that person." According to the Dictionary.com, plagiarism is "an act or instance of using or closely imitating the language and thoughts of another author without authorization and the representation of that author's work as one's own, as by not crediting the original author." In a more specific definition, The Council of Writing Program Administrators describes plagiarism as, "In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original not common knowledge material without acknowledging its source" (2014). In a survey of Australian, UK, and US universities Pecorari

(2001) found the following six elements to be the most common, “(1) material that has been (2) taken from (3) some source by (4) someone, (5) without acknowledgment and (6) with/without intention to deceive “(p. 235). While there is much variation in the terminology used to describe plagiarism, all these definitions define it as using someone else’s work without acknowledging the source. Plagiarism also has serious consequences in Western academia and can result in a failing grade in a course or even expulsion from the school.

Outside of these broad definitions, it is also delineated into various types. Plagiarism is frequently construed as either intentional or unintentional (Flowerdew & Li 2003, Pecorari 2003) However, determining a student’s intention can be unclear in many cases. According to Howard (1995), “Plagiarism is the representation of a source’s words or ideas as one’s own. Plagiarism occurs when a writer fails to supply quotation marks for exact quotations; fails to cite the sources of his or her ideas; or adopts the phrasing of his or her sources, with changes in grammar or word choice” (p. 799). In other words, plagiarism can be cheating, non-attribution, or patchwriting. The University of Illinois characterizes plagiarism as four types: copying, direct quotations, paraphrase, and borrowed fact (Retrieved from http://studentcode.illinois.edu/Full_Code_web2013.pdf).

Since a concrete definition of plagiarism can be unclear, unsurprisingly, a myriad of studies also show even Western tertiary students frequently misunderstand plagiarism. For example, Ashworth et. al. (1997) found, in their qualitative UK study, that nearly all students struggled to determine what is considered plagiarism. More recently, Gulliver and Tyson (2014), in a UK study of over 3,000 students found the majority frequently could not define all types of plagiarism and had never read their university’s policy on plagiarism. Moreover, plagiarism appears to be relatively common among native English speaking college students. One study with a survey

sample of 1,672 students from 25,000 students discovered that over 30% admitted to not properly citing a source, over 8% disclosed they had turned in an assignment written by someone else, and 8% confessed they had turned in an already published assignment as their own. (Hollinger and Lanza-Kaduce, 1997). Another study examining the academic practices of approximately 80,000 North American college and university students found that over 50% of undergraduate students admitted to paraphrasing text without citing the source, 7% admitted to “copying material almost word for word from a written source without citation” and 7% disclosed they were “turning in work done by another” (McCabe 2003, p.6). Hayes and Inrona (2006) concluded that the majority of UK students thought directly copying small amounts of text without citation to be morally appropriate. Furthermore, these statistics are most likely low, since some students would probably be reluctant to admit they plagiarized even if they are guaranteed anonymity since the consequences of plagiarism can be serious.

Some rhetoric and TESOL scholars advocate a postmodern understanding of plagiarism. Many (Scollon 1993, 1995; Pennycook 1995) question if plagiarism should be considered a problem since so much knowledge is intertextual. They argue that plagiarism is such an intrinsically Western concept that by making it the norm we are discounting other perspectives (Pennycook 1994, 1996; Scollon 1995). Roy (1999) proposes that thanks to the internet and social media, writing and rhetoric are becoming more collective so our understanding of plagiarism must also change. Howard (2000) argues the focus should be on teaching students holistic writing skills rather than punishing students who plagiarize. Indeed, many researchers who examine the writing practices of English learners prefer the term “textual borrowing” instead of plagiarism (Shi 2004, 2006). Chandrasoma et. al. (2004) propose shifting the paradigm from plagiarism to transgressive and nontransgressive intertextuality. They lament, “the state of thinking on plagia-

rism, therefore, is often caught between a culture of textual sampling and a culture of textual policing” (p. 173). In other words, words and ideas are constantly being sampled while simultaneously being monitored. Indeed, the West’s conception of plagiarism, particularly in teaching plagiarism to non native speakers of English, is evolving.

Research Questions

While much research has examined Chinese students’ perspectives on plagiarism, little qualitative research exists. That is, no one has made an effort to actually listen to Chinese international students themselves. Therefore, using a preliminary qualitative methodology this thesis will examine the following questions:

- How do undergraduate Chinese students define plagiarism?
- Does Chinese educational culture influence Chinese students’ perceptions of plagiarism?
If yes, how?
- Do undergraduate Chinese students studying at the University of Illinois perceive plagiarism as wrong? Why or why not?
- What factors cause Chinese undergraduate students at the University of Illinois to plagiarize or, conversely, avoid it?

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Introduction

This section of the thesis will begin by explaining the need for qualitative case study approach for this study. Then it will focus on the small cultures framework applied in this thesis. Then, the context of the participants will be described. Following the context, I will explain the background of the participants. Next, the survey methodology will be explained. Then, the interview recruitment and methodology will be explained in detail. Most importantly, the analysis methodology will be explained.

Preliminary Qualitative Case Study

The methodology for this thesis is a preliminary qualitative case study. As described by Chapelle and Duff, qualitative research is “aimed at understanding a bounded phenomenon by examining in depth, and in a holistic manner” (2015, p. 163). In this case, the “bounded phenomenon” is undergraduate Chinese students’ perceptions and attitudes towards plagiarism. According to Chapelle & Duff, an educational case study can be, “skill development and its consequences for learners” (p. 164). In this study, the skill will be plagiarism and how Chinese learners perceive it.

Furthermore, according to Creswell (2007), a case study can be a single program or “within-site study” (p.73). This case study is also descriptive and relational, as it “goes beyond pure description to find causal or relational patterns among observations or yield explanations about phenomena” (Duff,p. 101). This thesis will also be a within-site case study of undergraduate Chinese students perceptions of plagiarism at the University of Illinois under the ESL writing program. Since case studies are best when multiple sources of information are used (Creswell

2007, Chapelle & Duff 2015), this study will also draw on information from a survey and structured interviews.

Small Cultures Framework

Culture is a broad term with many meanings, but this thesis will consider undergraduate Chinese students at the University of Illinois through a “small culture” lens. Developed by Holliday, he describes it as, “when a researcher looks at an unfamiliar social grouping, it can be said to have a small culture when there is a discernible set of behaviours and understandings connected with group cohesion” (p. 249, 2007). A “small culture” lens is ideal as it allows for change and crossover between cultures. Plagiarism is a problem for not only Chinese students, but also other ESL students and domestic students. Furthermore, “small culture” sees behavior within a community, rather than seeing behavior as a consequence of an innate feature from a nationality or ethnicity.

In this case, the “small culture” is Chinese Mandarin native speakers with little experience studying in the West before arriving at the University of Illinois and the behavior is their attitudes towards plagiarism. “Small culture” also allows for changes within a culture. This is fitting since Chinese students studying ESL writing at the University of Illinois will undoubtedly have different attitudes about plagiarism after their ESL coursework and even after graduation. Furthermore, in “small culture,” members are seen as active participants rather than passive recipients of an object-like cultural force. The framework of “small cultures” allows me to see undergraduate Chinese students studying at the University of Illinois as a group that is learning about plagiarism.

Context

Chinese students are a burgeoning ESL and international student population in Western universities. Formal cultural exchange between China and the United States began in 1979, following Richard Nixon's visit to China in 1972. The number has jumped from approximately 40,000 in 1991 (Feng 1991) to well over 200,000 in 2014 (Institute of International Education, 2014). According to the Institute of International Education, Chinese students are now the largest international student population in the United States at 31% of all international students (IIE, 2014). This is a dramatic change, even from 2008, when Chinese students were only 14.6% of the international student population in the United States. This means the Chinese student international population has doubled in less than 10 years.

University of Illinois represents a microcosm of this trend in international education. As of 2015, there were over 3,000 Chinese undergraduates comprising over 60 % of the undergraduate international student population and nearly 10% of all undergraduates (University of Illinois Student Enrollment). Chinese students remain among undergraduate and graduate students. The following table shows the country of origin of international students at the University of Illinois.

Table 3.1 Undergraduate International Student Population at the University of Illinois

Country	Number	Approx % International Undergrads	Approx % Total Undergrads
China	3070	61.6%	9.3%
South Korea	697	13.9	2.1%
India	485	9%	1.4%

Table 3.1 Cont.

Taiwan	91	1.0%	.26%
Malaysia	83	1.0%	.25%
Other	560	9%	1.7%

(Retrieved from http://iss.illinois.edu/download_forms/stats/fa15_stats.pdf)

In order to be admitted to the University of Illinois, international students must prove English proficiency. This is proven through international study, ACT, SAT, IELTS, or TOEFL iBT scores. The following table explains how undergraduate international students can meet the English proficiency requirement for admission.

Table 3.2 International Student English Proficiency Requirement for Admission

	International Study	ACT	SAT	IELTS	TOEFL ibt
General	Complete high school education in the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain or Ireland	Score a 25 or above on English section.	Score a 550 or above on critical reading section	Minimum of 6.5 average and at least 6 on all modules.	A minimum of 80 total score.
Colleges of Business, Engineering, and Media,				Minimum of 7.5 average and at least 7 on all modules.	A minimum of a 100 total score.

(Retrieved from <https://admissions.illinois.edu/policies>)

While international students at the University of Illinois are usually highly proficient in English, they still have unique academic needs. Therefore, enrollment in the ESL courses has increased dramatically. In 2004, only a few sections of each course were offered at University of Illinois. As of Fall 2015, a combined total of 15 sections of ESL 111 and ESL 115 were offered for undergraduates. The ESL department also offers credit and noncredit courses in English pronunciation, public speaking and writing. The following table shows the available ESL courses at the University of Illinois.

Table 3.3 ESL Course Offerings

International Teaching Assistant	Pronunciation	Undergraduate Writing	Graduate Writing	Additional
ESL 504, 506, 508	ESL 110/510	ESL 111, 112, 115	ESL 500, 501, 505	ESL 502, 503
Graduate, No credit, must be degree seeking student.	Graduate and undergraduate, no credit, degree seeking students given priority.	3-4 hours college credit, fulfills Composition I requirement. Degree seeking students given priority.	No credit, fulfills graduate ESL composition requirement.	No credit, Supplemental courses for graduate students and visiting scholars.

(Retrieved from <http://www.linguistics.illinois.edu/students/esl/>)

As mentioned previously, ESL enrollment has increased dramatically. The following table shows the changes in enrollment in the ESL writing courses at the University of Illinois.

