

Louise Kaktiņš

Appraising plagiarism policies of Australian universities

Abstract: An investigation of plagiarism policies of Australian universities in the latter part of 2009 was undertaken to determine how such institutions construed the notion of plagiarism and how this was reflected in the language and expression of those policies. Various unexpected challenges emerged in using Martin and White's (2005) traditional APPRAISAL framework when analyzing attitudinal stance. The pronounced and widespread use of thingification and abstractions in the policies and the consequent ambiguity in identifying the appraised and/or the appraiser, presented challenges to Martin and White's distinction between Appreciation and Judgment (two subsystems of Attitude) and led to the adoption of Lee's (2007) double coding which seemed more aligned with the normative nature of the plagiarism policies. Overall, the findings suggest some movement away from the default punitive stance of plagiarism policies, to a more "educative" pedagogically based approach focused on the concept of *student as apprentice researcher*, already recognized as a valued member of the academic community.

Keywords: plagiarism, plagiarism policies, Australian universities, academic integrity, APPRAISAL analysis, educative approach

Louise Kaktiņš: Sydney Institute of Business and Technology (SIBT), Macquarie University, North Ryde, NSW, Australia. E-mail: louise.kaktins@mq.edu.au

1 Introduction

Within the last two decades, plagiarism as a phenomenon has attracted heightened awareness at educational institutions generally, and at universities in particular. Measures to address the perceived threats that plagiarism poses have resulted in the widespread adoption of plagiarism policies in Australian universities. Matters such as definitions and explanations of plagiarism, imposition of penalties, and explanations for the necessity to curb plagiarism in relation to the harm it does to academic integrity, have preoccupied policy writers. Where matters of such grave concern to powerful institutions are involved, it is inevitable that the discourse of these policies projects a very specific attitudinal stance that is

robustly aligned with the authoring bodies. Indeed, the notion of plagiarism as being pseudo-criminal and worthy of severe punishment continues to haunt students and to concern academics. Therefore, this paper investigates how the notion of “plagiarism” is viewed in the contemporary plagiarism policies of Australian universities, especially how such views are reflected through language and expression. An APPRAISAL analysis is the principal method of investigation to determine whether indeed a punitive approach is prevalent in the plagiarism policies.

2 APPRAISAL theory

APPRAISAL theory emerged as an extension of the research of Halliday and his colleagues within systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and their interest in the grammatical basis of interpersonal discourse semantics (Martin 2000: 143). As defined by Martin (2000: 145), “appraisal” relates “to the semantic resources used to negotiate emotions, judgements, and valuations, alongside resources for amplifying and engaging with these evaluations.” Linguistically, the APPRAISAL system is concerned with the relationships being established between speaker/listener or writer/reader through lexicogrammatical resources for the purpose of “positioning” (directing, encouraging) the views of those listeners/readers by speakers/writers (Droga and Humphrey 2002: 75). The significance of APPRAISAL theory to evaluation research is explained by Bednarek (2006: 32) as “the only systematic, detailed and elaborate framework of evaluative language.”

Seminal works in the APPRAISAL field (Martin 2000, 2003, 2004; White 2005; Martin and White 2005; Martin and Rose 2007) distinguish three subsystems of APPRAISAL namely, Attitude, Graduation, and Engagement, that operate in the discursive realization of an evaluative stance. Despite the importance of Graduation – the *force* or the strength of the feelings expressed (Martin 2003: 176) – and Engagement – the types of voices and their interplay in a text (Martin and White 2005: 35) – the focus on Attitude was believed to be justified due to the interesting challenges to APPRAISAL theory that emerged as a consequence of the present research.

Within the APPRAISAL framework there are three categories of resources related to attitudinal positioning – Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation. Martin (2000: 159) classifies the last two as the institutionalized versions of feeling (Affect), having the intent of exercising various types of control – of behavior in the case of Judgment, and tastes/preferences/values in the case of Appreciation – by orchestrating either positive or negative evaluations (Table 1). The nature of the data collected meant that of these three categories it appeared that Judgment, and to a

lesser extent Appreciation, featured most prominently in the APPRAISAL analysis. Being part of attitudinal positioning, Judgment is especially significant because it is so closely intertwined with the cultural and ideological contexts in which it occurs and indeed is defined and molded by them both (White 2005: Attitude/Judgment 2). What particular issues arise out of this in relation to attempts by the universities to adapt to the fluid and changing university environment are of interest both linguistically and pedagogically.

