

Plagiarism in Graduate Research: A Critical Perspective

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Abstract: Empirical work on plagiarism in graduate research, particularly in English studies, in the Bangladeshi institutions of higher learning (private and public), is so scarce that it could be considered as almost negligible. Plagiarism is a crime and a violation of intellectual property, and needs to be addressed; but it seems to be overlooked and/or neglected by the University Grants Commission (UGC) as well as the concerned universities. Moreover, when plagiarism is detected in graduate research, the blame predominantly falls on the plagiarists/students, who are held accountable for their actions. However, are the plagiarists completely responsible for their acts of negligence--conscious or unconscious? Should they shoulder all the blame or should others, directly or indirectly, responsible for guiding them in their academic research/studies be held accountable as well? This study intends to shed light on plagiarism in graduate research, especially in English studies in private and public universities in Bangladesh, from a critical discourse analysis (CDA) perspective.

1.0 Introduction

In graduate research, plagiarism seems to pose one of the greatest challenges for academia and academics alike. This phenomenon has increased with the advancement of communication technology, especially the Internet. The practice of not acknowledging the works, ideas or concepts of others and claiming them as one's own, whether consciously or unconsciously, is an apparent challenge that most academics have to deal with at one time or another.

In general, institutions of higher learning in the developed countries tend to have laws and policies at the national and the institutional levels to handle intellectual theft. This does not mean to suggest that plagiarism has been completely eradicated from such countries. While the plagiarizing techniques have become quite sophisticated, the means of combating such a practice in the developed countries have become quite innovative too, owing to advanced software that can detect plagiarism, and the implementation of newer and stricter rules and regulations aimed at curbing the theft of intellectual property. However, in the Bangladeshi context, there seems to be no specific rules and regulations or any particular policy against plagiarism, nor are the institutions of higher learning using any sophisticated software to combat plagiarism. Despite the innovative

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interventions in the developed countries to combat plagiarism, it is still a cancerous growth eating into academic research, threatening to ruin the credibility of potential research and researcher(s).

1.1 Underlying Principle

When doing empirical or literary research, reference materials are essential in establishing, supporting, pointing out various theories, ideas, concepts, and so forth. However, the techniques of in-text citation—for instance, quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing—are generally not emphasized in the research methodology courses / classes. In addition, the absence of specific 'thesis / dissertation guide' or 'manual' in most institutions of Bangladesh, if not all, is a drawback in doing research. Coupled with these reasons, the unfamiliarity of academics and supervisors with the norms of academic writing (e.g. journal articles, thesis, etc.) also contributes to plagiarism.

Empirical work on plagiarism, particularly from a critical discourse analysis (henceforth, CDA), in the Bangladeshi institutions of higher learning (private and public), is so scarce that it could be considered as almost non-existent. Plagiarism is a crime and a violation of intellectual property¹, which needs to be addressed, but seems to be neglected by the University Grants Commission (henceforth UGC) as well as the public and private universities themselves.

This study intends to shed light on plagiarism policies in the private and public universities in Bangladesh, from a CDA perspective. In general, one of the aims of CDA is to analyze discourse and focus on opaque issues that seem to be non-apparent or overlooked by the society (Haque 2008a; see Haque 2008b; Haque 2009). In Bangladesh, the whole issue of plagiarism seems to have escaped the notice of most of those involved in running, establishing and monitoring institutions of higher learning.

1.2 Necessity of a CDA Research on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious crime, involving intellectual theft. Yet, due to the apparent lack of awareness regarding its seriousness, it seems that academics, educationists, researchers, higher education monitors, and policy makers appear to be unaware of the seriousness of the issue. One of the central objectives of CDA is to analyze selected discourse(s) and focus on a particular issue that seems to be non-apparent or is overlooked by a society. In doing so, it endeavours to explain how a particular issue, if not addressed, could have certain repercussions on a society. Looking at the lack of seriousness regarding policies on intellectual theft from a CDA perspective seems justified, as CDA's main objective is to explore and expose non-obvious issues. In the context of Bangladesh, it seems that, to a greater or lesser extent, the educated people are apparently unaware of plagiarism. What seems more daunting is the fact that the

people who are supposed to be aware of the gravity of intellectual theft may be unaware, especially the academics and researchers in institutions of higher learning, as well as the educational governing bodies like the UGC and the Ministry of Education. In this respect, the reasons for investigating the issue of plagiarism from a CDA perspective are, first, to create awareness at the institutional and the national levels, and second, emphasize the need for a guide or manual for writing thesis / dissertation if not at the national level, coordinated by UGC, at least at the institutional level.

Research of this nature could help to explain that the issue of plagiarism in the context of our country, which in turn could lead to proper steps being taken to not only establish specific policies on plagiarism but also to imbue a sense of moral and ethical respect for copyright laws and curb the acts of intellectual theft.

