Exploration of the Influences of the Second Language on Academic Dishonesty of Post-Secondary School Students

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Abstract

The concentration of this empirical research is on the second language effects on academic dishonesty of post-secondary school students. In the current age, the advancement of technology has a drastic contribution to the enhancement of academic and learning activities. It is relevantly significant to recognize the existence of free online tools in respect of google translator metamorphosing the technique of students' engagement in view of the alternative language. Students at their various academic institutions have developed substantial amount of indulgent interest in the usage of machine translation. Remarkably, issues pertaining to the prevalence of online free translation tools could have been deemed from the perspectives of several critics, as virtually unthinkable. A lot of researchers have conducted studies on issues pertaining to academic integrity such as plagiarism, cheating, falsification, and fabrication of data but most of these studies were done disjointedly. Students who possess the alternative language skill typically have a specific technique to engage in cheating acts and uncommon approaches of their engagement in academic dishonesty. Hence, this study sightsees the impacts of the additional language on the academic dishonesty of students. The participants were the populace of a unique private university students in Baku, Azerbaijan. A self-constructed questionnaire was randomly disseminated among 95 participants of the control group. A plausible contribution of this empirical research is highlighted firstly from the perspective of scarcity of the previous studies as it adds to the existing literature. Earlier studies limited the investigation on the second language students to the classroom settings. Meanwhile, this study expands the scope through the participants' aptitude to read and comprehend different language aside from the language of instruction at the university. Consequently, the selection of the control group and accurate analysis methods affirm the limitations of this study and open the door of contributions for the succeeding studies.

Keywords: academic integrity; second language; academic dishonesty; post-secondary students

1. Introduction

The regularity of cheating and other forms of academic misconduct at educational settings across the entire academic stages has been established (Anderman and Murdock, 2007). Several studies have confirmed the students' involvement in cheating, reasons, methods of cheating and how to prevent the students from this academic misconduct (Beasley, 2004; Berry, Thornton, and Baker, 2006; McCabe, 1993; Park, 2003; Staats, Hupp, Wallace, and Gresley, 2009).

Researchers have emphasized on how problematic habit of cheating has been dealt with by the faculty management and how some faculty members have failed to take the expected measures by the universities (Keith-Spiegel, Tabachnick, Whitley, and Washburn, 1998; McCabe, 1993).

A lot of researchers have conducted studies on issues pertaining to academic integrity such as plagiarism, cheating, falsification, and fabrication of data but most of these studies were done disjointedly. Students who possess the alternative language skill typically have a specific technique to engage in cheating acts and uncommon approaches of their engagement in academic dishonesty, (2011) has illustrated that students with the second language capability were reported with academic cheating which were not found in other students or disciplines.

The concentration of this empirical research is on the second language effects on academic dishonesty of post-secondary school students. In the current age, the advancement of technology has a drastic contribution to the enhancement of academic and learning activities. It is relevantly significant to recognize the existence of free online tools in respect of google translator metamorphosing the technique of students' engagement in view of the alternative language. Students at their various academic institutions have developed substantial amount of indulgent interest in the usage of machine translation. Remarkably, issues pertaining to the prevalence of online free translation tools could have been deemed from the perspectives of several critics, as virtually unthinkable. For instance, an article from 2001 quotes instructor Martin of Stanford who projects that "improvement in machine translation in the previous forty (40) years has not been exceptionally great, and the next forty (40) years don't seem to be much better" (Youngblood 2001). While the ex-president of Harvard, Lawrence notably stated in 2012 that "English's appearance as the universal language, along with the speedy evolution in machine translation make it less clear that the considerable investment required to converse in a foreign language is globally worthwhile.