Table 1: Two categories of attitudinal positioning – Appreciation and Judgment (adapted from Martin 2000: 156, 160)

Appreciation	
Reaction	related to extent of impact and/or quality
Composition	related to the extent of balance and/or complexity
Valuation	related to the extent of being worthwhile
Judgment	
Social esteem	
normality	related to the extent of being exceptional
capacity	related to the extent of being capable
tenacity	related to the extent of being reliable or dependable
Social sanction	
veracity	related to the extent of being truthful or honest
propriety	related to the extent of being ethical

While earlier APPRAISAL researchers were “concerned with techniques that could be applied systematically to whole texts from any register” (Martin 2003: 171), in the light of subsequent research such a proposition appears overly ambitious. Among others, Bednarek (2007) and Lee (2007) have challenged the notion that the three subsystems of Attitude remain largely separate and inviolate. Though Martin and White (2005: 67) do make allowances for “borderline categories” where, for instance, “an activity is explicitly appreciated as a thing” but “judgement of whoever accomplished it might be evoked” these other researchers have proposed more fluid intermingling of the subsystems of Attitude and have developed various alternative frameworks to reflect this. Bednarek (2007: 107), for instance, explores what she labels “polyphonic phenomena” which she believes arises out of the *fusion* or *blending* of various types of systems and subsystems characteristic of APPRAISAL analysis, leading to a co-occurrence of these systems.

Lee (2007: 165) has made suggestions along similar lines while analyzing Attitude in undergraduate essays. Principally, she proposes that multiple layering occurs – “where ATTITUDE is expressed at different levels in the clause complex, group or lexical item” – and double coding – “where the same item may receive more than one ATTITUDE label” (2007: 166). She believes that such an approach is justified for various reasons. One is that in written texts the authentic “prosodically continuous meaning” (2007: 168) is best captured this way. Another is the complex nature of written texts, often involving high degrees of abstraction, which can result in ambiguous interpretations of who is the appraiser and what is being appraised (2007: 168).

Such propositions themselves raise further questions. Where evaluation is less than explicit, the resulting reaction is influenced by “our reading position” (Martin 2003: 172) which, in turn, would depend, among other things, on our cultural background and knowledge, raising questions about the potential for reader (researcher) subjectivity in dealing with issues such as double coding.

APPRAISAL analysis has been applied to a range of discourses, including newspaper articles (Knox et al. 2010), childbirth narratives (Page 2003), scientific discourse (Hunston 2000), undergraduate writing (Lee 2007), published research articles (Hood 2004, 2006), and various combinations thereof (White 2003). However, policies as targets for analyzing evaluative meaning have received scant attention, notable exceptions being investigations by Graham (2001, 2002) of contemporary technology policies and Sutherland-Smith’s (2010) of western universities’ plagiarism policies using semiotic analysis of discourse. No analysis to date investigates plagiarism by means of an APPRAISAL analysis of the policies of Australian universities. This paper is a preliminary attempt to consider this new discourse domain.

3 Method

The impetus for the current research came from anecdotal experience (the author’s teaching of international students for the past decade). When asked to explain “plagiarism,” students intermittently but consistently used punitive terminology – “it’s a crime”, “I’ll be put in jail” – sentiments almost identical to those expressed by international graduate students studying at a large Canadian university in 2005, when interviewed by Abasi and Graves (2008: 229).

The origin of such attitudes was of pedagogical interest. Could this reflect the attitudes and approaches taken by universities trickling down to the students? What consequences could there be for containing plagiarism via this method?

Would plagiarism policies available on university Web sites be helpful to students in adapting to academic culture or a source of more confusion?

The Web sites of 39 Australian universities were accessed electronically and their plagiarism policies considered. Four universities were identified as having policies that would be most suitable for a linguistic APPRAISAL analysis at a micro level. The selected universities (de-identified as Institutions A, B, C, and D) were from different geographical regions, had originated in different eras so that both older universities from the Group of Eight (e.g., Institution_A) and New Generation Universities (NGU) (e.g., Institution_D) were represented; one was included from the Innovative Research Universities (IRU) group (Institution_B), another focused on providing career-oriented education, specifically, technology (Institution_C), and (as will be seen later in this paper) their policies provided evidence of some discernible differences in how the notion of plagiarism was construed. The use of these varied criteria – as an alternative to an extensive corpus study of the policies of all the universities – was believed to lend support for some of the more generalizable conclusions. The four key extracts from the policies highlighted for discussion appeared central to the construal of plagiarism at the associated universities.