Table 3.4 Comparison of ESL Sections Offered, 2008 and 2015

	Fall 2004	Fall 2015
ESL 111 (114 in the past) <i>Introduction to Academic Writing</i>	2	7

Table 3.4 Cont.

ESL 115 <i>Principles of Academic Writing</i>	1	6
ESL 500 <i>Oral and Written Communication</i>	4	11
ESL 501 <i>Introduction to Academic Writing</i>	8	12

(Retrieved from <http://www.dmi.illinois.edu/stuent/>)

The University of Illinois composition requirement is explained as:

All students in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences must complete at least one course in English composition. Rhetoric, communication, and English as a second language (ESL) courses are designed to ensure your ability to write English clearly and to interpret accurately what others have said; these skills comprise the core of a liberal education. (Retrieved from <http://www.las.illinois.edu/students/requirements/comp/>)

The ESL 111 and 112 or ESL 115 sequence is one way to fulfill the freshman composition requirement at the University of Illinois. Other ways to fulfill the requirement is through the RHET 101 and 102 or RHET 105 sequence in the Rhetoric Department or CMN 111 & 112 in the Communication Department. The ESL courses are taught by instructors in the linguistics department, the RHET courses are taught by instructors in the English department, and the CMN courses are taught by instructors in the Communication department.

Table 3.5 Domestic Composition I Requirements

ACT Score	Composition Requirement
1-19	RHET 101 & RHET 102, RHET 100 concurrently both semesters.
20- 31	RHET 105 or COMN 111 & 112
32-36	Composition I Requirement Fulfilled

(Retrieved from <http://cte.illinois.edu/testing/pnp/cutoff15/rhet15.html>)

ESL writing courses are for non native speakers of English who were usually not educated in the United States before arriving at the University of Illinois. The undergraduate composition sequence for ESL students is ESL 111 Introduction to Academic Writing I, and ESL 112, Introduction to Academic Writing II, or ESL 115, Principles of Academic Writing. The ESL courses teach students the same writing skills as the rhetoric composition sequence designed for native speakers of English, but focus is on the needs of the ESL student population. ESL 111 & 112 are taught over two semesters while ESL 115 is taught in one semester.

All students were recruited from ESL 111 courses in the Fall 2015 semester. I chose to focus on ESL 111 because the participants were less likely to be exposed to Western education. The course description for ESL 111 is:

This is the first course in a two-course sequence for undergraduate international students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. It is an all-skills course with both writing and oral components designed to help international students succeed in an English-medium academic environment. The main focus is on introducing students to American academic writing at the paragraph level – its basic structure, development, and

patterns of organization. Strategies for avoiding plagiarism will also be introduced and practiced with source-based writing. Writing an essay is introduced with emphasis on elements such as outlining, thesis formation, introductions, conclusions, PIE structure, and paragraph transitions. In terms of oral skills, students are introduced to the conventions of formal oral presentations, group discussions, and peer review. (Kim, 2015)

One of the course objectives in ESL 111 is, “integrate sources in their writing without plagiarism (by paraphrasing, quoting, and summarizing) and document them in APA style” (Kim 2015).

Therefore, one of the curricular goals of ESL 111 is to teach students about plagiarism and how to avoid it. The standard syllabus for ESL 111 also explains plagiarism and its consequences with:

One of the main goals in this course is to teach you how to avoid plagiarism and how to uphold academic integrity principles. As you know, the consequences of plagiarism are serious. Plagiarism is one type of academic dishonesty which may result in a student’s suspension or dismissal from the University. At the very least, it will result in a failing grade in the course at the director’s discretion. Therefore, the work you turn in for this class **MUST BE YOUR OWN**. Do not plagiarize or you will receive an F on the assignment and in the course! (Kim, 2015)

Therefore, ESL writing students know plagiarism is considered unacceptable from the beginning of the semester. In the second unit of ESL 111, students are taught directly about plagiarism and are required to take a plagiarism tutorial exam. Study participants were surveyed and interviewed before they participated in the tutorial and were to be taught about plagiarism.

Other measures are taken in the ESL writing courses to manage plagiarism. Specifically, new ESL writing TAs are required to take a professional development workshop on how to find

and punish plagiarism. Furthermore, all major assignments are graded through a plagiarism detection software called SafeAssign available on the course management system Compass 2g.

Outside of the ESL writing courses, international students are taught about plagiarism during international student orientation and in the International Student and Scholar Services Academics Guide. The guide states,

Plagiarism is the use, without attribution, of someone else's thoughts or words. According to the Code on Campus Affairs and Handbook of Policies and Regulations Applying to All Students, plagiarism may be defined as "intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise." There are four kinds of plagiarism encountered in academic writing: a) quoting without crediting the source; b) paraphrasing without specifying the source; c) borrowing facts or information; d) adapting - without acknowledgement - someone else's argument or line of thought. Following are two examples of plagiarism that led to disciplinary action. (Retrieved from http://iss.illinois.edu/publications/guides/academic_guide.html)

In other words, plagiarism is defined with four categories: quoting without citation, paraphrasing without citation, using ideas without citation, and adapting ideas without citation.

Participants

Although the title and topic of this thesis calls the participants "Chinese undergraduates," I am referring to a specific demographic of Chinese students. That is, Chinese undergraduates studying at the University of Illinois. As of Fall 2015, the base rate estimated cost of attendance for international students at the University of Illinois was 46,326 a year. In contrast, the GDP per

capita in China was less than a quarter at 7,590 in 2015 (World Bank, 2015). Since financial aid is not available to international students, the socioeconomic status of Chinese students studying at the University of Illinois is most likely upper middle class to very wealthy. These students would also be characterized as “international students” according to Hedgecock & Ferris (2009) since the vast majority are educated, highly literate in their L1, and wealthy.

Equally important, the international student population is distinctly different from immigrants and generation 1.5 students (Hedgecock & Ferris 2009). Immigrant and generation 1.5 students may benefit from ESL courses, but they are not the primary population taught in the ESL writing courses at the University of Illinois. According to Reid (2004), International students learn through their “eyes.” (p. 79). That is, they have learned English by studying vocabulary, grammar, and other language rules rather than being immersed in English. As a result, international students tend to have weak writing skills since they were mainly taught how to write grammatically correct sentences (Reid 2006). Therefore, they may have little to no experience with academic writing.

Most Chinese students studying at the University of Illinois are also highly proficient in English. The average TOEFL iBT score for international students at the University of Illinois is 101-109 out of a possible 120. However, TOEFL iBT score averages vary by college with the lowest score a 94 in the College of Fine and Applied Arts and the highest 114 in the College of Engineering

Table 3.6 Interpreting TOEFL iBT Scores

<u>Skill</u>	<u>Score Range</u>	<u>Level</u>
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Table 3.6 Cont.

Reading	0-30	Low (0-14) Intermediate (15-21) High (22-30)
Listening	0-30	Low (0-14) Intermediate (15-21) High (22-30)
Speaking	0-4, converted to 0-30	Weak (0-9) Limited (10-17) Fair (18-25) Good (26-30)
Writing	0-5, converted to 0- 30	Limited (1-16) Fair (17-23) Good (24-30)
Total Score	0-120	

(Retrieved from <https://www.ets.org/toefl/institutions/scores/interpret/>)

Table 3.7 Average Undergraduate TOEFL iBT Score by College

College Wide	101-109
College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences (ACES)	96-106
College of Applied Health Sciences (AHS)	98-108
College of Business (BUS)	102-109
College of Education (ED)	100-110
College of Engineering (ENG)	105-112
College of Fine and Applied Arts (FAA)	94-106

Table 3.7 Cont.

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS)	102-109
College of Media (MED)	102-108
Division of General Studies (DGS)	98-106
School of Social Work (SSW)	105-107

(Retrieved from <https://admissions.illinois.edu/Apply/Freshman/profile>)

This is also a cumulative score. Thus, students may have be advanced in one of the language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) and high intermediate in another (Retrieved from <https://admissions.illinois.edu/Apply/Freshman/profile>). The participants are all native speakers of Mandarin and/or Cantonese, the most commonly spoken languages in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macau. Participants also have spent the majority of their education in China before starting their undergraduate education in the United States.

In both the survey and interviews, the student participants will fall under the “purposeful sampling” that Chappelle and Duff emphasize in their guidelines for ethnographic research in TESOL (2003, p. 165). Although 29 and 8 are relatively small sample sizes, students were carefully chosen to fit the demographics previously mentioned. That is, all participants were from mainland China, spoke Mandarin and/or Cantonese as their first language, and were studying at the University of Illinois as undergraduates.

Survey Methodology

Quantitative methodology is well-paired with qualitative research and results in triangulation (Duff and Chappelle 2015, Creswell 1998). Thus, a survey was used to gain a broader understanding of Chinese students attitudes towards plagiarism before interviewing a smaller sample. Of the 7 sections of ESL 111 offered in Fall 2015, 29 participants from 4 classes were re-

cruited for the survey. The survey was conducted online via surveymonkey.com and at the beginning of class after I and the instructor left the room. The survey was administered before students were taught about plagiarism formally in class, but plagiarism and general academic dishonesty were discussed during the mandatory international student orientation and in the ESL 111 syllabus.

The first part of the survey (see Part 1 in Appendix A) was general demographic questions. I asked students their country of birth to determine if they were from mainland China, Hong Kong or Macau. All countries of the world were listed, so I could confirm that all my participants were actually from China. Participants were then asked what languages they are fluent. The term fluent was explained with a definition from *Oxford Learners' Dictionary*. This helped me to determine if a student was fluent in Mandarin and/or Cantonese and to see if they considered themselves fluent in English. The background questions show how the demographics of the participants could mirror the demographics of Chinese international students at the University of Illinois and throughout the United States.

The second part (See Part 2 of Appendix A) considered students perceptions and understandings plagiarism. First, participants were asked how well they thought they understood plagiarism through a likert scale. Then, the participants were asked to define plagiarism in their own words with an open question. The open question was then compared with the confidence likert scale.

Interview Recruitment

All participants were recruited from the same ESL 111 classes as the survey and participated in the survey. I chose to recruit from the same course so all participants would be more likely to have the same study experiences. I visited the ESL 111 classes again and explained the

purpose of the interview. I told them the interview would be an extension of the survey. I stressed participation was optional, but it would be a good opportunity to practice spoken English with a native speaker. Some instructors even offered the students extra credit. I also told them that if they chose to be involved they would remain completely anonymous and reminded them I had very little association with the ESL writing courses as I no longer taught ESL writing as of fall 2015. I mentioned that my office is in the same building as all the ESL writing instructors, but is on a different floor.

