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Title

Plagiarism by Turkish Students: Causes and Solutions

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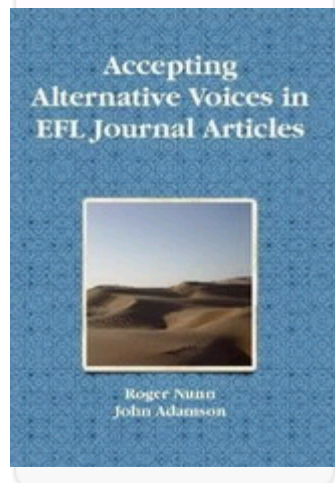
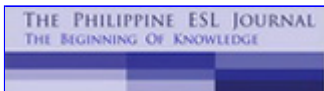
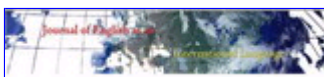
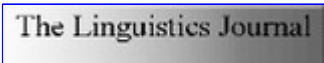
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Dr. Odiléa Rocha Erkaya received a B.A. in English Language and Literature from Federal University of Espirito Santo, Brazil; an M.A. in English Literature from Northeast Missouri State University, USA; and a Ph.D. in Higher and Adult Education with a concentration in ESL/EFL from Arizona State University, USA. She has been assistant professor of EFL at Eskisehir Osmangazi University College of Engineering in Turkey for the past 10 years. Prior to teaching at this university, she taught EFL in Brazil and ESL in the USA. Her research interests are in the areas of writing and speaking, as well as students' and teachers' motivation.

Abstract

Much has been written about plagiarism but mostly about the definition, detection, and deterrence (Austin and Brown 1999; "Avoiding Plagiarism" 2005; Barry 2006; Block 2001; Coulthard 2006; Park 2003). Few researchers have surveyed or interviewed second/foreign language students to find about the causes that they plagiarize. Thus, the purpose of this exploratory study is to identify causes of plagiarism among Turkish students and propose possible solutions. The study has used semi-structured interviews as the instrument of data collection. Six Turkish students--two from senior high school and four from college--participated in the study. The results show that the two most prevalent causes of plagiarism among the students interviewed were students' lack of awareness about plagiarism and students' lack of knowledge about writing research papers. All students interviewed were assigned papers to write in different courses, such as Biology, Turkish, English, History, to mention a few, in high school; nevertheless, the students claimed that they were taught neither what plagiarism meant nor how to develop and structure a research paper. In addition to these two perceived causes of plagiarism, three other causes were found: students' lack of motivation to do research, students' lack of freedom to express their opinions or use their own voices, and instructors' negative attitude towards writing as well as low expectations from students. To prevent plagiarism or reduce the number of

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plagiarized papers written by Turkish students, four specific solutions are offered: students should be informed about the use of available software and search engines that detect plagiarism; students should be taught about plagiarism and its consequences; students should be encouraged to choose interesting current topics for their research papers; and writing instructors should adapt their methodology to help students to avoid plagiarism.

Key words: definition of plagiarism; causes of plagiarism; solutions to plagiarism; plagiarism and Turkish students



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