It was thought desirable that the final list include at least one university (Institution_D) that provided documentation of some substance (50 printed pages in length), bearing in mind White's view (2005: Section 1, Attitude/Affect 2) that "stretches of language" representing a "complete proposition or proposal" yield richer and more authentic attitudinal positioning.

4 APPRAISAL and discussion

One of the key challenges in the APPRAISAL analysis is the extent to which such policies rely linguistically on multilayered abstractions, the creation of grammatical metaphors, and the "thingification" of processes and qualities. As well, the prosodic framework is of special interest in building a particular attitudinal stance on many fronts, thereby reinforcing linguistically the philosophy toward plagiarism espoused by an authoring university. This, of course, highlights particular power relations variously between the university and students, university and staff, and students and staff; power relations that have ramifications for promoting either an "inclusive" academic culture or an "exclusive" one, or indeed, both simultaneously.

A key collocation, that of "academic integrity" (Table 2), which forms a very robust part of the lexis throughout the plagiarism documents, undergoes a process of "[. . .] 'thingification' whereby activity is reconstructed as abstract things"

Table 2: Key collocations in relation to the guiding principles of the plagiarism policies. (Positively appraised items appear double underlined and negatively appraised underlined)

University	Guiding principles
Institution_A	<u>Academic integrity</u> is an essential component of teaching, learning and research, fundamental to the very nature of universities. The ideas and work of others must be acknowledged rather than claimed as one's own.
Institution_B	<u>Academic integrity, honesty, and a respect for knowledge, truth and ethical practices</u> are fundamental to the business of the University. These principles are at the core of all academic endeavour in teaching, learning and research. <u>Dishonest practices</u> <u>contravene</u> academic values, <u>compromise</u> the integrity of research and <u>devalue</u> the quality of learning.
Institution_C	At [Institution_C] <u>academic integrity</u> and <u>honesty</u> are viewed as essential components of teaching, learning and research. Indeed, <u>academic integrity</u> is viewed as fundamental to the very nature of universities. To protect this <u>integrity</u> , the ideas and work of others must be appropriately acknowledged rather than claimed as one's own.
Institution_D	<u>Academic integrity</u> underpins the University's core activities . . . <u>Academic integrity, honesty, and a respect for knowledge and truth</u> are fundamental to the work of the University in advancing the histories of individuals and communities.

(Martin 2007: 44). Both Institution_A and Institution_C refer to “academic integrity” as “essential component”, almost like a grammatical building block that can be moved around at will. In each of the institutions, “academic integrity” is described as being “fundamental” – “. . . to the very nature of universities” (Institution_A/Institution_C); “. . . to the business of the university” (Institution_B); “. . . to the work of the university” (Institution_D) – so the building block becomes a cornerstone.

Where “academic integrity” appears, it is positively appraised (positive appreciation – valuation; positive judgment, sanction – veracity), reinforced by the strategic alignment of “academic integrity” with other attitudinal lexis, e.g., “honesty” (Institution_C; Institution_D; Institution_B), “respect for knowledge and truth” (Institution_D), “ethical practices” (Institution_B), each instance involving positive appraisal. Such collocations are far more potent than isolated words, as highlighted by Whitelaw, Garg, and Argamon (2005: 625), who argue that the “atomic units” of significance are the “appraisal groups” composed of “coherent groups of words that express together a particular attitude.” Appearing in proximity, these words seem like linguistic foot soldiers ready to defend the university against various enemies, including plagiarists and plagiarism.

It is also important to address some other significant effects of abstraction in terms of the relationship with the reader. Martin (2004: 328) claims that “[p]ackaging events as things and appreciating them can have a distancing effect, forming more of a community of commenting observers than reactive participants (a more contemplative evaluation from afar).” Writing at a later date, Martin (2007: 61) argues that when writers in various academic disciplines “thingify” active processes or qualities (reconstructing them as abstract things), they create a technical, specialized, and dehumanized language of great privilege and prestige but at the same time one of alienation.