2.0 The Nature of Plagiarism: Identity Theft

Quoting or referring to the words, works or ideas of others to achieve eloquence or to substantiate a relevant point has been practiced since the dawn of history. When the information that is quoted or referred to is common knowledge to a society or a particular segment of that society, for instance an intellectual / research community, some people may not acknowledge the origin of the source, taking for granted that everyone is aware of it. In general, this practice, to some extent, may be accepted in some societies, especially in everyday social discourse. However, in the academic circle, not acknowledging the source of a work, idea or concept and proclaiming it as one's own is not only a violation of copyright law(s) but also a major offence that is deemed punishable by the institutions concerned or by the law.

If one looks at the etymological origins of 'plagiarism', according to the 7th edition of the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, it is seen that the word is derived from the Latin word *plagiarius*, meaning 'kidnapper' (also see Gibaldi: 2000: 30). Lindey (1952: 2) considers plagiarism to be "the false assumption of authorship: the wrongful act of taking the product of another person's mind, and presenting it as one's own" and Gibaldi (2000: 30) explains that to use another's ideas and expressions as one's own, without acknowledging the source is to plagiarize. Hence, plagiarism "constitutes intellectual theft," and "often carries severe penalties, ranging from failure in a course to expulsion from school" (*ibid.*).

Plagiarism is a complex phenomenon and should not be thought of as a monolithic act of identity theft by intellectuals. In the academia, it may occur because of a conscious and deliberate breach of academic ethics or an unconscious act of sheer negligence. Whatever the reason, it is unethical, illegal and punishable. However, the rules and regulations regarding plagiarism vary from country to country. For instance, in America the Office of Research

Integrity (ORI) has been taking administrative actions against plagiarists since 1992, which includes publishing their names in the *Federal Register*, *NIH Guide to Grants and Contracts*, *ORT Case Summaries online*, *ORI Newsletter*, *ORI Annual Report*, and the *PHS Administrative Actions Bulletin Board* (Price, 2006: 46).

In general, research on plagiarism is not only a laborious and time-consuming process, but can also be a frustrating endeavour, which might yield very little, or nothing, in the end. Citation problems are not always a top priority of scholars, as such problems are difficult to study (Martin, 2008: 136); however, 'plagiarism is more prevalent in academia than normally acknowledged (Martin, 1984: 83).

Plagiarism is a serious crime in the sense that it can rob an author of his or her identity, thereby depriving the credit that he or she deserves. Likewise, Pontiac (2007: 6) points out that even though *identity theft* is more appropriately linked with hackers stealing information for profit, 'plagiarism is also identity theft'.

2.1 Plagiarism Policies in Institutions of Higher Learning

Policies on plagiarism are essential in institutions of higher learning in order to protect intellectual property. Universities that have such policies quite clearly explain what constitutes plagiarism and what the consequences are, ranging from receiving an 'F' grade to being expelled. For instance University of Maryland University College² on its webpage gives a list of universities in America which have specific policies on plagiarism. In the Bangladeshi context there are various copyright laws and policies; however the *Copyright Act 2006*³ and the *Copyright Rules 2000* (amended 2005)⁴ does not seem to say anything specific regarding plagiarism policies in terms of institutions of higher learning in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, the University Grants Commission (UGC) monitors the quality of education, among other things, in the public and private universities. The Chairperson of UGC, Professor Nazrul Islam mentioned that UGC should have a specific policy on plagiarism, but at present, it does not have one.⁵ Some of the private universities directly or indirectly mention about plagiarism and its consequences but do not explicitly or implicitly explain what constitutes the act of plagiarism, or how to avoid it. So far, there does not seem to be any record of anyone being expelled for plagiarism in Bangladesh, either from a public or private university.

2.2 Plagiarism and Communication Technology

With the advancement of science and communication technology, 'cheating' has taken on a whole new dimension. The technologies that contribute to cheating include photocopying equipment, computers, the Internet, scanners, optical-character-recognition software, language-translation programs, cell phones, and pagers, among others; three of the commonest forms of cheating influenced by

these technologies are plagiarism, fake credentials, and unauthorized test assistance.

The Internet is probably the most influential when it comes to plagiarism. It (the Internet) is so vast that it is virtually possible to get access to information on almost any topic or subject matter; the sources are limitless, in fact, so limitless that one can literally be spoilt for choice. Sometimes, the access to certain information is either so common or so remote that the urge not to acknowledge the source is overwhelming. This is when the act of plagiarizing tends to take precedence. Almost everyday, new technologies are being developed to combat plagiarism, yet people seem to be coming up with ways of overriding such technological devices.