After I got their contact information, I e-mailed them to arrange a time to meet me in my private office. I made a point to keep my schedule flexible, so meeting me would be convenient. Although I had 15 students give me their contact information, only 10 scheduled a time to meet with me. Of those 10 students, only 8 became participants in the study since 2 potential participants missed our scheduled meeting time.

Interview Methodology

Interviews offer an opportunity to see *how* students understand plagiarism. Moreover, some ESL learners may be more proficient in speaking than in writing. Spoken English also allows for participants to negotiate meaning through interaction. Since multiple students were interviewed, the primary source of information is transcriptions of the interviews, and the primary focus of the research is the interviewees experiences with a phenomenon- plagiarism. These interviews will follow the structure of “creative interviewing” as described by Fontana & Prokos (2007, p.51). That is, I did not follow any particular set of rules and only worked from a loose set of questions. This allowed me to adapt questions or listen longer to certain responses. 8 students were interviewed. All the interview participants’ first language is Mandarin, and two speak Cantonese as a second language. Interviewees were given the opportunity to speak in Mandarin or

Cantonese, but none chose to do so. All interview participants were given pseudonyms to assure anonymity.

Many researchers have argued that the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee is intrinsically imbalanced (Kval 2006, Nunkoosing 2005). Therefore, I worked under the assumption that an equal relationship between me and the interviewees was impossible. I began the interviewing process recognizing since I have taught ESL writing courses in the past, I am older, and a native English speaker I would appear to have more power than my participants. Therefore, I emphasized to interviewees I was no longer teaching ESL writing courses. I also conducted the interviews individually and in my private office. I also assured students that their responses would remain anonymous and if they ever felt uncomfortable they could stop the study. To counterbalance the possible difference in language proficiency, students were explicitly told they could speak in Mandarin if necessary, though no students chose to do so. I overall tried to present myself as a “learner” (Fontana & Prokos 2007, p. 44). Specifically, I asked students to explain what the Chinese words meant. This would, hopefully, allow students to see me more as an equal as I would be learning from them.

Plagiarism and cheating are indeed a sensitive topic. In order to gain the most authentic responses, interview participants were assured anonymity. I stressed that my office door would be closed throughout the interview and I did not directly know any of their instructors. While the interviews were audio recorded, no video or names were recorded. Moreover, at the beginning of the interview, participants were reminded of this policy.

Establishing rapport in interviews is also critically important (Fontana & Prokos, 2007). Therefore, I began by asking interviewees some general background questions. The background questions were designed to mirror “small talk” and to help them feel comfortable with me. I tried

to make the tone conversational and shared my own personal experiences. For instance, I asked students to tell me about their hometown and shared that I had also visited. When students talked about a mistake or something possibly embarrassing, I would share that I had done something similar. Also every series of questions began with broad general questions and then became progressively more personal.

Following the background questions, I asked students to tell me about their experiences learning about Chinese and English writing in China. In this way, I could see what types and genres Chinese students have been expected to produce. This question then segued into asking students about their general experiences learning English in China. After discussing with students their experiences learning English in China, I asked them to explain their experiences with plagiarism in China. I first asked them if they knew anyone who had plagiarized in China and then asked if they had learned about plagiarism.

Next, I questioned students about the Chinese words, *piao qie* and *cao xi*. According to Liu (2004), these words mean plagiarism and have been part of the Chinese language since the Tang Dynasty. I showed students the words written in traditional Chinese characters and asked them to explain what these words meant. I chose to have students discuss these words for several reasons. First, these two words, according to Liu, have been part of the discourse on plagiarism for thousands of years. However, Liu does not explain how these words are understood by students in modern China. Second, the answers in the written survey were very short. No response was longer than a sentence. I thought asking them to explain two Chinese words and how those words are used would encourage more detailed responses. Third, this allowed me to become the “learner” as discussed by Fontana & Prokos (2007) and build more rapport with students. That

is, by asking students to explain terminology from their culture to me we were on more equal footing. Consider this interaction with Lin:

“Me: Ok (pause) Ok. Interesting. Um. I'm gonna show you two Chinese words and I apologize again that my Chinese pronunciation is quite bad.

Lin: It's ok

Me: [I can] I can do the consonant/vowel sounds, but it's the intonation is that's very hard for me.

Lin: Yeah! I know right?”

All interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed. Each interview was approximately 15 to 20 minutes. A superficial transcription was done immediately after each interview, so I could record perceptions while my memory was still fresh. Later, I added more detail to the transcriptions. The transcripts are not a conversational analysis, but I did transcribe laughter, false starts, and hesitations. Finally, I referred to both the transcripts and the audio recordings when I analyzed the interview data.

Analysis Methodology

This thesis has three levels of analysis which will be triangulated to create a small cultures case study. I analyzed the demographic questions to see how they aligned with the Chinese international student population at the University of Illinois. While the demographic data and an analysis of the open responses give me a broader perspective, the interview audio recordings and supporting transcriptions are the primary source of data for this thesis. As mentioned by Chappelle & Duff (2003), analysis of qualitative data typically goes from broad to specific. Thus, I began by giving a detailed profile of each student. Then, I highlighted quotes I found particularly salient. Based on these two data points, I described emerging trends. Finally, I compared and

contrasted the demographic data, open question responses, and interview data for further emerging trends. All the information together worked to produce a “holistic cultural portrait” that has a view of the participants (Prokos, 2007, p. 73). Thus, all the data is triangulated together to give us a greater understanding of undergraduate Chinese students’ perspectives on plagiarism at the University of Illinois.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This section will begin broadly by analyzing the demographic data found in the first part of the survey. First, I show how the demographics mirror the general undergraduate Chinese international student population at the University of Illinois. I then compared participants' confidence in their understanding of plagiarism with their definitions of plagiarism. I also will show the results from the interviews with each participant, with a particular focus on their understanding of the Chinese words *piao qie* and *cao xi*. Following the results, I will discuss the emerging themes from the interviews with examples from the transcripts. The emerging themes will then be used to answer my research questions.

Moreover, this discussion will be examining Chinese international students through a “small culture” lens as described by Holliday (1999). In other words, the Chinese students discussed here fall into the small culture of undergraduate Chinese students studying at the University of Illinois.

Results of Demographic Data

See *Appendix A* for full survey results

Although the sample size of the survey participants was relatively small, their demographics mirrored the international population at the University of Illinois. The vast majority of the study participants were born in mainland China and spoke Mandarin as their first language. The average age of participants was 18, but with some outliers. Eleven out of 29 participants had studied at a community college or university besides University of Illinois. Of those 11, 8 had studied at a university or college in China and 5 had studied at a university or college in the United States.

Results of Plagiarism Open Response

The following is an table with open responses defining plagiarism compared with participant's confidence in understanding. Answers highlighted in yellow are considered incomplete, answers highlighted in red are considered wrong, and answers highlighted in green are considered close to being accurate.

Table 4.1 Student Confidence Compared with Plagiarism Definitions

Yes I absolutely know 18/29= 62.1%	Yes I think I do 10/29=34.4%	No, I only understand a little 1/29=3.44
copy other's work	Stealing other people's work/words/ resources without notifying.	It's copying others works.
Using others work or idea as your own without clear citation.	You can't directly use others' material without changing anything.	
Using sentences completely written by others before without citation.	copy other's paper or sentences without side explanation use the phrases same with the other essay more than seven words without any side notes	
Using the ideas, sentences, researching directly into your own essay without changing the words and without reference the original resource's information.	copy or restate other's point or article without claiming.	
Copying other resources without citation.	copy others' words without mark the reference	
Taking the original writer's words and opinions without reference to it.	copy or get exam information before exam start	

Table 4.1 Cont.

It is the most important in academic that do not copy other's work.	Plagiarism is copy from other resources without cited or noted.	
Copying others words or answers	Using other's words or ideas without authorized.	
Use opinions and words from others word without citing.	use other person's sentences completely (more than5%)in one passage.	
Give the solution or answer to questions without one's own work on it.	Copy other's paper without any change.	
Plagiarism is about copying other people's work or do not cite the sentence that are not your original word.		
It's like cheating in the exam.		
I think plagiarism in the United States is copying others things, such as technology, from other countries, and in the U of I is copying others works or words online without guarantee.		
copying others' words or results without mentioning that. Copy others' answers.		
steal others' academic achievements		
Stealing the idea from others		

Table 4.1 Cont.

use others' words or resources without clearing notifying		
Copying the works from the internet or other sources without the proper citations.		

Emergent Themes from Open Responses

Several responses focused more on general cheating than plagiarism. The majority (62.2%) of survey participants felt they “absolutely” understood plagiarism, 34.4% of survey participants “think” they understood plagiarism, one participant (3.4%) felt they only understood plagiarism a “little.” Although survey participants had the option to state they had “absolutely no idea” about plagiarism, none responded with that answer.

The open responses produced several themes. First, responses often used the words “stealing,” “copying,” and “words and ideas.” Second, many responses referred more to general cheating than plagiarism. Most problematic, many participants were overconfident in their understanding of plagiarism, as the majority thought they “absolutely” understood plagiarism.

“Stealing,” “copying” and “words and ideas” were found in many of the open responses. “Stealing” was a word used by three survey participants to describe plagiarism. “Copying” was the most common word used in the open responses. Finally, several responses used the phrase “words and ideas.” In addition to stealing, copying, and words and ideas, many responses directly or indirectly referred to citation. Five responses directly use the word citation or cite. Also important, 28 out of the 29 participants used “other” or “others.” This indicates survey participants understood text ownership.

Interview Results

Survey responses were a starting point to understanding how Chinese undergraduate students define plagiarism. The interview transcripts were analyzed for more emerging trends.