These cynical predictions were prophesized to discourage the absolute dependency on the machine translation. In spite of above stipulated and other gloomy projections, translation has turn out to be an integral segment of the communicative scenery in the personal and intellectual lives of countless individuals. However, it is aptly important to incorporate this technology advancement without compromising students' academic accomplishment. To ensure this, Luton (2003) suggested extra in-classroom writing activities to avoid dogmatical use of translation technology. The greater recognition of the role that can be played by technology in second language writing training are expressed by Stapleton and Radia (2010). Lewis (1997) and García (2010) communicate how machine translation can be integrated to boost students

'critical thinking in learning any foreign languages. The process in which students can engage and improve themselves with machine translation has been empirically pinpointed by La Torre (1999), Belam (2002), Kliffer (2005), and Niño (2008). Nevertheless, more studies explore the intersection of plagiarism and machine translation, as outlined by Somers (2006) and Correa (2011). This undermines the idea of giving the students absolute freedom to adopt technologies in handling and solving academic problems. Universities are expected to play a substantial role in assisting or shaping the students' behaviours appropriately in line with academic environmental policies. Important among the expected roles is the creation of awareness among the students to understand the importance of integrity at academic environment and the danger of cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, falsification and other forms of academic integrity. This is necessary because of the cultural significant role which makes plagiarism that is globally unacceptable a normal survival mechanism in a society. According to Cavaleri (2006), referencing a source where the idea is obtained has been regarded -for the both, reader and author- as disrespectful. Peccorari (2002) introduces an innovation of higher importance by stating language as first of his six isolated and outlined elements of plagiarism. It indicates the complexity of the plagiarism on the one hand, and delicacy of misusing machine translation on the other hand.

Therefore, the present article investigates the effects of the second language on sustainability of academic integrity of the participants with second language ability through the following twofold questions: 1- how frequently do students engage in academic misconduct through the misuse of free online machine translation? 2- to what extent are the students aware of the importance of academic integrity?

In line with the above outlined research questions, the subsequent hypotheses were formulated:

HP1: students are prudently aware of the importance of academic integrity.

HP2: second language ability effects students' academic misconduct.

HP3: students with second language ability misuse the online free machine translator.

1.1. Academic Integrity

In view of the grammatical approach of academic integrity, researchers Bruce, Jingjing and Annie (2012) have provided extensive definitions for the concept. The following paragraphs display some key aspects of the definitions.

The problematic nature of academic integrity makes it wide open to various grammatical interpretations. Bruce, Jingjing and Annie (2012) focused in reviewing literature of academic integrity on key elements such as behaviour, conduct and values academics at any related aspects. While addressing issues pertaining to the academic integrity, there is no running away from "codes of honour" which usually consist of institutional constitutions that analyse how students are expected to behave towards achieving their academic goals. Ethic education is another extended dimension that covers various professions such as, medicine, law, business and other areas including education. Customarily, most universities nowadays provide trainings and professional programs to strengthen the professionals' behaviours and prepare them with good conducts for the labour markets. However, what concerns this study are the values, conducts and behaviours of the students at the educational environment. The scope of the definition shall be limited within student-institution context.

Honesty is frequently used interchangeably with "integrity". Tracing the concept back to other languages make honesty a suitable synonym for the integrity. For instance, Liang 2009 and Wu 2010 claim that the word integrity can be best explained through a Chinese two phrases known as 'cheng' cum 'xin'. Togetherness of the separate words forms 'Chengxin' and it means honesty in Chinese language. Measuring it from the English language perspective, integrity is rooted to the Latin word "integritas" or "integer" which simply means entire or whole that is; integration of separate parts of an individual's real identity. As proclaimed by MacIntyre (1981), integrity is strongly linked with the virtues which make a great personality in the moral philosophy. In establishing ethical values and virtues to academic integrity, lots of scientists and writers, example of Macfarlane 2004, 2007, 2009; Nixon 2004; Pring 2001 have recommended distinctions and qualities in personalities, as researchers are prudently expected with higher degree of academic humbleness, while moderate dignity should be found in teachers. A moderation of the prides that undermines ridiculous arrogance and unwanted inferiority. This is practically aggregated with Cummings' threefold classifications of the academic integrity components namely, research, teaching and service (Cummings 1998).