2.3 Debates on Plagiarism: A Cultural Construct

The discourse of plagiarism in general is a Western concept, and is much more complex than mere dis-acknowledgement of a source. Socio-cultural upbringing, collectivist ideology and educational underpinnings, among others, are some of the significant facets that need to be explored before trying to comprehend the act of plagiarism and plagiarist discourse of a particular society. Angélie-Carter (2000: 2) is of a similar opinion regarding the construct and complexities of plagiarism:

Plagiarism is in fact a modern Western construct which arose with the instruction of copyright laws in the eighteenth century. Before this time, there was little sense of artistic 'ownership'. Since then, the idea of 'originality' in writing has been highly valued ... plagiarism is a complex, contested concept, and in student academic writing it may be the surface manifestation of complex learning difficulties which relate to the educational environment, the nature of academic discourse and nature of language.

According to the academic concept of plagiarism, founded in Western citation and reference systems (e.g. APA, MLA, Harvard System, etc.), claiming the ideas of others as one's own is considered as intellectual theft and a violation of copyright laws. However, what happens if one does not have the intention of stealing someone else's ideas but simply does not clearly acknowledge the sources of those ideas? Is this plagiarism? This is rather vague in terms of academic ethics. Davis (2006: 70) points out that:

Claiming as one's own what one knows to be the discovery, idea, or writing of another is certainly plagiarism. But what about merely failing to acknowledge the work of another where one does not give the impression that the discovery is one's own? Does it matter how one came upon the knowledge in question, whether in a book, as a

referee for a journal, or from private correspondence? Does it matter how easy it was to make the discovery? This is a gray area in academic ethics.

This is certainly something to be debated on. The debate can be extended by bringing in the effect of cultural conditioning, leading to unconscious or subconscious plagiarism. Pennycook (1996) and Scollon (1995) seem to feel that plagiarism in TESOL is rather culture-specific in the sense that some cultures, to a greater or lesser extent, accommodate such a practice. Sowden (2005) argues along the same line, suggesting that foreign students tend to plagiarize because it is somewhat permissible in their cultures, especially Asian students from the Far East. However, he does caution against stereotyping Asian students in terms of plagiarism, as is also pointed out by Ha (2006) and Liu (2005). Ha (2006) argues that plagiarism is never entertained in Vietnamese culture or education, not even in primary schools.

2.4 In-text Citations and Referencing Styles

In-text citation refers to the acknowledgement of texts and ideas taken from another source, and used in one's own writing. Whether the source is quoted or paraphrased, at the paragraph, sentence, phrasal or even lexical level, acknowledgment is essential by citing specific details with reference to the author(s), year of publication and page number. The standard in-text citation style follows one of these: APA (America Psychological Association), MLA (Modern Language Association), Harvard, CMS (Chicago Manual Style). There are a few more too. The significance of giving credit where it is due is also emphasized by the America Psychological Association (2005):

...give credit where credit is due. Quotation marks should be used to indicate the exact words of another. *Each time* you paraphrase another author...you will need to credit the source in the text...The key...principal is that an author does not present the work of another as if it were his or her own work. This can extend to ideas as well as written words. If an author models a study after one done by someone else, the originating author should be given credit. If the rationale for a study was suggested in the Discussion section of someone else's article, the person should be given credit.

(America Psychological Association, 2005: 130)

It should be remembered that it is not only due credit that should be given through in-text citation, but also, everything that has been cited in the text must appear on the Reference page. The opposite must also be maintained, that is, "everything cited on the Reference page must appear within the text" (Houghton and Houghton, 2007: 5).

There are various types of parenthetical in-text citations, such as idea focused, researcher/writer focused and chronology focused Table 1 and Tables 2-5 (Appendix-A).

Table 1: Parenthetical in-text citations

Sl.	Option	Description	Sample Citation
1.	Idea-focused	Place the author(s) and date(s) in parentheses at an appropriate place in or at the end of a sentence	Researchers have pointed out that the lack of trained staff is a common barrier to providing adequate health education (Fisher, 1999) and services (Weist & Christodulu, 2000).
2.	Researcher-focused	Place only the date in parentheses	Fisher (1999) recommended that health education be required for high school graduation in California.
3.	Chronology-focused	Integrate both the author and date into your sentence	In 2001, Weist proposed using the Child and Adolescent Planning Schema to analyze and develop community mental health programs for young people.

(Source: http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocAPARReferences_Mag.html)

Other types of parenthetical in-text citations suggest how to cite sources with one or two authors, three or more authors, with no author, multiple sources in one reference, and so on Tables 2-5 (Appendix-A)

Gibaldi (2000: 34) points out that because of the relative ease with which publications can be downloaded and reproduced from the Internet, people in general may think that online materials are free to be copied and distributed. Like most published works, most materials on the Internet are protected by copyright laws (*ibid.*). Eliot (1998: 27) explains that to avoid accusations of plagiarism, the origins of the materials taken from the Internet at the time should be acknowledged in the footnotes. It is important to make the notes at the time when things are taken from the Internet, or else it becomes quite difficult to recollect the date and the source of the materials (*ibid.*).