Martin (2007: 53–55) maintains that these grammatical metaphors are key linguistic maneuvers in the creation of “vertical discourse” which is characterized by “uncommon sense classification” (especially as regards participants), and “thingification,” and that rather than being linguistic oddities, they serve a very specific purpose – their mastery by way of comprehending grammatical metaphor is the key to accessing many other critical knowledge structures in the academic world. Consequently, grammatical metaphor can act as a very effective linguistic firewall, allowing those who possess the appropriate knowledge of the code to enter, and excluding those who do not. For the latter, such language is not that of academic privilege but of academic alienation.

Thus, the abstract language characteristic of the plagiarism policies appears to create interesting discursive opportunities for establishing a particular evaluative stance on the part of the authoring universities. Such language also subtly orchestrates a linguistic “exclusion zone” that effectively filters those attempting to enter the academic community and culture, excluding those who are less than confident with the rhetoric and/or unable (or unwilling) to comply with the particular brand of codified ethics espoused by the universities.

This highly abstract, grammatically metaphorical style of writing in the plagiarism policies also presents one of the key challenges in their APPRAISAL, namely in differentiating between Appreciation and Judgment. On the whole, the extensive reliance on abstraction creates ambiguity when undertaking an APPRAISAL analysis due to the lack of specificity in identifying actual conscious participants (sentient beings). As a consequence, the targets of the appraisal are hard to pin down linguistically, creating challenges in differentiating between Appreciation and Judgment.

Several examples from Table 2 fall into this category. A case in point is the sentence from Institution_D that commences by declaring “Academic integrity underpins the University’s core activities”. The problem in traditional APPRAISAL analysis arises in determining whether this sentence can be construed as Judgment or Appreciation, and what criteria should be used in the determination. Martin and White (2005: 60; bold face in original) explain that “[w]here nominal

groups construe a conscious participant in an institutional role or name a complex process as a thing then virtually the same attitudinal lexis can be used either to **judge** or **appreciate** [. . .] (although not always with the same meaning).” They make a distinction between attitudinal assessment (Judgment) of human targets, i.e., “conscious participants,” and the attitudinal assessment (Appreciation) of complex processes presented as things “whether concrete or abstract, material or semiotic” (2005: 59).

In the case of the plagiarism policies, to construe “academic integrity” as Appreciation alone (using Martin and White’s distinction) would challenge the normative character and tone of the policies as suggested by the prosodic patterning. Essentially, a hardline distinction between Judgment and Appreciation cannot be definitively made without compromising the spirit of these documents, especially bearing in mind Martin and White’s (2005: 52) explanation of *social sanction*, a subcategory of Judgment, as being “more often codified in writing, as edicts, decrees, rules, regulations and laws about how to behave as surveilled by church and state – with penalties and punishments as levers against those not complying with the code. Sharing values in this area underpins civic duty and religious observances.” This is redolent of the whole ethos and structure of the plagiarism policies, with minor adaptations – the authoring body is the university, the “duty” is an academic one, and the “observances” scholarly. As Coffin and O’Halloran (2006: 82) explain, Judgment “encompasses meanings which serve to appraise human behavior by reference to a set of norms about how people should and should not behave.” That such norms are being created in the plagiarism policies cannot be ignored.

In consideration of these observations, and to do justice to the plagiarism policies, it might be useful to consider that documents of this particular type might lend themselves more readily to double coding (Lee 2007) or perhaps some of the linguistic variations on APPRAISAL suggested by Bednarek (2007). Bednarek has proposed a range of types categorized as “polyphonic appraisal.” Of these types, “appraisal blends” (2007: 131) essentially refer to the blending of what she describes as “topological subsystems” where subsystems of Attitude, e.g., Affect and Appreciation, can appear in concert and on equal terms, reminiscent of Lee’s (2007: 166) double coding, “where the same item may receive more than one ATTITUDE label.” While Bednarek is concerned with elucidating such innovative appraisal classification as a whole, it is Lee (2007) who has focused in greater detail on a few selected variations on the APPRAISAL theme that are more relevant for the current research, those of double or even multiple coding, which she claims are particularly effective methods of dealing with academic texts characterized both by high degrees of abstraction, as well as ambiguity in relation to the targets of evaluation. The plagiarism policies of interest share these same characteristics.

