

Yudi Cahyono, Bambang
Australian and Indonesian University Students' Understanding of Plagiarism

AUSTRALIAN AND INDONESIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF PLAGIARISM

Bambang Yudi Cahyono

State University of Malang, Indonesia

Abstract

This article is part of a larger report of research which explored and compared Australian and Indonesian university students' attitudes toward plagiarism, understanding of plagiarism, and understanding of university policy on plagiarism. It focuses on whether or not Australian and Indonesian students differed in their understanding of the notion of plagiarism and its various forms. Data of the Australian and Indonesian subjects' understanding of plagiarism were gained using a questionnaire and focus group interviews. The results showed that the Australian students were more knowledgeable of the notion of plagiarism and its various forms than the Indonesian students. The differences may be attributed to the academic context of the study. The Indonesian students were not familiar with the Western norm in academic writing, the norm which is regularly practiced in the Australian context. This study strongly recommends that the Indonesian students' awareness of plagiarism be increased in order to avoid plagiarism.

Keywords: understanding of plagiarism, definition of plagiarism, academic context, focus group interviews, university study.

INTRODUCTION

This research study is an exploration of university students' understanding of university policy on plagiarism conducted in two different contexts, Australia and Indonesia. The interest that eventually led to this investigation was sparked in 1996 when I had to supervise an undergraduate student of the English Department where I work in writing a thesis written in English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL) for a *sarjana* or Bachelor degree. Knowing that the student was in the final year of a four-year education program, I assumed that the student was familiar with rules of academic writing, particularly the use of academic sources. At the stage

of writing a thesis, students in the department have usually completed a series of writing courses. These writing courses are comprised of paragraph construction exercises and the development of various types of essays, including argumentative essays. However, when it comes to actually writing from sources, they tend to write with a high dependence on reference sources rather than formulating their own ideas. Examining the draft I received from my student, I got the impression that the text was written using words that seemed to be taken word-for-word from a range of secondary sources. A great number of sentences and paragraphs were written in such a way that they, in my opinion, were probably not written in the student's own words because of the language and structure the student included.

This experience resulted in a suspicion that the student's piece of writing had involved plagiarism. However, it was not known whether or not the student understood that over-reliance on sources, verbatim copying, and failure to indicate source when paraphrasing, constituted plagiarism. According to Howard (1995, p. 799), second language students tend to use words and ideas from sources when they are unfamiliar with the source material because of low language proficiency. Supporting Howard, Myers (1998, p. 10) argues that language deficiency encourages ESL/EFL students to use words directly from other sources. However, to consider the problem of using academic sources in the Indonesian context, the issue may not be limited to lack of proficiency in using English as a second or foreign language. This is because there have been some recent cases that involved students who were writing in their native language, Indonesian, which is locally called *Bahasa Indonesia*.

In 1995, Suyono, a former student of Gadjah Mada University was alleged to have committed plagiarism in the thesis that he submitted in 1992 as a part of requirements for his masters degree (*Gatra*, 1995 reported in MacDougall, 1995). Another case that occurred at the same university involved Ipong Azhar, a former doctoral student. The committee assigned to examine the case found evidence of plagiarism and Azhar's doctoral degree was revoked (Nur, 2001).

In the cases of plagiarism mentioned above, Suyono and Azhar wrote their theses in Indonesian, a lingua franca and a language used in academic contexts in Indonesia. It is clear that the issue regarding these cases was not the use of language. Rather, it concerns the use of academic sources. They knew they were allowed to use other people's material if appropriately

referenced, but they, perhaps, thought they could get away with plagiarism. The suspicion I had regarding the possible plagiarism in my student's work and the examples of the cases of plagiarism at Gadjah Mada University led me to raise a series of questions concerning plagiarism in the Indonesian context: Do the Indonesian students understand the notion of plagiarism? Is plagiarism explained to them?