When writing or publishing for academic purposes, it is very important that proper in-text citation and referencing style is followed. This is so important that quite often, good peer reviewed journals will not accept any article if the authors do not meticulously follow the in-text citation and referencing styles set out by the editorial boards of the concerned journals. The reason journals emphasize on maintaining such norms is because if unacknowledged writing is accepted and

published, the concerned journal(s) will be accused of plagiarism. This could drastically question the credibility of the journal(s), its editorial board and thereby ruin the reputation of the journal itself.

2.5 Universities in Bangladesh

Once considered the Oxford of the East, University of Dhaka is the oldest university in Bangladesh; it was established in 1921, and in the next 71 years, that is, between 1921 and 1992, 10 more public universities came into being (see Karim *et al.*, 2008). Yet the renaissance in university education in Bangladesh began in the early 1990s with the implementation of the Private University Act (PUA) 1992. The first private university was established in 1993; within the next couple of years, there was an explosion in terms of the number of universities that mushroomed. Around that time, in 1992 the National University was established under a Parliamentary Act (see National University: <http://www.nu.edu.bd/>). The National University is considered to be the biggest university in the world, where over one million students are studying in more than 1600 colleges / institutions affiliated to this university (*ibid.*). Since the early 1990s, the scenario of tertiary education in Bangladesh, private and public, has been in a constant state of change. At present Bangladesh has approximately 142 universities, that is, 30 public universities, 54 government approved private universities, 2 international universities, and 56 illegal private universities (see Karim *et al.*, 2008; "56 Private", 2007). Last year "despite opposition from Bangladesh's university regulator, the country's caretaker government passed a law...that allows private individuals and institutions to establish campuses in the name of foreign universities, but only with prior permission from the government" ("Bangladesh Will Allow," 2008). More specifically, "The Council of Advisers...approved the Private University Ordinance-2008 with a provision allowing foreign university campus" even though "UGC banned 56 foreign university campuses in the capital and four other cities after allegations against them of selling certificates of different degrees without imparting quality education" ("New Ordinance," 2008). Dhaka alone has well close to 100 private and public universities, far exceeding that of Boston considered the hub of higher education. However, the challenge that Bangladesh has to confront head on is to find ways to transform majority of the universities into institutions imparting quality education. One of the ways that institutions of higher learning can impart quality education is to engage in active research, enabling them to identify their weaknesses, cater to the market demand, and improve their standards to compete with the best universities in the region, and ultimately the world. Among the private tertiary institutions, East West University (EWU) is shaping up to become the first research university in Bangladesh. In fact, EWU was ranked as the top private university in Bangladesh in the successive years of 2007 and 2008 by *Webometrics*⁶, and *Research Bangla (RB)*⁷ voted this institution as the number

one private research university in the country in 2009⁸. However, in order for research to flourish, academic honesty and protection of intellectual property need to be ensured. In Bangladesh, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has the sole responsibility of monitoring the public and the private institutions of higher learning. Yet it seems, neither the UGC (established in 1973) nor Dhaka University (established in 1921), or any of the private universities, for that matter, appear to have any specific policies to stave off plagiarism, especially at the graduate and postgraduate levels.

2.6 Background of Graduate Research in English studies in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, research in public universities have generally been confined to the postgraduate level (e.g. M.Phil. and Ph.D.), especially in the humanities and the social science disciplines. Research at the graduate level (e.g. M.Sc.) is mainly a precondition for graduation in the pure and applied sciences and to some extent in the social sciences. In general, there is a preference for degrees (especially graduate and postgraduate) from foreign universities. This preference, in the public universities is a hush hush matter, while the private universities directly show their desire for candidates with foreign degrees, particularly from dominant native English speaking countries. Therefore, those who can afford it, pursue foreign degrees, shunning local ones.

Before the 1990s, the public universities never required a thesis / dissertation as a partial requirement for the fulfilment of an M.A. degree, especially in English studies—whether the specialization was in language or literature.⁹ The private universities only came into being in the early 1990s, that is, after the implementation of the Private University Act 1992; the first private university started in 1993 (Haque 2008c; Haque 2004). Some of the private universities began to offer M.A. in English towards the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century.¹⁰ Since their infrastructure is based on Western education system, especially North America, research in the form of a dissertation / thesis was introduced as a requirement for the partial fulfilment of an MA in English degree, whether the specialization was in the area of literature, linguistics or English language teaching (hereafter, ELT). In other words, most of the private universities, that have programmes in M.A. in English and / or M.A. in ELT, research is a precondition for graduation. However, in the last couple of years, the syllabuses in the public universities are being upgraded too; as a result, research, in the form of a dissertation / thesis, has been or is being introduced at the graduate level (in requirement for the partial fulfilment of an M.A. degree).