1.2. Influence of second language on academic misconduct

Many studies have proven that higher institutions are much concerned about the students' attitudes towards cheating at the universities, but the commitments and embracement from the faculties are still questionable (Keith-Spiegel, Tabachnick, Whitley, and Wash-burn, 1998; McCabe, 1993). Academic misconduct have been dealt with by several researchers (Beasley,

2004; Berry, Thornton & Baker, 2006; McCabe, 1993; Park, 2003; Staats, Hupp, Wallace, & Gresley, 2009) and greater attention has always been paid to methods and strategies students adopt to cheat or engage in academic misconduct. However, literature discovering the influence of alternative language on academic dishonesty is minimal. Oliphant, 2002 claimed in his research that some students tend to access ready-made works, translate it to the relevant language and present it as their original work. The claim was steadfastly supported by other researchers with additional point of view that the translation of the procured works usually occurs through online machine translation or traditional system of translation when the paper is found in the language of the students' proficiency Berry et al. (2006). Vividly, students at the liminal of involvement in cheating discover that it weakens their morality and kills their hubris and confidence of production. Meanwhile, some students are so productive and have tendency of producing better work, even more than works retrieved from the source (Clifford, Merschel & Joan, 2013). A researcher recommends esoteric suggestions for the technology researchers to affirm the effectiveness and efficiency of technology consumption among the students (Garrett, 1991). All in all, the great influence on academic development cannot be undermined, but there should be close monitoring and constant evaluation of students' academic capability which can be justified through a simple comparison of students' standards and presentations.

1.3. Cheating

Reviewing its consequence on the system and the quality of education, cheating impacts the valuation of human capital stock, given that it is accomplished on "quantity" and "quality" basis of educational assessment (Barro & Lee, 2000; Hanushek & Kimbo, 2000; Rehman & Waheed, 2014). Cheating has tendency of reducing the efficacy educational system of a nation by garbling truthful race amid students (Magnus et al., 2002).

The hallucination of cheating among professors is of devastating reputation in that the students involving in it are utmost implausible to have the skills required for the forthcoming expert life, and the honour of a degree to those people attributes to numerous stages of impairment. Undeniably, the invention of clumsy specialists' projects "societal tribulations", as those imminent specialists may not capable of proper execution, conceivably resulting in destruction to human being and constitute harm to other professionals in similar area and to the academic organization that facilitated them. More so, the entire educational setting may correspondingly be inflated, given that the character of cheating indicates that more determination must be

consumed regulating it, and this determination should be healthier applied extra absolutely to scholarship (Dick et al., 2003).

The concept of cheating remains one of the most difficult terms to define. Accordingly, researchers (Dick et al. 2003) remark an inclusive array of conceivable varieties of cheating, determining that, generally, cheating results in fissuring of demarcated and acknowledged directions and values. For instance, copying in exams is one system of cheating broadly referred to in studies doctoring cheating (Bunn et al., 1992; McCabe & Trevino, 1997; Tibbetts, 1999; Sheard & Dick, 2003; Hrabak et al., 2004).

Consequently, the core influential issues of cheating, specifically falsifying, projected in the literature tumble into discrete groupings, and array from student's faces to features correlated to the institutional establishment, prices of determining frauds, probability of detection, and so on. Sundry variables were verified for the dissimilar groups to elucidate the phenomenon, amid which are: course average, gender, class size (student-related characteristics); (Hrabak et al., 2004) year, teaching elegance and reality of a code of conduct (institutional establishment-correlated issues); academic exuberant of instructor, incidence or alternate of unwritten notices about the penalties of being trapped cheating, figure of sorts of the assessment, type of examination Bunn et al., (1992), space for every single student in the interior of the teaching space (discovery charges). Besides, issues allied to the students' opinions inline to the momentousness of the marvel and to their observation regarding its regularity cum the existing castigation exercise, were similarly apprehended to be relevant facets, in accordance to the pecuniary literature on the theme.