Table 4.2 Profile of Interview Participants

ID	Gender	Major	Academic Background	Languages	English Study
Biming	Female	Actuarial Science	Transfer student from US university	Mandarin only	SAT Prep, from elementary school
Chen	Male	Finance	Transfer from Chinese university	Mandarin fluent, some Cantonese	primary school, attended English oriented high school
Mei	Female	Communication	Freshman, no previous university	Mandarin only	primary school, English conversation classes
Lin	Female	Undeclared, wants to transfer to food science.	Freshman, no previous university	Mandarin only	primary school, toefl prep, English conversation class
Rong	Female	Economics	Previous study at Chinese university	Mandarin only	primary school, TOEFL Prep
Ting	Female	Mathematics	No previous university	Bilingual in Mandarin and Cantonese	primary school
Xiao	Male	Undeclared, but wants to do Computer Science	No previous university	Mandarin, a little Cantonese.	Elementary school, special prefectural Education program. Special high school with international component
Zhen	Female	General studies, wants to transfer to actuarial science	No previous university	Mandarin	Elementary school

Biming

Biming is a transfer student from another US university studying actuarial science. Mandarin is her first language and she does not know any Cantonese. Biming was eager to communicate her experiences studying in the United States. She came across as studious and serious. She also seemed to imply she felt slightly disappointed in herself. She originally wanted to study accountancy, but went into actuarial science because the program was easier to gain admission. She said she is content with studying actuarial science because the program has a high ranking and the major has good job prospects. She decided to study in the United States because she did not want to prepare for the Chinese entrance exam system. She transferred to the University of Illinois from another US university because Illinois has a higher ranking.

She states she has never cheated or plagiarized in the United States, but did cheat on pop quizzes in China. She also was accused of cheating when she studied at another University in the United States, “And I was once to got an email led me to go to my dean's office to talk about some issues I'm in and when I got there I just realized that somebody just else just copy my answer. That another Chinese student copied my. Later, when I explained it, everything was OK”

Biming was the only participant to mention being accused of cheating, but her academic background is similar to many to other interview participants.

Chen

Chen is a transfer student from a Chinese university. He has sophomore status at the University of Illinois and is studying finance. He understands some Cantonese, but like Biming Mandarin is his primary language. Chen was very polite. He had a noticeable lisp and spoke hesitantly. When told he had the option to speak in Chinese, he said he wanted to speak in English so he could get additional practice. He started learning English in primary school, but did

not study in an immersion English program. He decided to study in the United States because he felt the quality of instruction would be better. He admitted to cheating on math assignments and plagiarizing history assignments while he studied at a Chinese university, but like Biming said he had never cheated or plagiarized in the United States. Chen states that Chinese students know plagiarism is wrong, but did it anyway. He later states, “Yeah because the whole atmosphere is that yeah if you don't do it, you are weird. Yeah.” When asked why students in China plagiarize he says, “Mmm because they want to get success. Because they want to publish their own academic uh..popularities or something like that.” Like other participants, Chen felt Chinese academic culture influenced plagiarism practices there.

Mei

Mei is a first year undergraduate studying Communication, but she hopes to change to Accounting. She attended English conversation classes after school, but never went to a standardized test preparation school. She states she started writing in English in middle school, but it was only simple sentences and paragraphs. Mei was very sociable and mentioned several times how much she enjoys making Chinese and American friends on campus. In our interview, she mentioned that she was taught to quote outside sources, “but in our Chinese class teacher will tell you, you need to quote. But it's not like a formal... learning right now... It's really formal, you need like reference, the author's name...but in China we..I don't think we do that so, so..formal. We just quote them..and say it was said by somebody.” Mei emphasized she had never plagiarized in China. “When asked why she states, Because..uh... I think when you are using this stuff...you are writing some academic research.. but in my high school and middle school we are writing something about your own experience. So theres no need to copy..uhh. ”

Mei was one of the few interview participants to stress she had never plagiarized in China.

Lin

Lin is an undeclared freshman who hopes to study Food Science. Lin was bubbly and friendly throughout the interview. She started studying English in elementary school, but ESL 111 is her first course that focuses on English academic writing. She took intensive English classes outside of regular school to help her prepare for the SAT. In terms of language proficiency, Lin had the best fluency and vocabulary of all the participants. For example, when discussing what she dislikes about the University of Illinois, she said she was “not a fan” of the dining hall in her dorm. According to Lin, her English proficiency is good because she practices with her American boyfriend. I built rapport with Lin by mentioning I visited Shanghai, a major city near her hometown. Unlike Mei, she admitted to cheating but not plagiarism in China:

I'd say a few times a week probably. It just doesn't necessarily mean I copied the whole thing. Maybe just one sentence or maybe one answer ? umm especially in high school because we had.. the workload we had was intense and um it's very often that you have some problems you just can't figure out or it they take too long

Later she states:

I think I mostly copied Chinese things. English I um I don't think so. Because I was very good at English back in China. And now I just um due to the whole integrity thing I just don't.

She stated that she avoided plagiarism and cheating because the consequences are more serious in the United States with, “Because it's very strict, the rules and I know how um serious it can be when it's found out.” When asked what she personally thought about copying and plagiarism she said that plagiarism and cheating were common in China due unreasonable academic pressures.

Interestingly, she was the only participant who directly criticized the Chinese educational system. At the end of the interview, she explicitly mentioned how much she enjoyed talking with me and said “I like you, Kat! ”When she left my office and said goodbye, a colleague commented that she sounded almost like a native speaker.

Rong

Rong is a transfer student from a Chinese university studying economics. She chose economics because, “Uh because umm uhh it's uh actually it's it's the most easiest one to apply for.” She hopes to return to China to work but decided to earn her degree at an American university because it is more prestigious than studying at a Chinese university. She took some English classes on the TOEFL in China, but was never in an English immersion program.

Rong was unable to distinguish between general copying and plagiarism. Equally interesting, Rong said she was not worried about getting caught plagiarizing, “uh no, (laughs) because I will never do things like that” Of all the interview participants, Rong seemed the most reluctant to share her thoughts. When asked sensitive questions about plagiarism and cheating she would hesitate and laugh. For example, when asked if plagiarism and cheating are common in China, she states, “Um. I think no. uh We will not.. uh.. the most thing.. the most often.. the most uh the most often things that we do is we just compare our answers to each other and find the difference. I think this is not of cheat action. ” Rong was the only participant to claim plagiarism and cheating are rare in China.

Ting

Ting is a transfer student from a Chinese university studying mathematics. She chose mathematics as a compromise with her parents because they wanted her to study finance and she wanted to study economics. This is her first year studying in the United States, but she studied

mathematics for two years at a university in China. She is bilingual in Mandarin and Cantonese, but said Mandarin is her dominant language. Ting mentioned she was from Gaungzhou, China and I built rapport by telling her I had visited Guangzhou. She started studying English in elementary school, but ESL 111 is her first class in English academic writing. She says in school she only learned things like “abcd” and how to write basic sentences. When explicitly asked if she ever cheated she candidly responded, “Yes, actually. ” She later explains with, “Ummm.. I don't know.. like... I don't if that's really a cheating. I never cheat at an exam. But we will like..like do the homework. When my friends finish, we will like copy uh others, like the answer. Well... I don't know... three or four grades.”

However, when asked if she had ever been told plagiarism is wrong in China she says:

“Yeah. Yeah.. we'll like... um.. yeah because.. y'know.. a teacher would would tell us that it is wrong. And..and we know if we do it we know it is very easy for others to find out. That it is not your paper because I mean It's very difficult or kind of impossible to to to present something write a very similar essay. ”

Like many other participants, she explicitly states she was taught plagiarism is wrong.

Xiao

Xiao is a freshman at the University of Illinois in general studies who hopes to transfer into the computer science program. When asked why he chose computer he stated, with laughter, because he likes computers. He hopes to eventually be a software engineer. Student X was friendly and polite but I needed to say follow up questions to get detailed answers. He went to what he calls “internationally oriented classes” in high school, but did not attend an English focused high school. His prefecture had a special English education program and He started studying English in elementary school. He says he avoided cheating in high school because it would be on his permanent record. He recounted a sad story about one his classmates in high school,

“Yeah.. I remember a very bad thing in high school... In second year....and..uh... one of... it's in our international.. it's in regular part. some student cheating and they were found and they found out cheating and their score cancel. Then the student suicide. ” When asked if he ever plagiarized to get a better grade he says,“I don't think it's...uh... because I'm in.. i'm not in.. i'm not studying things like writing or lot most of my work is done in stuff like math or physics..I'm very good about it, so I don't think there is any reason for me to break the rules. ”Like other participants, Xiao felt he did not plagiarize because his coursework did not require him to plagiarize.

Zhen

Zhen is a freshman in general students, but she hopes to transfer to actuarial science. ESL 111 is her first academic writing course in the United States. Out of all the participants, Zhen was the most reluctant to communicate with me. She began learning English in elementary school and does not remember when she started to learn to write in English. When asked if she ever took a course on writing in English previously, she joked that it maybe be her SAT preparation. Unprompted, she explicitly mentioned that she does not like writing in English or Chinese. She describes plagiarism and cheating as commonplace in China:

Yes, um but lot of times when students write some, write their homeworks and the student who do not like write homeworks make just grab some other students homework and copy it down and uh in the universities? When writing essays some students may umm search the website and copy the website's material into their essays.

Interestingly, when asked to explain:

And and sometimes when and like some shops as like making clothes um to um like to um like make the clothes with others' designs and then share the others' designs in a very low price and the customers maybe prefer the price, the low price and clothes with the

same design. No, um I'm very hates this behavior. Because my homework is always copied by others, but ..and sometimes when I'm not in the classroom and I like go out someone may steal my homework and copy it down. And once, uh once the teacher finds out that my homework ad is similar to- with others and they the teacher is very angry, but I don't, I did not anything about that so I got a zero in that homework and I was very angry too.

Zhen again stressed she thinks cheating and plagiarism are wrong:

Because um this idea belongs to others but they maybe write a lot of things and they think about lot of time to create this ideas and it's um belongs to others if you steal from others you steal others' time and steal others hard working.

Out of all the participants, Zhen was the most outspoken in her disdain for plagiarism.

Emergent Interview Themes

Like the themes discussed in the survey responses, several themes emerged from the interviews. These themes were used because they were found in more than one interview participant. The majority had more than three participants. These themes will be first categorized in the following table and then further detailed.

Table 4.3 Theme and Participants Involved

Theme	Participants
Standardized tests	Biming, Rong, Zhen, Xiao
University of Illinois for academics	Chen, Mei, Rong, Xiao
Career prospects	Biming, Chen, Mei, Ting, Zhen
Admitted to cheating and/or plagiarism	Biming, Chen, Lin
Claimed to never cheat or plagiarize	Rong, Xiao

Table 4.3 Cont.