Of course plagiarism conducted by university students does not occur only in Indonesia, where clear information concerning the notion of plagiarism and ownership of ideas may not be available, but also in other countries (Decoo, 2002; Standler, 2000). A number of cases involving plagiarism were reported to have occurred in Australia, a country where the notion of plagiarism is acknowledged as part of academic life in universities. For example, a series of cases of plagiarism have also been reported at Newcastle University, where a number of international students have submitted academic work plagiarised from other sources (Smith, 2003, p. 15). More recently, one student was failed in a particular subject and many other students were assigned to resubmit their work for that subject by the Veterinary Faculty of the University of Sydney due to allegation of "copying or fabricating material" (O'Riordan, 2005, p. 1).

The reported cases of plagiarism above indicate that plagiarism is a serious issue. This article reports the results of research which investigated Australian and Indonesian university students' understanding of plagiarism. It was guided by the following research question: Are there any differences between Australian and Indonesian university students' understanding of plagiarism?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The word *plagiarism* originates from an earlier English form *plagiary* meaning 'literary theft'. In Greek, from which the term was borrowed, the word *plagiârius* means 'kidnapper' or 'literary thief', and *plagium* means 'kidnapping' (Barnhart, 1995, p. 573). Three dictionary definitions of *plagiarism* are quoted as follows:

Collins Cobuild English Dictionary for Advanced Learners (Sinclair, 2001):

The practice of using or copying someone else's idea or work and pretending that you thought of it or created it. (p. 1169).

Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture (Summers, 1992):

The action of plagiarizing; to plagiarize is to take (words, ideas, etc.) from someone else's work and use them in one's own work without admitting one has done so. (p. 1002).

The Macquarie Concise Dictionary (Delbridge & Bernard, 1998):

The appropriation or imitation of another's ideas and manner of expressing them, as in art, literature, etc., to be passed off as one's own. (p. 878).

An examination of dictionary definitions of plagiarism above suggests that plagiarism does not indicate anything other than 'the deliberate theft of other people's words or ideas'. A review of the literature also suggests that plagiarism is commonly defined according to this basic meaning (Kirkpatrick & Yonglin, 2002, p. 488; Lafollette, 1992, p. 49; Stearn, 1999). However, as Angéilil-Carter (2000, p. 2) notes, a great number of instances of plagiarism may result from the students' lack of a clear understanding of the notion of plagiarism.

In a survey of plagiarism identification conducted at the University of Birmingham, United Kingdom, Dudley-Evans (2002) provided his respondents with a number of statements concerning plagiarism. He asked them to identify whether or not plagiarism includes a number of behaviours. The results of the study indicated that the subjects did not have a uniform understanding of these various forms of plagiarism. For example, they were of different opinions on whether "composing a paragraph by taking short standard phrases from a number of sources and putting them together with some words of your own" (p. 233) is a form of plagiarism.

In a study based on conversations with staff at a photocopy centre and her own classroom experience at Tiffin University, Ohio, the United States, Moore (2002) reported that many students used another person's paper for their assignments. He stated that the students submitted another person's work or submitting similar research papers because they thought that "it doesn't matter" or "it wasn't so bad" (p. 1). Thus, the results of Dudley-Evans's and Moore's studies clearly indicate that students are not always informed about various forms of plagiarism.

METHOD

This study employed a survey design, aiming to determine and describe things the way they are (Gay & Airasian, 2003, p. 279), and used focus groups to collect more in-depth data (Krueger & Casey, 2000; Littoselliti, 2003). It involved two groups of undergraduate students from two universities, the University of Melbourne and the State University of Malang.

The first group consisted of 120 Australian students who were native speakers of Australian English. These students were from non-language fields of study. The second group was made up of 120 Indonesian university students in Indonesia. This group was composed of students of English Department and non-language fields of study. Out of all participants, 32 Australian and 34 Indonesian students (totaling 66 students) of various categories were involved in the focus group interviews.