There are determining factors of cheating, most importantly copying, projected in the literature tumble into separate types ranging from students' features to attributes related to outlays of realizing cheats, factors associated to academic settings, probability of detection and so on. Vividly, numerous variables have been verified for diverse kinds in explaining this phenomenon as stipulated above. In line with the provision of wide-ranging, arranged assessment of the academic literature, of which this research equally adds methodological values to the part, struggling an uncommon breach in the scholarships reviewed. Potentially, some critical dimensions in the attitude of duplicating are thus announced, in addition to the reimbursements related to crime model as articulated by Becker (1968) some decades ago. This has relatively added to the elements of copying typically engrossed on in the literature. Adaptation of analysis done by McCabe & Trevino (2003) has also been felt germane to effect of establishing a code of conduct at the universities. In addition, a contextual component is

equally proposed as that of the 'copying' probability in progress with or without the educational organizations cultivate a code of conduct.

2. Methodology

The study adopts quantitative method of sampling. A five items self-developed survey was designed purposely to carry out this research. A Likert scale for the questionnaire has five points, ranging from (Never, Sometimes and Always). To ensure the reliability and validity of the developed items, a pilot test experimental approach was the done prior the final distribution of the questionnaires to the control group of this study. The students of Khazar university were chosen as a control group of the study, in-which the questionnaires were distributed across the entire schools as follow, school of science and engineering, school of economics and management, and school of humanities, education and social sciences with the initial aim of maintaining a random selection approach. A number of 128 surveys were disseminated on a arbitrary basis through the schools as stipulated above and the office of international affairs of the university. In the long run, 78 questionnaires were completely administered and retrieved from the participants. Consequently, a bit portion of the questionnaires was distributed using a convenience distributing technique and a total of 95 (44 males and 51 females) questionnaires was generated and eventually analyzed. A consent letter stating the aims of the research was attached to the questionnaire and the anonymity was prudently assured.

2.1. Data analysis

A total number of 95 questionnaires recovered from the control group was inputted for proper analysis. This comprises 51 females and 44 males. With the majority (66) of undergraduate and few (29) postgraduate of 61 domestic and 34 international students. In line with the analysis of the data, a simple frequency table was generated through the itemized five questions to have an overview of participants' responses towards the matter, see Table 1.

In accordance with the frequency analysis, the results were as follow. Pertaining to the use of online machine translation, it was shown that 25 (26.3%) students claimed not to ever translated works done in another language and present it as their works, a good number 64 (67.4%) of students admitted to do it "sometimes" while the number of those who claimed to do this always was 6 (6.3%) insignificant, see Table 2.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Participants' GENDER	95	1.00	2.00	1.5368	.50129
Participants' Academic Level	95	1.00	2.00	1.3053	.46296
Participants' Country of Origin	95	1.00	2.00	1.6421	.48192
Using online free machine translation to translate a work done in a particular language to the language of instruction and present it as your own work?	95	1.00	3.00	1.8000	.53792
How frequent have you seen other students engaging in the above stated conduct?	95	1.00	3.00	1.8947	.47206
Have you ever reported a student or heard about a suspected incident been reported to the Khazar university authority?	95	1.00	2.00	1.2316	.42408
Have you ever assisted any students to translate a work done by someone else to the language of instruction at the university?	95	1.00	3.00	1.6842	.58824
Have you ever been informed about the value of academic integrity and danger of academic misconduct at Khazar university?	95	1.00	3.00	1.4947	.71271
Valid N (listwise)	95				

Table 2. Statistics - Using online free machine translation to translate a work done in a particular language to the language of instruction and present it as your own work?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	25	26.3	26.3	26.3
	Sometimes	64	67.4	67.4	93.7
	Always	6	6.3	6.3	100.0
	Total	95	100.0	100.0	

Concerning how frequent the participants have seen other students partaking in the conduct, only few (16.8%) students responded "never"; 73 (76.8%) confirmed that they do see students engaging in such a conduct "sometimes" and a very (6.3%) students claimed to see that "always", see Table 3.

An item of the investigated the participants to check, if they have ever reported a student or heard about any suspected incidence been reported to the Khazar university authority. A substantial amount 73 (76.8%) of students said "never", 22 (23.2%) of the students selected "sometimes" and surprisingly not was found for "always", see Table 4.