3.0 Methodology

This is an exploratory study which follows a qualitative paradigm. The research attempts to explore the nature of plagiarism in graduate studies in selected public

and private universities of Bangladesh. In doing so it investigates why plagiarism is a serious threat to the academic community and what measures are needed to be taken in order to create awareness of this issue. It is part of an elaborate ongoing research covering majority of the public and private universities in Bangladesh, in particular those which offer graduate programmes in English studies, for instance, M.A. in English, M.A. in ELT, M.A. in Applied Linguistics, as well as M.Phil. and Ph.D. This study covers five public universities such as Dhaka University, Chittagong University, Jahangirnagar University, Rajshahi University, and National University, and five private universities, namely North South University, East West University, BRAC University, Northern University and Presidency University. All of the above private universities have graduate programmes in English studies, that is, M.A. in English and/or M.A. in ELT, while the public universities have graduate programmes in the forms of M.A. in English, M.A. in ELT, M.A. in Applied Linguistics, as well as M.Phil. and Ph.D. Data was collected through a two-pronged approach: interviews with the academics and administrators and textual analysis of over 50 randomly selected dissertations (M.A., M.Phil. and Ph.D.) from the above public and private institutes.

The framework for this study comprised theoretical adaptations from critical discourse analysis (CDA). Fairclough's (2003) tools for text analysis, his three-dimensional approach to discourse analysis (see Fairclough, 1995), as well as his concept of discourse, power and ideology (see Fairclough, 2001). Furthermore, Haque's (2005, 2008b) concept of prescriptive CDA will help to pave the path and establish a blueprint to combat plagiarism in Bangladesh. However, the approaches will be amended whenever necessary, in order to accommodate the nature of the data collected in the Bangladeshi context.

4.0 Findings: Results and Discussion

Based on the interviews conducted with the academics and administrators from the above public and private institutes it seems that there does not seem to be any specific rules and regulations in existence with regard to plagiarism. Even though all the universities have disciplinary codes or rules regarding social misconduct and cheating, nothing explicit seems to be mentioned in terms of misconduct in academic research.

In general in private universities and sometimes in some public universities, course outlines are provided to the students. In the course outlines there may be a reference to plagiarism. For instance in the course outlines of the Department of English at East West University usually it is mentioned that representing the work of another as one's own, whether through direct copying, unacknowledged paraphrasing, or inadequate citation practices constitutes plagiarism. A paper that is plagiarized in whole or in part will receive an F. However, in the service

course *ENG102: Composition and Communication Skills*, which is a compulsory course for the undergraduate students of all the departments, a briefing on plagiarism is given and an overview of the APA in-text citation and referencing style is provided. Whether the students really embrace the knowledge on plagiarism and proper citation and referencing norms is another question. The referencing styles, especially the distinction between APA and MLA, are again emphasized to some extent in the MA programmes. Again, for instance at East West University, in the MA level course *ENG507: Research Methodology*, students are not only made aware of citation styles and why plagiarism is detrimental to academic writing, but at the same time, questions on referencing, in-text citation and plagiarism in academic writing / research may also be set in the examinations.

Despite the fact that there does not seem to be any particular rules or regulations on plagiarism in the universities from which data was collected, the instructors who teach research methodology, to some extent, try to make the students aware of the seriousness of 'intellectual theft'. Nevertheless, in most instances the awareness falls on deaf ears due to the lack of specific policies stating the consequences or penalties for those who plagiarize. Because plagiarism is a complex phenomenon, in general academics are unaware of its complexities. In some instances not even instructors who teach research methodology or editors of journals for that matter. If academics and editors themselves are not aware or bothered about the consequences of plagiarism, then how are we to explain its seriousness to the students and raise the quality of academic writing?

In total, over 50 dissertations were critically analyzed from ten public and private universities. All the dissertations contain plagiarised materials—majority of them contain indirect and some direct plagiarism. The astonishing revelation is that a few (5) did not contain a single in-text citation; what is even more astounding is the fact that some of the supervisors are from renowned public universities.

When materials are taken from primary or secondary sources, little or no attempt is made to paraphrase the text. When texts are quoted directly from particular sources, there should be quotation marks to indicate that they are the exact words. Usually, this is not done, suggesting that the authors of the dissertations have paraphrased the ideas, whereas in reality they (the so-called authors) have merely attempted an amateurish 'cut and paste' job, suggesting indirect plagiarism. Sometimes, the 'cut and paste' jobs are not even acknowledged, indicating direct plagiarism.