Questionnaires and focus group interviews, which were conducted in the native languages of the participants (i.e., English and Indonesian), were used as instruments to collect data. The questionnaires were employed to investigate university students' their understanding of plagiarism. Fifteen questionnaire items focused on two major issues, namely, the definition of plagiarism (Items 1-4) and forms of plagiarism (Items 5-15). The items of the questionnaire were provided with three options for responses: "yes", "not sure", and "no" (see Table 1). The application of Cronbach's alpha method to measure reliability resulted in the alpha level of 0.82, indicating that the questionnaire was internally reliable (Brown, 2001; Bryman & Cramer, 1999).

The focus group interviews, which were conducted in groups of two to seven students, were used to more closely examine various aspects related to students' understanding of plagiarism. The researcher served as the moderator and managed interactions within the focus groups. The focus group interviews were conducted by using a scenario as follows:

Gabrielle showed her essay to Hillary. Hillary lent Gabrielle's essay to Jack. Jack copied Gabrielle's essay for his class assignment. The teacher found that Jack's and Gabrielle's works were similar. (a) The teacher had to decide who should be punished. Should any, some or all of them be punished? (b) If yes, how?

In addition, guiding questions were asked to address students' familiarity with plagiarism and how they define it. The guiding questions are as follows:

- (a). Before you began studying at the University, was plagiarism ever mentioned or explained to you at school?
- (b). How would you define plagiarism?

Two major statistics were used to analyse the questionnaire data. First, descriptive statistics were used to describe the general trends. The responses of the students to the options of each questionnaire item were computed in order to find the frequency (*f*) and the proportion (%) of responses for all students in each group. Second, ANOVA was used to compare understanding of plagiarism by taking into account nationality, gender, length of study, and field of study; yet, only the significant factors are presented. The comparative analysis with factorial ANOVA was conducted using the statistical computations of SPSS Version 12.

The focus group interview data were analysed and interpreted using Taylor-Powell & Renner's (2003) procedures: becoming familiar with the data, focusing the analysis, categorising information, indentifying categorical patterns, and interpreting data. Quotes from the respondents (with pseudonyms) were provided to illustrate points in the findings.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the Australian and Indonesian university students' responses to the questionnaire. Generally the Australian students were familiar with concept of plagiarism, whereas the Indonesian students were aware of the basic notion of plagiarism (see Items 1-4), but unaware of its various forms. Most of the Australian students understood that plagiarism included handing in work that is written by someone else (Item 7) and using material from the Internet without clear indication of its origin (Item 12), compared to only over half of the Indonesian students who were aware of these forms of plagiarism.

Table 1. Australian and Indonesian Students' Questionnaire Responses

Questionnaire items	Options	Australian		Indonesian	
		f	%	f	%
Plagiarism is ...					
deliberately using other people's words as one's own.	Yes	1	9	7	6
		1	3	5	2
		2	.	.	.
			3		5

	Not sure	5	4 . 2	3 4	2 8 . 3
	No	2	1 . 7	1 0	8 . 3
deliberately using other people's ideas as one's own.	Yes	1 0 5	8 7 . 5	1 0 5	8 7 . 5
	Not sure	1 1	9 . 2	1 0	8 . 3
	No	3	2 . 5	5	4 . 2
using other people's words without acknowledgment.	Yes	1 1 2	9 3 . 3	8 9	7 4 . 2
	Not sure	7	5 . 8	2 1	1 7 . 5
	No	--	--	7	5 . 8
using other people's ideas without acknowledgment.	Yes	9 3	7 6 . 7	1 0 0	8 3 . 3
	Not sure	1 7	1 4 . 2	1 3	1 0 . 8
	No	1 0	8 . 3	6	5 . 0
paraphrasing paragraphs without due acknowledgment.	Yes	9 1	7 5 . 8	5 2	4 3 . 3