Table 3. Statistics - How frequent have you seen other students engaging in the above stated conduct?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	16	16.8	16.8	16.8
	Sometimes	73	76.8	76.8	93.7
	Always	6	6.3	6.3	100.0
	Total	95	100.0	100.0	

Table 4. Statistics - Have you ever reported a student or heard about a suspected incident been reported to the Khazar university authority?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	73	76.8	76.8	76.8
	Sometimes	22	23.2	23.2	100.0
	Total	95	100.0	100.0	

The next item was designed to examine the participants' opinions by asking if they have ever assisted any students to translate a work done by someone else in a particular language to the language (English) of instruction at Khazar university. The frequency table illustrates that 36 (37.9%) of the participants maintained the fact that, they have "never" helped any students to do so, and "sometimes" was the case of 53 (55.8%) students, while just 6 (6.3%) students confessed that they "always" assist other students for the translation, see Table 5.

Table 5. Statistics - Have you ever assisted any students to translate a work done by someone else to the language of instruction at the university?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	36	37.9	37.9	37.9
	Sometimes	53	55.8	55.8	93.7
	Always	6	6.3	6.3	100.0
	Total	95	100.0	100.0	

Finally, the last item measured the level of academic integrity awareness among the Khazar university students and the item reads: "have you ever been informed about the value of academic integrity and danger of academic misconduct at Khazar university?". Remarkably, majority 60 (63.2%) of the participants declared that they had "never" been informed by the university about the value of academic integrity and danger of academic misconduct, 23 (24.2%) of the students admitted that the university "sometimes" educate them about the value of academic integrity and danger of academic misconduct and only 12 (12.6%) students claimed that they have been always informed about that, see Table 6.

Table 6. Statistics - Have you ever been informed about the value of academic integrity and danger of academic misconduct at Khazar university?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	60	63.2	63.2	63.2
	Sometimes	23	24.2	24.2	87.4
	Always	12	12.6	12.6	100.0
	Total	95	100.0	100.0	

Additionally, the means of males and females' participants were compared to investigate the gender influence on the impacts of the second language on academic dishonesty of the population, but the results were not included -as it is not relevant- but available on request. However, a histogram's boxplot indicating the gender uniformity of the participants on the above reckoned assertion was displayed, see Figure 1.
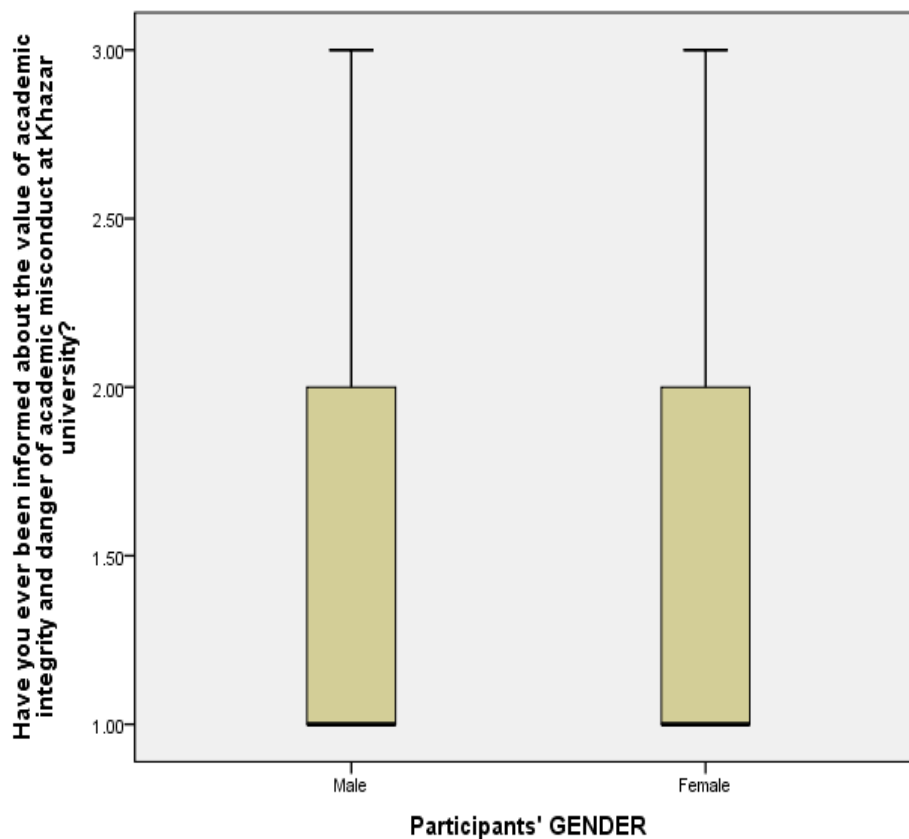