Unfamiliarity with academic writing	Biming, Mei, Zhen
Believe cheating and/or plagiarism caused by Chinese educational culture	Biming, Chen, Lin
Difficulty Distinguishing cheating and plagiarism	Biming, Mei, Rong, Ting
Explicitly state plagiarism is wrong	Chen, Mei, Lin, Zhen
Reluctance to discuss plagiarism	Mei, Rong
Avoid Plagiarism due to consequences	Chen, Lin, Xiao

Focus on Career Prospects

5 of the 8 participants said they chose their major based on potential career prospects and sometimes pressure from their parents. For instance, Ting detailed a conflict she had with her parents over her major:

We have kind of conflict with each other. So, um, like, so we have some kind of conversation like you can choose Mathematics in your for your like uh university maba-bachelor? Major? and then you can choose whatever you want in master. Like they want me to find out which-which which kind of things I really want to do.

Similarly, Biming states she chose actuarial science over economics because in the case of economics she would be, “It's kind of embarrassed for looking for a job.” Like Biming, Mei chose her major for career options. When asked why she chose accounting over math, Mei says, “Uh, cause maybe uhhh it's easier to find a job and uh I have some interest in math.” These responses indicate Chinese students studying at the University of Illinois are career oriented.

Focus on Standardized Tests

Many of the participants emphasized the results of grades and tests when discussing their experiences in education. For instance, when asked why she chose to attend the University of Illinois, Biming stated, “And I prepared SAT cause there's so many more choice for me. More choices for me. And lots of friend. They also uh went to the college in the United States. ” In other words, Biming chose to attend the University of Illinois because the SAT was manageable. In another case, Rong identified herself as a good student because she earned a good mark on the Chinese entrance exam. She states, “Because I have to take the uh take Chinese and Chinese college entrance exam cause its a really strict exam and it's really really important because just have one chance and and we all study really really hard.” These participants’ responses confirm that standardized testing is a big part of Chinese educational culture as mentioned in the literature review.

At University of Illinois for Better Academics

Although some interview participants stated they chose to study at the University of Illinois to avoid the Chinese college entrance exam, other participants said they chose University of Illinois for better academics. For example, Chen stated, “Because it is a famous school and I want to receive a better college education yeah compared to the Chinese universities. Yeah. ” He later said, “I wanted to receive a better college education because in China the college professor just don't take us seriously and they focus on their studies and don't .. mm and did and did not very good in teachings.” Mei said something similar with, “University of Illinois has better academic background.” Rong had the same perspective as Chen and Mei and stated “And I think it's a really good school... yeah.” Xiao also chose to attend University of Illinois for its strong academics and states he chose the school because he “heard the computer science program was real-

ly good.” In sum, some Chinese international students choose University of Illinois for its stellar academic reputation.

Chinese Academic Culture

Many interview participants admitted to cheating or plagiarizing due to Chinese academic culture. When asked if she cheated or plagiarized in China, Biming explains that cheating was often tolerated, particularly for quizzes, “Yeah I know. uh.. Not a big...I mean on a big exam I never cheated, but you know sometimes that a little bit quiz, my friend may always change the questions, but the teacher they never cares too much. They never care too much in China I mean.” She later, unsolicited, shares, “but in small quizzes, maybe the teacher they just agree with that. Yeah they know that we don't have too much time to prepare and they always came up the pop quiz.” Other interview participants claim cheating and plagiarism were simply part of the Chinese educational system. For instance, when asked why she cheated and plagiarized in junior high and high school, Lin states, “It's not good, definitely not, but um. When it comes to extreme circumstances like back in high school when everybody was very busy with their study that they would spend um six hours on homework everyday and I think it's the the system that has a problem.” In other words, she blames the “system” rather than individual students. Similarly, Chen, who studied at a Chinese university for two years, states:

“Yeah..mm Cause in China although we, although we just, although we consider it to be bad procedure, but just many Chinese, just many Chinese just uh ignore it and just copy the works from the others that are plagiarit? uh That is we just copy it from the other scholars and don't want to give credits to them and sometimes mmm in order to get the w-work to be done quicker we just don't study by ourselves. Yeah, it's not very good I

know but there is a reality in China. Yeah. Although we consider it bad in reality we just do it.”

Chen indicates that this culture of plagiarizing is simply a “reality” of Chinese society. Zhen, another transfer student from a Chinese university, found plagiarism to be commonplace in Chinese universities:

“Because um they do not like to, because um because in Chinese most of the students like to play in the university and they do not take classes so when they graduate they did not a lot of knowledge about their major so what they can do is to grab the words from the wikipedia.”

According to Zhen, Chinese students plagiarize in their home country because they prefer not to do academic work. These participants responses indicate cheating and plagiarism were caused by the general academic culture and instructors tolerance of it rather than an aspect of traditional Chinese culture.

Confusion Between Plagiarism and Cheating

Half of the participants struggled to distinguish between plagiarism and general cheating. One telling example came during my interview with Rong:

“Uh uh policy of the like of the courses in the syllabus and it will defined like that. Um, I I think, I think if I, if I um compare the answers uh to to the answers of others I think this is not.. but uh if uh in the exam I look at others answers I think this is uh the plagiarism.”

Clearly, Rong has little understanding of plagiarism. However, when asked if she was worried about getting caught accidentally plagiarizing she laughed and responded quickly with “no.”

Likewise, Ting explicitly states she cannot distinguish between plagiarism and general cheating

when she says, “I don't. . . what the difference between cheating and this words, because I think they are same.” When asked to define plagiarism, Biming states, “Copying someone else answer? And uh.. and including paper if you just copy it.” Later in the interview, I asked Biming if she ever learned about plagiarism in China she says, “If you...cheating.. cheated on a big exam, you would definitely got punishment. But, for small quiz, just like I said, the teacher doesn't cares about it.” Similarly, when asked to explain the Chinese word for plagiarism, *piao qie*, Ting states, “Like..um..In the syllable¹ I mean... in end of the syllable, it says like if you do somethin like...I think that is kind of cheating. in your homework or in exam test. you'll be like very serious... It's like a very serious problem.” Thus, although *piao qie* directly translates to plagiarism, Ting only associated plagiarism with cheating. Equally important, the other participants did not prove they could distinguish between plagiarism and general cheating.

Plagiarism as Unethical

Many participants did not necessarily understand the difference between plagiarism and cheating, or had an incomplete understanding. However, all participants appeared to see cheating and plagiarism as wrong. This was shown by 5 participants explicitly saying it is wrong. When asked to define plagiarism, Chen states, unsolicited, “Yeah. And since uh it's a wrong procedure for you just to copy others work and don't give credits to them. Mmm. So I think plagiarism is bad yeah.” Similarly, Lin states when asked why she does not cheat or plagiarize at the University of Illinois, “Of course, it's wrong. Um.. that's why I don't do it here.” Moreover, Mei was directly asked if she considered plagiarism to be wrong. Her response was short, but she did state, “It's wrong.” Zhen thought plagiarism was wrong and also strongly disliked the behavior. She said, “No, um I'm very hates this behavior.” When asked to explain why she says, “Be-

¹ “Syllable” most likely means syllabus.

cause um this idea belongs to others but they maybe write a lot of things and they think about lot of time to create this ideas and it's um belongs to others if you steal from others you steal others' time and steal others' hard working. ” In sum, many interview participants stated plagiarism is wrong.

Reluctance to Discuss Plagiarism

Three of the 8 participants were reluctant to even discuss plagiarism and cheating. For example, Mei gave detailed responses to earlier “small talk” questions, but when asked if she had ever plagiarized her responses were brief:

“Me: Ok. Have you ever done either one of these things?

K: No.

Me: No?

K: No. “

Rong was also reluctant to discuss plagiarism. Specifically, she hesitated more in her speech when asked about plagiarism compared to when she was asked questions earlier. Their reluctance indicates they found plagiarism and cheating to be at least ethically problematic or were concerned about the consequences.

Admitting to Cheating or Plagiarism

Some participants admitted to cheating or plagiarizing in their home country. For instance, Lin when asked if she cheated or plagiarized said, “I'd say a few times a week probably. It just doesn't necessarily mean I copied the whole thing. Maybe just one sentence or maybe one answer?” and then admitted to copying writing assignments when in China as well. Biming says she never cheated but then admits to doing an action that is usually considered cheating, “Not a big...I mean on a big exam I never cheated, but you know sometimes that a little bit quiz, my

friend may always change the questions.” When asked if he had cheated or plagiarized, Chen stated, “I used to”

Others insisted they had never cheated or plagiarized in China or the West. For example, Rong states, “Um.. I think no one will do it because uh.. well..I am in high school..uh the school is really really strict. If the student copied the answers they will be uh, they will not go to school anymore. (laughs)” Equally important, none admitted to plagiarizing or cheating in the United States. For example, Lin says, “Of course it's wrong. Um.. that's why I don't do it here. ”

Unfamiliarity with Academic Writing

Many students mentioned that they did not begin writing academic essays until they started university either in China or in the United States. Indeed, some of them admitted their only experience with writing essays in English was on the TOEFL or SAT. For example, Biming states, “we don't have so much paper in high school to finish.” This implies he was not expected to write essays. Mei’s explanation to why she did not plagiarize in China also indicates he was not expected to do academic writing in high school or junior high, “Because..uh... I think when you are using this stuff...you are writing some academic research.. but in my high school and middle school we are writing something about your own experience. So theres no need to copy..uhh” When asked what experience he had with writing he said, “Yeah we wrote it for exams.” Similarly, when asked what experience he had with academic writing, Zhen joked, “If you said SAT is the also a writing class.” Other interview participants did not explicitly mention their lack of academic writing experience, but they did not mention their experience academic writing either. It was difficult to ascertain how much (or little) English education interview participants got, but these participants’ responses indicate they were not taught about academic writing in Chinese or English.

Avoiding Plagiarism due to Consequences

Some interview participants stated they avoided plagiarism because consequences are “serious.” When asked why he avoided plagiarism in the US, but not in China, Chen states, “Because here the outcome is very serious. If you be discovered you--I might be dismissed from the universities or something like that. But in China since no penalty there yeah because yeah everybody knows in their heart yeah if and nobody just excused.” Lin admitted to plagiarizing in China, but says she avoided plagiarism in the US because she was worried about getting in trouble, “And now I just um due to the whole integrity thing I just don't. Because it's very strict, the rules and I know how um serious it can be when it's found out.” Similarly, Xiao states, “It's very strict here.. I don't think... I don't think it's any reason for me to cheat.” In sum, some interview participants stated they avoid plagiarism because of the strict consequences.