Plagiarized text—a small section from an MA dissertation—page 14:

Advertisers tend not to make specific comparisons between their product and others by naming and referring to their rivals. For example, a washing power manufacturer would be unlikely to say

'X' washes whiter than 'Y'. Their lack of specific reference to other products does not stop advertisers from employing comparative reference. An ideal advert will say, 'X washes whiter'. On the other hand, they will never mention 'than what'. But readers tend to supply in bracket 'than all its rivals'. For better response from audience advertisers supply some very unflattering comparisons: 'Washes whiter than a sackful of coal', 'washes whiter than industrial effluent'.

Actual text from Goddard's (2002) book—pages 71-72:

Advertisers tend not to make specific comparisons between their product and others by naming and referring to their rivals. So, for example, a washing power manufacturer would be unlikely to say 'X washes whiter than Y'.

In linguistic terms, this construction is called comparative reference. It tells the reader that they need to locate particular items in the text, and draw them together for comparison on a special basis. In the above example, this basis is 'whiteness'.

Their lack of specific reference to other products doesn't stop advertisers from employing comparative reference, however. What they do is to leave out the comparative item while keeping in the basis for comparison. So you get: 'X washes whiter'. We are not told 'than what', but as readers we tend to supply in bracket 'than all its other rivals'. To notice the way in which the reader works to provide a positive message as a kind of norm, try supplying some very unflattering comparisons: 'washes whiter than a sackful of coal', 'washes whiter than industrial effluent'.

The above passage is a small section from an MA dissertation that contains many passages, which is an exercise in cut-and-paste job from Angela Goddard's (2002) book entitled *The Language of Advertising* (2nd edition). If the student is not competent in English, his/her academic writing style varies quite considerably. In other words, when the plagiarised text is coupled with the writer's own text, the natural spontaneity and the flow seems to be unnatural, and lacks cohesion and unity. In many instances the writer is acknowledged, but the year of publication is not mentioned, as in the following example:

Tautology, often regarded as a fault of style, was defined by Fowler as "saying the same thing twice."

The problem with this kind of acknowledgement is that, if the acknowledged writer authors more than one publication, then locating the acknowledged source becomes problematic.

The analysis of the 50 dissertations indicates that not only are there discrepancy in in-text-citations, but also there seems to be inconsistency in terms of referencing style. In general, the APA and the MLA reference styles are taught in English studies in Bangladesh. The findings from the data suggest that students and sometimes academics are not very familiar with either of them, and tend to confuse the distinction between the two styles:

References from an MA dissertation—page 66

- Goodman, Lizbeth. (1996). Literature and Gender. London: Routledge.
- Bhatnagar, M. K. (2004). Feminist English Literature. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers.
- Heilbren Carolyn. Writing on Women's Life. Penguin Books.
- Woolf, Virginia. A Room on One's Own. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1929.
- <http://www.hastingspress.co.uk/>

The above references came from an MA dissertation in the same sequence. It is difficult to determine whether the student is following the APA, MLA, a combination of both or some other referencing style. It seems that the concerned supervisee and the supervisor are either negligent or unaware of referencing styles, and should both be held in contempt.

Another common problem, more so in in-text-citation than referencing, is the interference in addressing a writer with an honorific title, such as 'Professor' or 'Dr.'. In order to show honour and respect, students not only mention the honorific title, but also write the name in full rather than only the surname. For instance, some people who are influenced by such titles might start off a sentence like "According to Professor / Dr. Mohammad Shahiduallah (2001)...":

Professor Cunningham says that one important task for materials is to set clear goals for the materials (*sic.*).

(Stricture: Honorific title + no year of publication + syntactic error)

Sometimes, at the end of a quotation or a paragraph some students tend to write (Professor / Dr. Mohammad Shahiduallah) without even mentioning the year of publication of the page number from where the quotation was taken. The inclusion of the honorific titles is probably a cultural phenomenon to show respect, rather than anything else. It may stem from the fact that in the sub-continent, especially Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, we tend to address our male teachers (whether school, college or university) with the title 'Sir' and our female teachers 'Madam', whereas in the West, the address forms may comprise 'Mr.' and 'Ms.', as well as 'Professor' and 'Dr', but quite rarely 'Sir' or 'Madam', unless in a very bureaucratic situation. The use of 'Sir' or 'Madam', particularly in the academia, in the sub-continent may reflect the remnant of the colonial past.

From the data, it seems that in many cases the plagiarists tend to reflect their socio-cultural norms and practices, until they have been instructed otherwise. Based on the analysis of the graduate dissertations it seems that students face more difficulty with in-text citation than referencing. In general APA and MLA referencing styles are followed in the English departments and by social science journals in Bangladesh. The universities in the study have disciplinary rules and regulations regarding cheating, which can lead to the failure of a course and / or expulsion from the institution. A few have briefly mentioned about plagiarism at the institutional or departmental level. However, none have any specific discourse that explains the nature of plagiarism or the harm it does to the academic community and intellectual property. Subsequently, the disciplinary codes do not emphasise the punishment of those who are caught plagiarising.