	Not sure	1 7	1 4 . 2	5 3	4 4 . 2
	No	1 1	9 . 2	1 4	1 1 . 7
copying a paragraph making only small changes with synonyms.	Yes	1 0 5	8 7 . 5	5 1	4 2 . 5
	Not sure	1 4	1 1 . 7	4 7	3 9 . 2
	No	--	--	1 7	1 4 . 2
handing in work that is written by someone else.	Yes	1 1 6	9 6 . 7	6 3	5 2 . 5
	Not sure	1	0 . 8	2 6	2 1 . 7
	No	2	1 . 7	3 1	2 5 . 8
failing to cite sources of reference completely and accurately.	Yes	6 0	5 0 . 0	4 0	3 3 . 3
	Not sure	4 3	3 5 . 8	5 0	4 1 . 7
	No	1 6	1 3 . 3	2 9	2 5 . 8

allowing someone else to copy from one's own work.	Yes	6 2	5 1 · 7	4 1	3 4 · 2
	Not sure	4 0	3 3 · 3	3 5	2 9 · 2
	No	1 7	1 4 · 2	4 3	3 5 · 8
helping someone else write a paper that should be his/her own independent work.	Yes	3 5	2 9 · 2	1 2	1 0 · 0
	Not sure	6 1	5 0 · 8	4 2	3 5 · 0
	No	2 3	1 9 · 2	6 0	5 0 · 0
submitting work that I have already submitted for grading in another subject.	Yes	3 4	2 8 · 3	2 7	2 2 · 5
	Not sure	4 2	3 5 · 0	4 1	3 4 · 2
	No	4 3	3 5 · 8	5 1	4 2 · 5
using material from the Internet without clear indication of its origin.	Yes	1 0 1	8 4 · 2	6 6	5 5 · 5
	Not sure	1 1	9 · 2	4 0	3 3 · 3

	No	7	5 . 8	1 4	1 1 . 7
copying and pasting a paragraph from the Internet with small changes.	Yes	1 0 5	8 7 . 5	4 7	3 9 . 2
	Not sure	1 0	8 . 3	5 5	4 5 . 8
	No	4	3 . 3	1 7	1 4 . 2
handing in an essay taken completely from the Internet.	Yes	1 1 9	9 9 . 2	8 3	6 9 . 2
	Not sure	--	--	2 4	2 0 . 0
	No	--	--	1 3	1 0 . 8
handing in an essay bought from Internet sites.	Yes	1 1 5	1 1 5	6 9	5 7 . 5
	Not sure	3	2 . 5	3 1	2 5 . 8
	No	1	0 . 8	1 9	1 5 . 8

Many of the Australian students thought that other forms of plagiarism included paraphrasing paragraphs without due acknowledgment (Item 5) and copying a paragraph making only small changes with synonyms (Item 6). In contrast, less than half of the Indonesian students considered

these two to be forms of plagiarism. It is also worth mentioning that while about half of the Australian students were not sure that helping someone else write a paper that should be his or her own independent work constituted plagiarism (Item 10), half of the Indonesian students considered this was not a form of plagiarism.

The results of ANOVA indicated that the university students' understanding of plagiarism differed with regard to *the interaction of nationality and field of study*. Further examination shows that within the Australian group, the Australian language students had a better understanding of plagiarism than the Australian non-language students (Mean Difference = 0.111; $p = 0.025$). Within the Indonesian groups, there was no difference between the Indonesian language and Indonesian non-language students' understanding of plagiarism (Mean Difference = 0.035; $p = 0.477$). This means that regardless of the field of study, the Indonesian students were unsure in their understanding of the notion of plagiarism. The differences between the four groups of students' understanding of plagiarism are shown graphically in Figure 1.