Responses to *cao xi* and *piao qie*

Students' responses to these Chinese phrases were surprisingly varied. While Liu (2005) defined them as clearly associated with plagiarism, some students gave short and brief explanations that did not directly associate the word with plagiarism. However, the majority of the participants clearly distinguished between the two and associated both terms with plagiarism.

Table 4.4 Participant Responses to Defining *Cao xi* and *Piao qie*

Participant	<i>cao xi</i>	<i>piao qie</i>
Biming	“it is, it is in Chinese, it is plagiarism.”	“I think it is kind of a..a..aaaa. paper... paper? copying someone else paper or copying someone else uhh writing some or literature ”

Table 4.4 Cont.

Chen	“I think is more general when you, when you uhh use others music or movies without giving the copyright information.”	“Piao qie is more academically in some in some papers or some academic ones”
Mei	“Yeah. It's.. it's like something..uh.. you use others words without citation.”	“Yeah.. its.. it means plagiarism I think. ”
Lin	Basically the same as plagiarism	Not much difference, it's the uh same word.
Rong	I just know the situation uh like uh they're a student here and I'm here I will look at her.. look at her uh answers and she didn't know.	the second word is uh I will look at her answer and she will know, she knows that and she will let me me look at her answers is the second one.
Ting	(pause)I think... Well... actually cao xi means copy,	is just like, you steal others like idea or Like thoughts or like yeah..
Xiao	it means copy	it like steal I think.
Zhen	The other one maybe uh copy some words.	I think the first maybe like uh steal others creations or steal others ideas.

How do Chinese Students Define Plagiarism?

The interview and survey data yielded new insights into how Chinese students define plagiarism. A useful point for comparison is the University of Illinois' definition and the interview participants' definition. As mentioned in the literature review, plagiarism is defined by at the University of Illinois as:

intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise." There are four kinds of plagiarism encountered in academic writing:

- a) quoting without crediting the source; b) paraphrasing without specifying the source; c)

borrowing facts or information; d) adapting - without acknowledgement - someone else's argument or line of thought. (Retrieved from http://iss.illinois.edu/publications/guides/academic_guide.html)

However, international Chinese students' definition of plagiarism did not completely align with this definition. In fact, most study participants responses did not even include a quarter of the Illinois definition. None of the participants, survey or interview, mentioned paraphrasing, summarizing. They also never alluded to similar practices.

However, several terms did emerge when participants described plagiarism. For instance, citation was found in more than half of the open responses. While Pennycook (1992, 1994, 1996) and Scollon (1992, 1994) argued Chinese students do not know how to do citation, study participants seemed to strongly associate plagiarism with appropriate citation.

While citation is part of their definition of avoiding plagiarism, it is still incomplete. Copy was also frequently used to describe plagiarism. The open responses' use of the word "copy" would sometimes indicate copying an answer rather than copying an essay or other written assignment. Likewise, 4 of the interview participants could not distinguish between plagiarism and general copying or cheating. This shows that overlap between copying answers for a quiz or test and copying an essay could be confusing. Survey and interview participants appeared to not understand that plagiarism is a type of cheating. Since plagiarism is a kind of cheating, this confusion is natural and may have little to do with language proficiency or culture.

While the majority of the survey participants felt confident in their understanding of Western plagiarism, the majority of their definitions were at best incomplete and at worst completely wrong. Interview participants also felt confident in their understanding of plagiarism, but were either unable to distinguish between plagiarism and general cheating and/or gave a very

narrow definition of plagiarism. This indicates a Chinese student's insistence that he or she understands plagiarism is not sufficient. Equally troubling, some of the interview participants with the weakest understanding of plagiarism also appeared to be the most unconcerned that they were at risk for unintentionally plagiarizing. However, the simple definitions may be more related to language proficiency than knowledge of plagiarism, since participants were asked to write in English.

Originally pointed out by Liu (2004), the participants' definitions of *cao xi* and *piao qi* also shed light on how Chinese students define and perceive plagiarism. *Cao xi* and *piao qi* directly translate as plagiarism and cheating, respectively. The majority of interview participants were able to distinguish between the two terms and relate them to plagiarism and cheating. However, some interview participants could not tell the difference. Therefore, while an understanding of plagiarism exists in China, some Chinese EAP students still did not know a complete meaning.

Do Chinese students perceive plagiarism as wrong? Why or why not?

All interview and survey participants appeared to perceive plagiarism negatively. First, four out of the 8 interview participants directly described plagiarism as wrong. Second, two different interview participants were reluctant to discuss plagiarism and cheating during the interviews. Equally important, participants who admitted to cheating or plagiarizing would frequently add that they knew they were doing something wrong. They only plagiarized or cheated because they knew it would lead to good grades and there were few consequences. This is different than the ignorant plagiarizer described by Lund (2004). While my interviews were only a superficial analysis, participants appear to know that plagiarism is at least ethically problematic.

Equally important, some interview participants described *cao xi* and *piao qie*, the Chinese equivalents to plagiarism in a negative context. This means that Chinese participants see the Chinese concept of plagiarism in a negative light. Moreover, participants were able to give concrete definitions of the term, so they understand the concept and were able to put it in a negative light.

How does Chinese educational culture influence their perceptions of plagiarism?

My second research question asks how Chinese educational culture influences Chinese international students' perceptions of plagiarism. Based on the data I found, Chinese educational culture does foster academic dishonesty. However, this appears to have little to do with the "Chinese learner" as construed by some educational scholars. As mentioned in the literature review, Chinese students are thought to plagiarize partly due to societal collectivism but no evidence from the survey or interviews supported this notion. Instead, the data from the interviews indicates Chinese students have divergent views and perceptions of plagiarism, so a collectivist mindset seems unlikely. While there were many trends that emerged from the survey and interview data, the diversity of perspectives was perhaps one of the most notable points of the data I collected. Indeed, 12 trends emerged from the interview data of 8 participants. Some interview participants were eager to quote more than paraphrase or summarize, but this seemed to be more of a case of wanting to be accurate rather than a desire to "respect the author." I never asked students if they desired to show reverence for the author by directly copying, but it was never mentioned in any of the interviews or survey responses.

However, some components of modern Chinese educational culture do appear to promote cheating and plagiarism. As mentioned in the literature review, the primary focus in junior high and high school is to prepare for standardized high school and university entrance exams. These

standardized tests have existed for thousands of years. Indeed, standardized tests were arguably invented in China. Success in these tests involves a great deal of study and rote memorization. The focus standardized tests was an emerging theme as well. Several interview participants mentioned they cheated or plagiarized because of the high pressure academic environment in Chinese schools. Specifically, 3 of the interview participants explicitly stated the Chinese school system encouraged plagiarism. This is unsurprising since Robinson & Kuin (1999) and Cogee (2010) found that Chinese students are under immense pressure to succeed. Equally important, many interviewees stated there was little punishment for cheating or plagiarism in junior high, high school, or universities in China. According to the interview with Lin, this is because teachers are so busy preparing students to succeed academically.

The majority of interview participants mentioned that their first experience with academic writing was at the University of Illinois or at another university or college. This is partially because English education only recently started in China, as mentioned by Hu (2004). So, a lack of study in academic writing may lead to difficulty in understanding plagiarism. This was not mentioned by any of the research I found in the literature review, as most focused on the language proficiency rather proficiency in the academic writing genre.

Participants' inexperience with academic writing challenges the notion that we should consider how writing influences culture when teaching undergraduate Chinese student writing. Kaplan (1966) and Matalene (1985) propose that culture influences the rhetorical style of writing, or contrastive analysis. However, many interview participants stated they had little experience with any kind of academic writing unless they had attended a university or college. Therefore, culture may not influence rhetoric, at least in regards to plagiarism.

Interestingly, many interview participants sharply contrasted education at the University of Illinois with education in China. Interview participants struggled to explain and understand plagiarism, but all participants understood that Western universities, particularly University of Illinois, had certain expectations about academic honesty. Indeed, 3 interview participants stated they avoided plagiarism at the University of Illinois because of concerns about the consequences, but admitted to plagiarizing in China. Nonetheless, while they knew there were expectations, and if they were caught plagiarizing they would be punished.

What factors cause Chinese undergraduate students at the University of Illinois to plagiarize or, conversely, avoid it?

When asked why they had not plagiarized in the United States, based on the students' interviews two reasons have been identified. First, one participant claimed he had no need to plagiarize because their coursework was "easy." 3 participants stated they avoided plagiarism because of "the serious consequences." While interview participants could not necessarily define the consequences, they were concerned with being caught or punished. These responses indicate academic preparation and an understanding of the consequences may encourage and help students to avoid plagiarism.

Chinese students may avoid plagiarism because they sincerely think it is wrong. Out of the 8 interviews, 4 explicitly stated they felt plagiarism was unethical. Moreover, two interview participants seemed uncomfortable discussing the topic. Likewise, 4 of the interview participants chose to study at the University of Illinois for better academics and 5 participants emphasized career prospects, so they may avoid plagiarism because it hinders learning.

Chinese international students' intrinsic motivation to learn was noticeably absent in all the research on Chinese students and plagiarism.

Likewise, two interview participants stated they had not plagiarized or cheated in China because the disciplinary consequences in China are serious, but other participants stated they plagiarized because there was no punishment and they wanted to earn a better grade. Some interview participants admitted to cheating and/or plagiarizing in China. This was not because they do not know plagiarism was wrong, but for the sake of academic success. This contrasts sharply with the notion described by Scollon (1992, 1994) who stated Chinese students copy and plagiarize out of a desire to respect the author. These results indicate there are no consistent consequences for plagiarizing and cheating in China.

Summary of Results & Discussion

Based on the data gathered, the small culture of Chinese international students studying at the University of Illinois have a unique perspective of plagiarism. In this chapter I analyzed the data collected from a survey of 29 students and interviews with 8 students. I then considered the trends that emerged from the survey and interviews, respectively. The survey analysis showed that participants were overconfident in their understanding of plagiarism and frequently gave insufficient definitions of plagiarism.