4.1 Critical Implications

From the interviews with the academics and administrators of the selected private and public institutions of higher learning, it seems that they have a vague idea of plagiarism. In other words, they have limited knowledge regarding its complexities and its consequences. It was also found that none of the universities had any specific institutional policies to curb plagiarism. Nor did they take any measures to make students, researchers and academics aware of plagiarism and its long term repercussions. Even the central monitoring body of the private and public institutions of higher learning in Bangladesh, the University Grants Commission (UGC), is unaware of the seriousness of plagiarism. It also does not have any policies to combat plagiarism.

During the interviews, the discourse that was 'foregrounded' by the academics seems to suggest that the students are solely responsible for plagiarism, because they want to take the easy way out when it comes to submitting assignments, projects or dissertations. The fact that they, that is the academics, the administrators and their institutions should also be held accountable in controlling 'intellectual theft' was in general 'backgrounded' and not highlighted in general. A few mentioned that the teachers should make the students aware of what constitutes plagiarism, so that they know the proper norms of in-text citation and the different referencing styles. The academics and administrators acknowledged that plagiarism is a concern for graduate research and that at the moment their respective universities did not have any specific rules and regulations on plagiarism. However, none of the academics or administrators mentioned that there should be multidimensional efforts on the part of the individual teachers, the institutions, the UGC and the country itself.

According to Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional approach to discourse analysis a text is supposed to be analysed, interpreted and then explained in terms of the socio-cultural context pertaining to the issue at hand. The findings

suggested that in most of the instances the plagiarists took chunks of information without acknowledging them, which constitutes direct and deliberate plagiarism. Some tried to acknowledge their sources, but due to improper in-text citation techniques their endeavours constitute indirect or unconscious plagiarism. Due to the lack of proper in-text citation techniques, many students cannot distinguish the difference between direct quotation and summarizing an idea or a passage; they are unaware when to quote and when to paraphrase. And even after quoting and paraphrasing correctly, the students do not know how to write the name of the author, whether to put the surname, the year of publication and the page number(s) inside or outside or outside a parenthesis (bracket). Analysis of such texts reveals that the students are accountable for conscious or unconscious plagiarism. But such an interpretation may be considered a biased interpretation from a CDA point of view. The reasons for conscious and unconscious plagiarism need to be explained, because the biased interpretation is too simplistic and the concept of plagiarism, especially in our context is much more complicated and complex. Perhaps, due to the lack of social and institutional awareness, the absence of specific policies on intellectual theft, the insufficiency of knowledge regarding empirical investigation, the ignorance of those who teach research methodology or supervise research students, coupled with a bunch of other discursive and societal factors, plagiarist tendencies seem to be subconsciously rooted in our socio-educational practices.

Recently I participated in the *WIPO Training Course on Intellectual Property for Government Officials and Lecturers from Tertiary Institutions*, organized by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in cooperation with the *Department of Patents Designs and Trademark (DPDT) of Bangladesh* with the assistance of the *European Union* held from 9-10 August 2009. The main objective of the training was to create awareness and inculcate the basic knowledge of intellectual property rights among the academic intellectuals and government officials. The topics focused on the international and national policies on patents, trademarks, copyright, traditional knowledge, and other intellectual property related themes. The last two days focused on developing curriculum, methodologies and programmes to teach intellectual property rights education and training, especially through the partnership between the academic institutions and the private sector. My intention in participating in the training was to gain more in-depth knowledge in international and national copyrights laws, especially intellectual theft, that is, plagiarism. Even though we have a copyrights law and an act, there is hardly any direct or indirect reference to plagiarism. I discussed the issue with many participants, comprising of lawyers, academics, government officers from the Ministry of Cultural Affairs; they had no clear understanding regarding the nature, laws and policies, as well as the legal and ethical implications of plagiarism in the context of Bangladesh, especially in the academic context.

5.0 Conclusion

Plagiarism in graduate research is a cancerous growth that seems to be overlooked in the academia and the academic community, especially in a country like Bangladesh. Dhaka University was established in 1921, yet it does not have any specific policy on intellectual theft. The University Grants Commission (UGC), the official monitoring body of all the institutions of higher learning in the country was set up in 1972 to maintain the quality of education in tertiary institutions. It does not have any policies to curb plagiarism either.

Without any specific policies at the institutional and/or state levels, rampant plagiarism may be taking place. This should pave the ground for undertaking major research to investigate the seriousness of the matter. If the issue at hand is not studied and policies are not established to tackle the situation, we may be legitimizing a generation of 'so-called' researches and academics without a solid foundation, which in the long-run may do more harm than good to our academia and rock the very foundation of our academic community.