Table 3: Instance of double coding in Institution_A's policy, within the context of the original sentence: "Academic integrity is an essential component of teaching, learning and research, fundamental to the very nature of universities"

Instance	Attitude type	Appraised	Appraiser
Academic integrity	positive appreciation: valuation	unspecified	the author plus the university
	positive judgment: sanction: veracity	those who engage in it	

Lexical collocations are especially prominent in the linguistic landscape of plagiarism policies. One classic example – “academic integrity” – is notable not only for the universality with which it is embedded in the policies, but for lending itself so readily and frequently to double coding via the coupling of Appreciation and Judgment (Table 3). Note also the ambiguity in describing the “appraised” – “unspecified”; “those who engage in it”.

Lee (2007: 169) concludes in her study that successful writers of academic discourse tend to employ high levels of such multiple coding. Therefore, it is not surprising that written discourse produced by an academic institution reflects a style that is highly valued in academic culture. Continuing to support her position for double/multiple coding, Lee proposes some finer differentiations of Appreciation's subsystem Valuation. These she contends provide a rationale for the double coding in that Maintenance Valuations “carry strong saturated attitude value as explicit judgement” (2007: 170) and it is the Maintenance and Salience Valuations – the former concerned with “social order/disorder” (configured as “academic order/disorder” in the plagiarism policies) and the latter with “social worth” (configured as “academic worth” in the policies) – that are preferentially employed by higher level academic writers. She stresses that these Valuation subcategories be considered in conjunction with a prosodic context since the latter provides a platform for “the radiation of implicit interpersonal meaning over a long stretch of text” (2007: 170). Bearing this in mind, the way evaluative stance radiates throughout plagiarism policies, particularly in a longer discourse such as that provided by Institution_D, is an important consideration.

Overall, a grander “sweep” of the prosodic structure of the plagiarism policies is required to fully appreciate the development and reinforcement of the evaluative stance, illustrating the inextricable interrelationship between prosody and APPRAISAL.

Appraisal resources are used to establish the tone or mood of a passage of discourse, as choices resonate with one another from one moment to another as the text unfolds. The pattern of choices is thus “prosodic”. They form a prosody of attitude running through the text that swells and diminishes, in a manner of a musical prosody. The prosodic pattern of appraisal choices constructs the “stance” or “voice” of the appraiser, and this stance or voice defines the kind of community that is being set up around shared values. (Martin and Rose 2007: 59)

Other writers concur. Hood (2006) notes the importance of the prosodic framework when analyzing the manner in which professional academic writing is immersed in particular values, while Graham (2002: 230) refers to the same phenomenon as “evaluative propagation” in his analysis of technology policy. Indeed, as Coffin and O’Halloran (2006: 82) claim, “APPRAISAL analysis is a way of comprehensively and systematically capturing the global evaluative patterns that occur within a particular text, set of texts or institutional discourse.”

The preamble section of Institution_D’s policy (example [1]) is of particular significance in that it spearheads the entire document and sets in place the initial attitudinal stance that pervades the discourse. How this evaluative propagation occurs is examined.

- (1) Preamble to the explanation of the “purpose” of Institution_D’s policy. (Positively appraised items appear double underlined; negatively appraised underlined; positively appraised by implication underlined italics)
- ^[1.1] [Institution_D] is a dual sector University serving about 45,000 students with a portfolio of approximately 700 courses from across the spectrum encompassing pre-Apprenticeships to PhDs. ^[1.2] In 2005, the University *sharpened its strategic focus to transform individuals and communities* in its region through the power of vocational and higher education. ^[1.3] Its capacity to make inroads towards positive economic change in western metropolitan [name of city] (and in so doing to serve as an exemplar internationally) rests on the commitment of the University to building its academic standing based on innovative courses, excellent learning experiences and good graduate outcomes. ^[1.4] Academic misconduct degrades the value of the University’s awards.
- ^[1.5] All members of the academic community, students and staff alike, are responsible for the integrity and originality of their work. ^[1.6] This policy reflects the vigilance of Victoria University in curbing the incidence of plagiarism and providing clear and fair procedures for handling allegations.
- ^[1.7] The University’s values are at the heart of how we deal with the unauthorised, unacknowledged and/or the improper use of the intellectual work of other persons by staff and students.

In the first instance, the introductory sentence [1.1] appears to provide information that is objective and neutral – in essence, merely a statement of fact. On closer examination (Table 4), it is interesting how that same sentence functions as an opening gambit in a tightly orchestrated but seemingly imperceptible linguistic undercurrent to position the university for what is a sequential build-up of positive APPRAISAL, later to be dramatically contrasted with the negative APPRAISAL of “academic misconduct” [1.4], (D.10 in Table 4), and “plagiarism” [1.6], (D.16). Hood (2006: 43) refers to such a strategy as one that “enables a foregrounding of objective description while maintaining the flow of evaluative stance.”