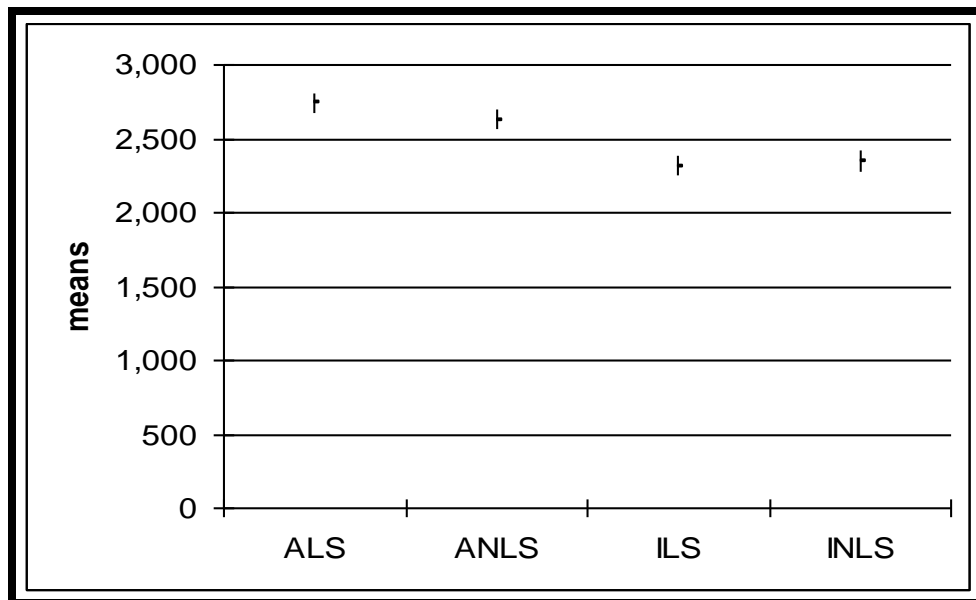


Figure 1 The differences between the Australian language students (ALS), Australian non-language students (ANLS), Indonesian language students (ILS), and Indonesian non-language students' (INLS) understanding of plagiarism

Using the scenario and guiding questions, the focus group interviews explored further the Australian and Indonesian students' understanding of plagiarism involving several students, students' understanding of plagiarism before university study, and their definition of plagiarism.

PLAGIARISM INVOLVING SEVERAL STUDENTS

Responses to the scenario indicated that the Australian and Indonesian students had different views regarding the roles of the students in the case. Whilst many of the Australian students thought that *all of these students* were involved in the occurrence of plagiarism, many of the Indonesian students maintained that *only Jack* was at fault.

Most of the Australian students were sure that Jack should be penalised because he copied Gabrielle's essay. For instance, one student, Ivy, said, "Jack should be punished because he actually copied Gabrielle's work". Similarly, more than half of the Indonesian students thought Jack should be penalised because he was the one who plagiarised by copying Gabrielle's essay. However, these Indonesian students also stated that Hillary and Gabrielle were not at fault. The following argument was shared by eighteen other students: "Jack plagiarised. Therefore, he has to be penalised. Naturally an essay is to be shown to other people. So, Hillary and Gabrielle are not guilty" (Anisa).

With regard to Gabrielle and Hillary, the Australian students considered that the teacher should examine the case more thoroughly to decide whether these students should be penalised as well. In their opinions, the teacher should find out whether or not Gabrielle and Hillary knew that the essay was going to be copied by Jack. The investigation will enable the teacher to decide if Gabrielle and Hillary were also at fault. This view is apparent from Darcy's statement, "You've got to kind of figure out why she [Gabrielle] left the essay with Hillary for Hillary to be able to give it to Jack".