The emergent interview themes are an eagerness to communicate despite language barriers, a focus on career prospects and standardized tests, studying at University of Illinois for better academics, a reluctance to discuss plagiarism, an unfamiliarity with academic writing, an avoidance of plagiarism due to consequences. The responses to the terms *cao xi* and *piao qie* indicate that most of the participants associated Chinese words with the concept of plagiarism.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

General Conclusion

This thesis aimed to examine Chinese undergraduate students' perspectives on plagiarism under the context of University of Illinois. As discussed in the Research Design and Methods, these voices were elicited under a small cultures framework (Holliday 1999). Using this framework, I established four research questions in order to gain a deeper understanding of their perceptions. My aim was not to gain categorical answers, but rather gain new insights by listening to Chinese students' voices.

The responses to these research questions indicates that while culture must be considered when teaching language, it is also context specific. Based on the data gathered from these interviews and survey, culture does influence the writing practices and perceptions of plagiarism by students. However, it is more related to direct parts of the small culture of the students. In this case, modern educational culture influenced Chinese students perceptions of plagiarism rather than traditional Chinese culture.

Pedagogical Implications

The data from this thesis offers new insight into *how* Western instructors should teach plagiarism to Chinese students, particularly in the ESL writing courses at the University of Illinois. These pedagogical implications are designed to teach international students how to avoid plagiarism and to have a better understanding of the needs of international Chinese students in general. First, Chinese students international students do not need to be told about the ethics of plagiarism. Indirectly or directly, all interview participants appeared to know that the concept known as plagiarism is considered wrong. They also seem to clearly articulate why plagiarism might be wrong. However, based on my discussion with students, most only avoided plagiarism

when the consequences were “serious.” Therefore, when teaching students about plagiarism and academic writing in general the focus should not be on the morality of plagiarism. In the ESL writing courses at the University of Illinois, instructors should work under the assumption that students already know plagiarism is considered wrong.

Furthermore, as mentioned in the Research Design and Methodology chapter, even though survey and interview participants had been shown the official University of Illinois definition of plagiarism during international student orientation and in course syllabi, students still could not give a complete and inaccurate definition of plagiarism. This suggests that simply asking students to read about a concept is not enough to give them a sophisticated understanding on the topic.

The data from this thesis also indicates that asking students if they understand plagiarism is not sufficient in recognizing how they understand plagiarism. Rather, instructors should ask students to show how they understand the concept. This indicates instructors should not make assumptions about a student’s understanding based on their culture

Much of the data indicates Chinese students have less experience and understanding of academic writing and have difficulty with understanding plagiarism as a result. 3 of the participants expressed that their only experience with writing was a personal narrative. For instance, very few of the survey responses gave an accurate definition of plagiarism. Furthermore, many interview participants struggled to distinguish between plagiarism and copying. In that vein, instructors may be able to correlate experience with academic writing with understanding of plagiarism. This could be useful for both domestic and international students. Furthermore, international students, especially Chinese students may benefit from explicit introduc-

tions to academic writing genres. In the ESL writing courses, instructors should ask students about their previous experiences with academic writing.

Equally important, while some interview participants emphasized standardized test scores and career prospects when discussing academics, 3 interview participants also stressed they chose to study at University of Illinois for better academics. This means educators should work under the assumption that Chinese students sincerely want to learn. Chinese students' intrinsic motivation for learning was noticeably absent from the current research on their perceptions of plagiarism. In the ESL writing courses, instructors should consider students' motivation for learning about writing, particularly plagiarism and try to align those motivations with the overall curriculum aims and objectives.

Limitations of Research

Limitations to this thesis are found in its sampling and methodology. While these issues place some limits to the extent the data can be used to help understand how undergraduate Chinese students perceive plagiarism, there is still some remaining useful data and trends. Moreover, "reflexivity," or a candid explanation of one's own mistakes, can be a useful tool for analyzing research (Fontana & Prokos, 2007). Therefore, the methods used in this thesis can be used to gain more information in how to teach Chinese international students about plagiarism and how to best research the phenomena further.

In terms of sampling, the sampling size is too small to be representative of Chinese students studying in the United States or at the University of Illinois. Furthermore, since my study participants were volunteers they cannot be a completely random sample. I also wish I had selected an equal number of male and female participants. I am not sure how it would have influ-

enced my results, but gender frequently influences everything from communication style to attitude towards education.

Furthermore, the methodology had some weaknesses. For instance, while these interviews were transcribed, as Rapley (2007) argues, “recordings and transcripts themselves are always selective and always partial” (p. 51). Therefore, while I tried my best to capture entire interactions with each student including body language, something will inevitably be missing. I wish I had recorded students body language and facial expressions in addition to their talk. Furthermore, due to my status as a graduate student, a native English speaker, and a former instructor of ESL writing, interviewees may present a less authentic version of themselves.

I would also have liked to review the themes with another rater to make sure the themes found were most accurate. Finally, I surveyed and interviewed all participants in their L2 or in some cases L3, English. Of course, this made it difficult for students to coherently and accurately communicate their thoughts. Moreover, I struggled to distinguish between hesitation in answer and difficulty with language proficiency when I transcribed and analyzed our interviews.

Suggestions for Further Research

This qualitative case study only began to answer my research questions. As my research progressed many new questions and potential research possibilities emerged.

As mentioned in the analysis and discussion, all participants struggled with language proficiency and fluency in their interviews. I chose not to ask students for their TOEFL scores because I feared the question could hurt in building rapport. In some cases, interview participants would even say they were not capable of explaining in English but they were still uncomfortable discussing it in Mandarin or Cantonese. Since I hoped to interview students with little academic study in the United States or the West, their English proficiency was likely to be weak. There-

fore, I wish I had I had done at least part of the interview in Mandarin or Cantonese to gain the most accurate answers.

I am curious how and/or if Chinese students are taught about paraphrasing and summarizing in their home country and if they associate the terms with plagiarism or how to avoid plagiarism. I initially ended the interview component of the study by asking participants to read a passage and then choose the best paraphrase. This component was eventually cut because participants felt overwhelmed by the task and this caused the interviews to end negatively. Paraphrasing and summarizing were noticeably absent from the survey responses and interviews. This sort of research would be amenable to a quantitative or mixed methods methodology.

Another point to consider is how intrinsic motivation influences plagiarism and general academic dishonesty. Are international students and consequently Chinese students more likely to plagiarize and cheat if they have greater intrinsic motivation? What about domestic students? My interview data found that 5 participants were focused on career prospects and half of the interview participants were at the University of Illinois for better academics. Is there a correlation between focus on academic and career success and perceptions of plagiarism? This could lead students to plagiarize or avoid plagiarism, depending on the context.

This thesis focused on Chinese students studying at the University of Illinois, but I am not sure if many of these behaviors are unique to Chinese, Asian students, or international students in general. Many of the points drawn from the discussion in Chapter 5 could easily apply to students from many other cultures, particularly ESL learners. Moreover, I would have liked to compare domestic students studying composition with international students.

While much pedagogical literature on teaching the “Chinese learner” exists, how educators perceive Chinese students, particularly Chinese students’ perceptions of plagiarism, is un-

clear. I would be interested to see how lecturers and TA's in University of Illinois' ESL writing program perceive undergraduate and graduate Chinese students. Particularly since many ESL lecturers and TAs are international and/or non-native speakers of English themselves. However, it seemed methodologically inappropriate for me to interview them since many are colleagues and friends.

I only interviewed participants one time and wish I had more time to interview students multiple times over their academic careers. By interviewing students multiple times, I would be able to see how their perceptions of plagiarism develop throughout their education. This would also allow interview participants to reflect on their previous learning experiences. Participants may also gain improved English proficiency as they study at the University of Illinois and be able to give more sophisticated answers in English. As mentioned by Fontana & Prokos (2007), building rapport usually takes time. Moreover, multiple interviews would encourage interview participants to be more candid with me. I also wish I had interviewed participants a second time, after they had taken the plagiarism tutorial exam. As mentioned in the context section of this thesis, the tutorial is designed to give ESL writing students a more detailed understanding of plagiarism and prepare them for future academic writing.

Final Thoughts

I hope the data found in this thesis can be used to not only influence how we teach Chinese students about plagiarism but also how we teach and interact with the international student population in general. My research shows that stereotyping or making generalizations about students' learning based on a broad understanding of their culture can be at best inaccurate. While more work needs to be done, this research should underscore the importance of doing qualitative

research and listening to students needs, rather than making assumptions based on our own perceptions of their culture.

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APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONS

Part 1: Demographic Questions

1. What is your country of birth?
 - (All countries were listed)
2. What languages are spoken in your home?
 - (All major languages were listed)
3. In what language(s) are you fluent? You may check more than one. Fluent means being able to speak, read, and write a language easily and well.
 - (All major languages were listed)
4. Have you studied at another university, college, or junior (community) college outside of University of Illinois? If yes, where?
 - At a university or college in the US
 - At a college or university in my home country
 - At a college or university in another English speaking country

Part 2: Plagiarism Question

1. Do you know what plagiarism is?
 - Absolutely yes
 - Yes, I think I do.
 - No, I only understand a little.
 - No, I don't understand at all.

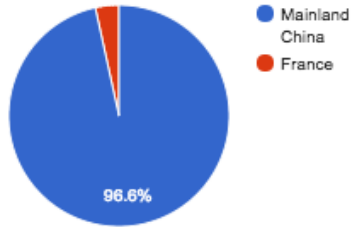
Part 3: Open Questions

1. In your own words, give your own definition of what is considered plagiarism in the United States and (at the University of Illinois). Please write at least one sentence and do not look at outside sources.

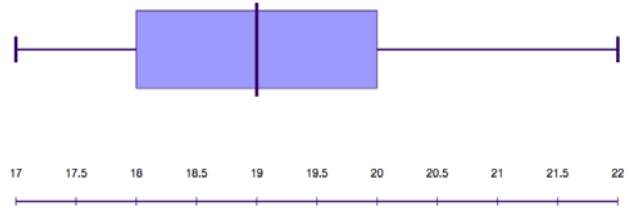
APPENDIX B: SURVEY RESPONSES

B.1 - Demographics

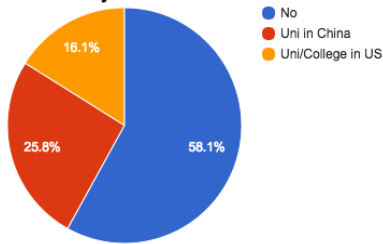
Country of Birth



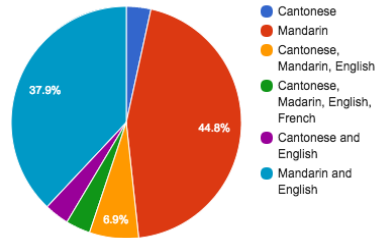
Age of Participants



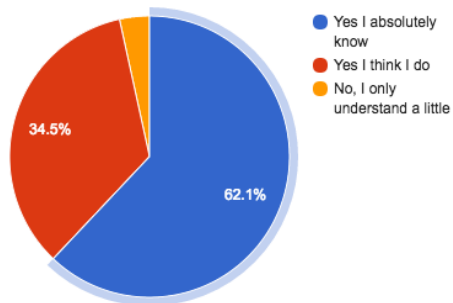
Have you studied at another university, college, or junior (community) college outside of University of Illinois?