Fig. 1. Boxplots – Have you ever been informed about the value of academic integrity and danger of academic misconduct at Khazar University?

3. Discussion

This present research investigates the impacts of the second language on academic dishonesty of the control group. The investigation of the study was carried out within the scope of quantitative method. The participants were randomly selected and contained the (males, females, international, domestic, undergraduate and postgraduate) populace of the Khazar university students. All the international students from more than 10 counties (The Gambia, Nigeria, Russia, Ghana, Iran, Zimbabwe, Yemen, Indonesia, China, Mauritania, Sri Lanka, Iraq and Turkey) were grouped together as" international" and the Azerbaijani students were referred to as "domestic". A five items of self-developed questionnaire was distributed among the control group to answer the two research questions. "Using online free machine translation to translate a work done in a particular language to the language of instruction and present it as your own work" was one of the items structured in the survey of this study. It was revealed that the number of Khazar university students who habitually "always" participated in this conduct statistically insignificant. Although, majority of the students acknowledged the fact that they irregularly "sometimes" engaged in this misconduct and the good number of the control group renounced their engagement in such a misconduct. This particular part of the findings is not accurately harmonized with the prior hypothesized measures but went hand to hand with the predictions of some researchers (Clifford, Merschel & Joan, 2013) that only few students always engaged in misconduct of misusing machine translation. Given that "sometimes" was equally found to be more significant by the participants is an affirmation of the students' engagement in this misconduct but sporadically. This is obviously inclined to the claim that many participants have never offered support tor any students by translating another person's work in order form them to hand it in as their works. Concerning the habit of reporting cases related to this misconduct to the university authority, majority of the participants stated that they have reported any students or heard any cases pertaining to that at the university. This buttressed what has been previously found by several researchers (Keith-Spiegel, Tabachnick, Whitley & Wash-burn, 1998; McCabe, 1993) that, most higher institutions advocate for the promotion of academic integrity but too flexible in handling matters related to academic misconducts harshly. It is noteworthy to highlight the claim of the participants that, they had "never" been informed by the university about the value of academic integrity and danger of academic misconduct. Creating awareness to boost and establish the values of academic integrity is paramount at every educational environment.

3.1. Conclusion

Conclusively, the two research questions of the research were answered through the analysis of a self-developed questionnaire which contains five items. The first research question about frequency of participation and engagement in academic misconduct and specifically on the misuse of free online machine translation was answered through the first four items of the survey, while the findings of the second research question about students' responsiveness of the consequence of academic integrity was presented in the analysis of the last item of the questionnaire. Within the scope of this article, lack and inadequacy of students' responsiveness about the consequence of academic integrity was established in this study. Accordingly, the study has proven that mis usage of online free machine translation has facilitated the students' frequent engagement in academic misconduct. Thus, the significance of the study is unquestionable as it adds to the literature in the field. A plausible contribution of this empirical research is highlighted firstly from the perspective of scarcity of the previous studies as it adds to the existing literature. Earlier studies limited the investigation on the second language students to the classroom settings. Meanwhile, this study expands the scope through the participants' aptitude to read and comprehend different language aside from the language of instruction at the university. Consequently, the selection of the control group and accurate analysis methods affirm the limitations of this study and open the door of contributions for the succeeding studies.

Acknowledgements

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