Tackling plagiarism is not a simple matter. Before policies can be established and implemented a lot of groundwork needs to be done. It is crucial to create awareness of intellectual dishonesty, if not at all the educational levels (primary, secondary, higher secondary and tertiary), at least at the tertiary level. Without awareness, it is difficult to instil the values of intellectual property, and show the harm plagiarism does to the academic and research community.

Notes

¹ "As a general working definition, ORI considers plagiarism to include both the theft or misappropriation of intellectual property and the substantial unattributed textual copying of another's work" (Price, 2006: 1).

² http://www.umuc.edu/distance/odell/cip/links_policy.shtml#collection (Accessed on 19.02.2009)

³ http://www.copyrightofficebd.com/copyright_act.php (Accessed on 19.02.2009)

⁴ http://www.copyrightofficebd.com/copyright_rules.php (Accessed on 19.02.2009)

⁵ Interview conducted with the UGC Chairperson, Professor Nazrul Islam, on 7 September 2007 and 1 June 2009.

⁶ The "Webometrics Ranking of World Universities" is an initiative of the Cybermetrics Lab, a research group belonging to the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC), the largest public research body in Spain.

⁷ *Research Bangla* (RB) is an affiliate of Center for Policy Research & Social Responsibility (CPR2) a web based organization.

⁸ See *The Financial Express* (31 July 2008) at: <http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/2008/07/31/41296.html>

—*The Guardian* (February 2008)

—*The Star Campus* (Volume 2 Issue 116, April 26, 2009) at: <http://www.thedailystar.net/campus/2009/04/04/feedback.htm>

—*Center for Policy Research & Social Responsibility (CPR2)* at: http://cpr2-bangladesh.org/result_private.html

⁹ Interview conducted with Professor Arifa Rahaman, Head of the English Language Department, Institute of Modern Language, University of Dhaka, on 31 December 2008.

¹⁰ Interview conducted with Professor Arifa Rahaman, Head of the English Language Department, Institute of Modern Language, University of Dhaka, on 31 December 2008.

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Appendix – A¹

Table 2: Cite source with one or two authors

When you have . . .	Here's what you do:	Sample Citation
First and subsequent citations	Within a paragraph, omit the year in citations after the first one if no confusion with other studies will result	Fisher (1999) administered a questionnaire . . . Fisher's results indicated . . . [new paragraph] The questionnaire administered by Fisher (1999) was used by . . .
A source with 1 or 2 authors	Cite name(s) in first and all subsequent citations	(Adkins & Singh, 2001) Adkins and Singh (2001)
Authors with same surname	Use initials even if the years are different	D. Baldwin (2001) and M. L. Baldwin (1999)

Table 3: Cite source with three or more authors

When you have . . .	Here's what you do:	Sample Citation
A source with three to five authors	In all citations after the first, use the first author's name followed by et al.	<i>First citation:</i> (Baldwin, Bevan, & Beshalke, 2000) <i>Subsequent citation:</i> (Baldwin et al., 2000)
A source with six or more authors	Use the first author's name followed by et al. in all citations	<i>6 authors:</i> (Utley et al., 2001) <i>7 authors:</i> (Yawn et al., 2001) [Note: In the reference list, use of et al. begins with 7-author references.]
Sources with two or more six-author groups with same first surname	If two or more six-author groups shorten to the same surname, cite the surnames of as many subsequent authors as needed to distinguish references.	(Baldwin, Utley et al., 2001) (Baldwin, Bevan et al., 2000)

¹ <http://www.apastyle.org> (Accessed on 17.01.2006)

Table 4: Cite source with no author

When you have . . .	Here's what you do:	Sample Citation
A source with no author	Use the first few words of the title--in quotation marks for article or chapter, in italics for self-contained item	("Mad Cow," 2001) (<i>Sleep Medicine</i> , 2001)
An edited work with no author	Use editor(s) names in the author position	See guidelines for citing authored works

Table 5: Cite multiple sources in one reference

When you have . . .	Here's what you do:	Sample Citation
Two or more works in parentheses	Arrange by order of the reference list; use a semicolon between works	Several researchers (Greenberg, Domitrovich, & Bumbarger, 2000; Roy, 1995; Yawn et al., 2000) . . .
Representative works	Use <i>e.g.</i> (<i>for Sample Citation</i>) before parenthetical citations	The need for more effective prevention of mental illness in children has been the focus of many reports (e.g. National Institute of Mental Health, 1998; U.S. Public Health Service, 2000; Weist, 2001).
Major work plus others	Use <i>see also</i> after major work	(Roy, 1995; see also Embar-Seddon, 2000; Greenberg, 2001)