Some Australian students thought that Hillary was at fault because she lent Gabrielle's essay to Jack without asking permission from Gabrielle. One student, Mitta, said, "Hillary did the wrong thing by lending someone else's essay to Jack". However, Hillary's actions were considered by most Australian students to be a less serious offence than Jack's act of copying Gabrielle's essay. For example, Emmeline said, "If you know the whole situation, I'll agree that Jack should be the one to be punished, and not Gabrielle, and possibly Hillary but not as much as Jack". Many of the Australian students understood that according to the university's policy, lending an essay to another student – which could lead to an act of plagiarism – is prohibited. In looking at Gabrielle's case, some Australian students thought that Gabrielle only showed the essay to Hillary and had not expected that Hillary would lend it to someone else. If this was the case, these students considered Gabrielle not to be at fault. Ford stated, "Gabrielle shouldn't be punished at all, because she didn't know what was going to happen to the essay". On the other hand, one Indonesian student argued that

both Jack and Gabrielle should be penalised as their essays were the same. This student, Yustisa, argued that the lecturer should penalise the students who submitted the same essays.

STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF PLAGIARISM BEFORE UNIVERSITY STUDY

In the focus group interviews, the Australian and Indonesian students were asked if plagiarism had ever been mentioned or explained prior to their university study. Some of the Australian students gained an understanding of plagiarism in primary school where it was explained by their teachers. For example, Strauss said, "I remember at Grade 6 teacher writing in big letters on the board PLAGIARISM and then he said, 'OK, we'll teach you about this word today'". Many more Australian students came to understand the notion of plagiarism when they were in secondary school.

In contrast, only three Indonesian students – Amin, Dita, and Priyadi – had been aware of plagiarism only since their senior high school years (Years 10-12). Amin had heard of plagiarism from his teacher's explanation on plagiarism to the class, while Dita received advice from a teacher when she wanted to enter a writing competition. The third student, Priyadi, had heard about plagiarism when he joined a journalistic training program at his senior high school. He stated, "I heard about plagiarism in the first year of senior high school. At that time I attended a journalistic training program. I learned which plagiarism was allowed and which was not".

The Australian students heard about the notion of plagiarism from several sources. First of all, they found plagiarism included in their school's policy on academic conduct. For example, one student, Jenny, said, "Plagiarism was clearly explained to me in high school It was explained clearly every year and there was no question about it". They also found that plagiarism mentioned in some ways in their schools. For instance, the students were told to write down the sources they used and not copy someone else's work. Joseph said, "It was certainly mentioned ... that you shouldn't kinda look over someone's shoulder when you're doing a test or something like that".

The Indonesian students heard about plagiarism much later in their school life and not necessarily from their teachers. Even those who had heard of it did not necessarily have a clear idea of what it meant. Some other students had heard cases of plagiarism involving a famous Indonesian poet and a postgraduate student of a large university in Indonesia when they were in senior high school. Thirteen of the students had heard about plagiarism from friends, television, or newspapers, but did not know its

meaning. Four students – Melati, Nuning, Rini, and Tiwuk – stated that they knew of plagiarism as simply “copying”. The experiences of the students who knew of plagiarism as a vague concept may be represented by the following statement given by Hasim: “Before I studied in this university, I had heard about plagiarism, but it was not clear. Now that I’ve been studying at university, I know the exact definition of plagiarism”.

Thus, except some Australian students who understood the notion of plagiarism since primary school, many of them only became familiar with plagiarism when they entered secondary schools. In contrast, only some Indonesian students were aware of plagiarism when they were in secondary schools. The other Indonesian students did not have a precise understanding of the notion of plagiarism or had never heard of it at all before their university study.

STUDENTS’ DEFINITIONS OF PLAGIARISM

Most of the Australian and Indonesian students defined plagiarism as “using other people’s work without acknowledgement”. However, the phrase “using other people’s work” did not necessarily mean the same thing for the Australian and Indonesian students. The phrase means “citing” or “referring to other people’s work” to Australian students, whereas it was frequently understood as “copying” by the Indonesian students.

The Australian students’ definitions of plagiarism as “using other people’s work without acknowledgment” can be explored further in their answers to the guiding question. For example, one student, Zeally, defined plagiarism as, “using someone’s ideas, even if you’re rephrasing them in your own words not acknowledging them”. Definitions of this type included “taking” or “copying” somebody else’s work without acknowledgment and “lifting it straight word for word and putting it in” (Indy).