In What Languages are you Fluent?



B.2 Plagiarism Questions



APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

While I deviated somewhat from these questions, I used them as a starting point for discussing their experiences learning English and their perceptions of plagiarism.

1. Where are you from?
2. Why did you decide to attend University of Illinois?
3. What do you like about attending University of Illinois?
4. What is your major? Why?
5. When did you start learning English?
6. When did you start writing in English?
7. Did you ever cheat?
8. Did you ever plagiarize?
9. Did you know anyone who has plagiarized?
10. What do the words *cao xi* and *piao qie* mean to you?

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Me: Ok. First question I have is where are you from in China.

L: Hangzhou, it's a city near Shanghai. It's like 2 hours away.

Me: Oh ok. Cool. What are you studying at U of I?

L: Uh.. My major is undeclared but I'm leaning towards food science.

Me: Oh cool. Why food science?

L: Because I love food and um I think the industry would uh especially the industry back in China, the food industry it needs improving.

Me: What does it need improving on?

L: Um.. I think the safety is very concerning and um that's the main reason I say.

Me: Ok. What are you um why did you decide to come to U of I?

L: Why specifically?

Me: Yeah

L: Um.. because this is the best school I applied for and I got in.

Me: Ok. Why U of I instead of a university in China?

L: I'm very curious about the outside world and and uh um I've always been interested in English um it's a great opportunity and my family would think that it's better to explore when you are young.

Me: Ok. Why umm. What was your first impression of U of I when you got here

L: Wow! That's a hard question.

Me: Well, I'll make it easier then, what do you like about U of I? What is something you really like about it here?

L: Mm (softly) (pause) Just give me a sec.. sorry.

Me: No, no, it's ok. There's no right or wrong answer either.

L: I know ?? but there is so many things I like I need to figure out which one is my favorite

Me: Ok

L: My favorite sooo.. umm.. I guess the resources there are so many kinds of different things that we can use on campus and umm.. and it just requires some exploring before you actually get to know and use them. Um for example, the ARC, it's a part that I use the most.

Me: [I like it too] Is there anything you don't like about U of I? Strongly?

L: No, I don't think so. Not yet.

Me: Ok, that's nice to hear.

L: Or maybe or presby's hall dining hall.

Me: Not crazy about it?

L: No. Not a fan.

Me: Ok. Umm. Did you ever study- did you ever.. did you.. Is this the first time you've been in the United States?

L: Yeah, it's the first time.

Me: Ok, when did you start studying English?

L: Uhhh. I think it can be traced back to um primary school.

Me: Ok

L: Um, I star- started studying English at 7-8 years, but we used to having English, English class like once per week. So it's really studying, just getting to know some of English.

Me: Ok

L: But, um, before coming here, I took some hardcore English courses to help.

Me: Ok. Like a special school or something?

L: Yeah, like a school um that is built to help us um develop our grades on the SAT scores.

Me: Ok. Ok. Um so when did you start writing sentences and paragraphs? In your first language.

L: Wow.

Me: You don't have to give an exact year, but just when did you think did start it.

L: Primary school, I think 7 or 8.

Me: Ok, when did you start writing in English? (pause) Writing anything.

L: Um, middle school

Me: Ok. Umm what were you taught about well, let's step back, when.. have you ever, and this is anytime you were in school, and here or or in China. Did you ever copy answers from someone else for something.

L: [yeah sure]

Me: How often?

L: I would say more often when it was in China.

Me: Ok

L: I'd say a few times a week probably. It just doesn't necessarily mean I copied the whole thing.

Maybe just one sentence or maybe one answer ?

umm especially in high school because we had.. the workload we had was intense and um it's

very often that you have some problems you just can't figure out or it they take too long

Me: [math]

L: Yes math maybe or chemistry.

Me: Ok. Um, did you ever for a writing assignment copy anything?

L: Yeah I did.

Me: And this was in Chinese or English?

L: I think I mostly copied Chinese things. English I um I don't think so. Because I was very good at English back in China.

Me: Oh cool.

L: And now I just um due to the whole integrity thing I just don't.

Me: You don't do it here?

L: No

Me: Why do you not do it here?

L: Because it's very strict, the rules and I know how um serious it can be when it's found out.

Me: What do you personally think about copying?

L: It's not good, definitely not, but um. When it comes to extreme circumstances like back in high school when everybody was very busy with their study that they would spend um six hours on homework everyday and I think it's the the system that has a problem.

Me: Ok

L: So it kinda pushed us to copy things.

Me: Ok

L: In a way yeah.

Me: Um.. Did you.. so you would not copy an essay or a paragraph.

L: No I would[n't]

Me: [here]

L: No,

Me: Why again?

L: Because.. it, you can be like um kicked out of school or

Me: []

L: or maybe get a warning and um the consequences is, is it consequence? Because the consequences are very serious.

Me: What do you think personally about copying? Do you think it's wrong, do you think it's right?

L: I think it's wrong.

Me: Ok.

L: Of course it's wrong. Um.. that's why I don't do it here. And it's also serious so.

Me: What do you mean by serious?

L: Like the consequences are serious and it's not fair for the people who are not cheating.

Me: Ok. Um has there ever been a time where you, so when I mean copying I mean someone wrote something and either you had a friend write it for you or you take part of it and copy and paste it somewhere. Do you think that's wrong?

L: Yeah, it's wrong. It's the same thing as copying the whole thing. It's just to different extent.

But..

Me: [ok]

L: [it's exactly the same thing]

Me: Have you. .Would you ever.. and did you learn that.. is it considered wrong in China do you think?

L: It's considered wrong of course. I think it's considered wrong everywhere.

Me: I agree.

L: Yeah.

Me: Ok so were you umm but did you ever..You copied things from books when you were in China though?

L: Yeah I did.

Me: Ok (pause) Ok. Interesting. Um. I'm gonna show you two Chinese words and I apologize again that my Chinese pronunciation is quite bad.

L: It's ok

Me: [I can] I can do the consonant/vowel sounds, but it's the intonation is that's very hard for me.

L: Yeah! I know right

Me: That's really hard for me.

L: It's a big problem.

Me: So look at these two-- you have really good English pronunciation.

L: Oh thank you.

Me: This is the first semester you've ever been here?

L: Yes

Me: Really?

L: Yeah.

Me: Did you have native English speaking friends in China?

L: Um, I didn't, no, not really.

Me: You are picking up a lot of habits that are native speaker habits like and you used "like"

L: (laughs)

Me: Do you have a roommate that's an American.

L: Uh, you now?

Me: Yeah

L: All my roommates are American

Me: That's probably helping.

L: And I'm dating someone whose very good at English I guess.

Me: He's Chinese and he speaks..

L: No, he's not Chinese

Me: That's good..? you have very good English

L: Thank you

Me: Um, soHere are the two words. The first one is piao qie

L: Oh Piao Qie?

Me: And Ciao Xi.

L: Oh right, ok

Me: What is this one?

L:

Me: Um, do you associate these words with the English word plagiarism?

L: Yeah.

Me: Why?

L: Because they're the same basically the same thing. (insistent and confident voice) Like copying...

Me: It's basically the same

L: I didn't really look up the word plagiarism but I usually understand

Me: Um, so you do associate them with them?

L: Yeah.

Me: And you were taught

Were you ever directly taught about these in school that they were wrong.

L: No, I don't think so.

Me: Not directly, but you always knew it was wrong?

L: Yeah.

Me: Why do you think you knew it was wrong.

L: Umm. Because I think we would um children will naturally develop a sense of right and wrong when they are young.

Me: Mmm.

L: And they hold onto that moral value.

Me: Mmmhmm

L: So I guess that's..

The teacher would tell us that it's not right, but they don't.. they don't specifically mention what is considered.. piao qie or cao xie.

Me: So it's never directly.

L: [No]

Me: It's just something you always felt like you knew was wrong.

L: And the teacher would try to catch us sometimes, but when we were in high school they basically just ignored them.

Me:[ugh]

L: Because it was so common. Everyone was doing it.

Me: Ok

L: Yeah and they didn't have the time 'cause the teachers would-were caught up like teaching us knowledges and they were grading us. Everyone was very busy back in high school. [So]

Me:

[Ok]

L: So it was simply didn't pay attention

Me: [But] In your opinion would you say most people in China, your classmates, your friends, your teachers, they would all say that (pause) plagiarism is wrong.

L: Mmm..Yeah

Me: Ok. That's useful information. I think I've asked you all the questions I want to ask. Oh yeah.. if someone-if someone plagiarizes who is it most unfair to? Who do you think it hurts the most? (pause) the person that did it, classmates, teacher, other?

L: Wow, that's very hard. I think that p-plagiarism would um hurt them in different ways.

Me: Ok

L: Like the teachers um. Their work would die in vain

Me: Yeah

L: Because they-they tried to teach and that's what they got. They waste time grading.

Me:

L: And um, And I personally know that I would make them angry and um of course they would have to report it to their supervisors

Me: Mmhmm.

L: That's what my TA boyfriend told me and he was very bugged by the fact that several of his students were cheating.

Me: Ok

L: So and um the other classmates who are not cheating they're, that could be because maybe some professors do curve so I would in fact

Me: Ok

L: And um for the person is cheating and I think um first of all

he or she would know that he is doing the wrong thing

Me: Ok

L: And um it would hurt them because they would be afraid

Me: Umm what do you think is the difference between unintentional plagiarism and intentional plagiarism?

L: Ummmmm unintentional plagiarism ummmmmm I can list some example but I really, I don't think I'll be umm

those two differences.

Me: What's the big difference between the two?

L: Ummm. Unintentional is that you-you're not sure that you're doing it?

Me: Yes.

L: And intentional plagiarism is that you know that you were doing it?

Me: Good, good.