Two Australian students – Barbara and Inglis – shared this type of definition of plagiarism which emphasised the importance of acknowledging other people’s work. In these students’ opinions, acknowledging the source is important and can be done easily. Three Australian students gave an extended explanation of the aspects of plagiarism. For example, Mitta defined plagiarism as “copying someone else’s work, paraphrasing someone else’s work, cutting and pasting from the Internet, and not giving acknowledgment when it’s needed, and not referencing and stuff like that”.

The definitions of plagiarism elicited from the Indonesian students can be classified into two types. The first definition suggests that plagiarism is “copying, using, or taking other people’s work or ideas (without acknowledgment)”. The following definition of plagiarism given by Rebo was typical of this type and was shared by more than half of the students:

“Plagiarism is ... imitating or copying other people’s ideas or explanation either from books or the Internet without including the source”.

The second definition of plagiarism is broader than the previous one and treats plagiarism as copyright infringement, an issue which is essentially different from plagiarism. Sigit’s definition of plagiarism was shared by nine Indonesian students. Sigit said, “Plagiarism may be defined as an act of imitating other people’s work ... for one’s own personal benefit ... copying essays ... pirating cassettes, VCD, DVD, and the like can also be called plagiarism”.

Thus, the Australian students’ definitions of plagiarism were not limited to the traditional understanding of plagiarism as “using other people’s work as one’s own” or “using other people’s work without acknowledgment”, but also included the various forms of plagiarism. On the contrary, the Indonesians students defined plagiarism as “copying” or as a part of copyright infringement.

DISCUSSION

The Australian students seemed confident in their understanding of the notion of plagiarism. They understood that plagiarism was not restricted to the conventional meaning of “deliberately using other people’s ideas or words as one’s own” (Summers, 1992, p. 1002) and “using other people’s ideas or words without acknowledgment” (Lafollette, 1992, p. 49). They were aware that plagiarism also includes any uses of academic sources without acknowledgment, be they printed or digital materials. They were also aware that plagiarism covered handing in work that is written by someone else and allowing someone else to copy from one’s own work. In their separate reports, Moore (2002) and Dudley-Evans (2002) stated that students were unlikely to understand various forms of plagiarism. This does not seem to be the case with the Australian students in this study.

My investigation of the students’ responses to the guiding questions and to hypothetical scenarios in the focus group interviews led to the conclusion that the Australian students’ understanding of plagiarism and forms of plagiarism was formed to a great extent by the academic environment in which they study both at secondary and, later, tertiary levels. The focus group interviews revealed that most of the Australian students were very familiar with concept of plagiarism and had an understanding of plagiarism before university study. The Australian students’ definitions of plagiarism elicited in the focus group interviews supported their understanding of plagiarism. Their definitions not only included the basic notion of plagiarism, but also the various forms of plagiarism such as

copying and pasting material from the Internet without acknowledgment and lending an essay to another student.

The Australian students' understanding of plagiarism and various forms of plagiarism was also apparent through their discussion of the hypothetical case of plagiarism involving several students. The Australian participants thought that all three students, two students who had showed or lent an essay to another student and the one student who had copied the essay, committed plagiarism. The opinions of the Australian students conformed to the rules of the University of Melbourne. The rule states that plagiarism, through various means such as "direct duplication, by copying (or allowing to be copied) another's work, whether from a book, article, web site, another student's assignment, etc.," is prohibited (University of Melbourne, 2005a, p. 1). In this case, showing or lending an essay is considered to be a careless action of allowing the essay to be copied by another student.

The Australian students' opinions on the suitable types of penalties for the students involved in the case further supported the assessment that these students have a good understanding of the notion of plagiarism and forms of plagiarism. They stated that different penalties should be given to the students involved depending on their acts in the case. According to the Australian students, the students who copied the materials should be given more severe penalties than those who showed or lent an essay to another student. This conforms to the university rules which specify the existence of a range of penalties. According to the rules, depending on the types of plagiarism, the penalties range from the provision of "a mark of zero" or "a fail for a particular subject" to more severe penalties such as "expulsion from university" and "refusal to grant an academic degree" (University of Melbourne, 2005b).

An exploration of the Indonesian students' understanding of plagiarism showed that they had an understanding of the basic notion of plagiarism only. The results of the focus group interviews which elicited their personal definitions of plagiarism supported the questionnaire data which indicated their limited understanding of the notion of plagiarism. More specifically, the Indonesian students were aware that the use of materials from sources needs complete and accurate referencing (Dudley-Evans, 2002). However, they lacked a comprehensive understanding of the various forms of plagiarism such as those explained in universities in Western countries (e.g., University of Melbourne, 2005a). For example, they tended to single out only the student who actually copied the essay for a penalty.

Thus, it was evident that the Indonesian students lacked understanding of the Western notion of plagiarism. This finding supports Angéllil-Carter's (2000, p. 2) argument that lack of a clear understanding of the notion of

plagiarism may lead to plagiarism. The Indonesian students' lack of awareness of the notion of plagiarism may result from the absence of guidelines and instructions on what constitutes plagiarism in the school system. In fact, the focus group interviews exploring the students' understanding of plagiarism before university study showed that most of the Indonesian students had never encountered the term *plagiarism* or had it explained to them prior to their university study. Many of them knew that plagiarism was something like "copying" which was not allowed, but they were not aware of the various forms of plagiarism beyond this basic meaning.

The differences between the Australian and Indonesian students' understanding of plagiarism may be attributed to the Indonesian students' unfamiliarity with the Western norm in academic writing. The guidebook for scientific publication in Indonesia which emphasises the importance of avoidance of plagiarism (Saukah, et al., 2000) does not provide detailed information regarding how students can use academic sources and avoid plagiarism.

The Australian students' intolerance of plagiarism might have been affected by dissemination of policies regarding plagiarism through various means such as student diary, information included in subject materials, and web site at the University of Melbourne. In the case of the Indonesian students, the guidebook for scientific publication, which contains information regarding plagiarism and is most useful to the students at their final year of study because of the requirement to write a thesis, may not reach many of the Indonesian students in the university.

It is apparent that the difference between the two nationality groups can be attributed to the academic context of the students. In the context of Australian universities, plagiarism is seen as part of a code of ethics which should be upheld by academics and scholars. Plagiarism has been integrated fully and explained explicitly in the university policies regarding academic conduct. In contrast, plagiarism has not been treated explicitly in the Indonesian universities, where most of the universities considered issues of plagiarism within religious or academic morality. As a result, plagiarism has not been explained clearly within their policies (see Cahyono, 2005).

CONCLUSION

This study found that the Australian students were knowledgeable of the notion of plagiarism, a favourable condition in relation to the standards in academic writing. Therefore, the implications of the study focus on the Indonesian students. This study strongly recommends the Indonesian students' awareness of plagiarism need to be increased in order to avoid plagiarism.

Due to the scarcity of rules regarding plagiarism, it is recommended that the *the General Directorate of Tertiary Education* and *the Coordination of Private Tertiary Education* take steps to design and implement policies regarding plagiarism for all Indonesian universities. This should start by defining plagiarism and forms of plagiarism to be adopted in the policies. These policies should then be disseminated and implemented from the university level to the classroom level using various means.

It is worth noting that approaches implemented in Indonesian universities to improve the students' understanding of plagiarism should be directed to students from both language (English Department) and non-language fields of study. More particularly, when dealing with English Department students who find language difficulty when writing their thesis in English, Indonesian academics should pay closer attention to the students during the process of writing and give them guidance in using other people's words or ideas in order to avoid plagiarism.

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