In the first sentence [1.1] of example (1), the APPRAISAL is elusive and difficult to categorize, but there is “a positive stance by implication” (Hood 2006:43) being established by a build-up of “+quantity.” A *quantity = heightened quality and/or value* paradigm to enhance the reputation of Institution_D is being employed at the outset [1.1], as exemplified in both strength of numbers – “dual sector”, “45,000 students”, “70 courses” – and scope – “across the spectrum”. Prosodically, this functions to establish a positive evaluative stance that is maintained in the next sentence [1.2], where the impact of currency (“In 2005”) of the university’s altered “strategic focus”, segues into the positive Judgment (social esteem) of the university – “sharpened its strategic focus” (D.1) – with the author positively appraising the university’s tenacity. The rest of that sentence continues such positive APPRAISAL, indicating that this “strategic focus” will help “transform individuals and communities in its region through the power of vocational and higher education” (D.2; D.3).

The focus on the university’s wide-ranging scope and influence continues in the following sentence [1.3] with the university undertaking not only local economic improvements (“western metropolitan [city]”) because it has the “capacity” to do so (D.4) but also moving to a global stage – “an exemplar internationally” (D.5). Hence the economic betterment of (potentially) the *entire* world is directly linked to the university’s reputation – “the commitment of the University to building its academic standing” (D.6). In turn, this “academic standing” is dependent upon “innovative courses” (D.7), “excellent learning experiences” (D.8), and “good graduate outcomes” (D.9) – in each case double coding involving both positive Appreciation (valuation) and positive Judgment (esteem/capacity).

This intense momentum of positive APPRAISAL of the university and foregrounding of its “praiseworthy” activities, positions readers to take a negative stance toward that which follows – all these positively judged/positively appreciated activities are jeopardized by “academic misconduct” [1.4], (D.10), which “degrades the value of the University’s awards” [1.4], (D.11). The beginning of sentence [1.4], “Academic misconduct degrades . . .”, comes almost as an intrusion

Table 4: APPRAISAL instances of example (1). (Extract from Institution_D's plagiarism policy)

#	Instance	Attitude type	Appraised	Appraiser
D.1	sharpened its strategic focus	positive judgment: esteem: tenacity	the University	author
D.2	transform individuals and communities in its region through the power of vocational and higher education	positive judgment: sanction: propriety	the University	author
D.3	the power of vocational and higher education	positive judgment: esteem: capacity	vocational and higher education	author
D.4	capacity to make inroads towards positive economic change	positive judgment: esteem: capacity	the University	author
D.5	[capacity] to serve as an exemplar internationally	positive judgment: esteem: capacity	the University	author
D.6	the commitment of the University to building its academic standing	positive judgment: esteem: tenacity	the University	author
D.7	innovative	positive appreciation: valuation	courses and also the university	author
		positive judgment: esteem: capacity		
D.8	excellent	positive appreciation: valuation	learning experiences and also the university	author
		positive judgment: esteem: capacity		
D.9	good	positive appreciation: valuation	graduate outcomes and also the university	author
		positive judgment: esteem: capacity		
D.10	Academic misconduct	negative appreciation: valuation	unspecified	author
		negative judgment: sanction: propriety	those who engage in it	

Table 4 (cont.)

#	Instance	Attitude type	Appraised	Appraiser
D.11	degrades the value [of the university's awards]	negative appreciation: valuation	academic misconduct and those who engage in it	author
		negative judgment: sanction: propriety		
D.14	the vigilance of [Institution D]	positive judgment: esteem: tenacity	the University	author
D.16	plagiarism	negative appreciation: valuation	unspecified	author
		negative judgment: sanction: propriety	those who do it	
D.18	clear and fair	positive judgment: sanction: propriety	procedures	author

into the former (positive) evaluative climate and introduces enormous negative interpersonal evaluative force into the discourse.

The discursive configuration in example (1) is also interesting on two other counts. Firstly, there is an attempt to establish inclusiveness in the use of “alike” [1.5], with both students and staff being accorded equal status in an endeavor that is indicated as critical to the preservation and authentic continuance of the university, in other words, a valuable and worthwhile task undertaken *together*, establishing a community based on “shared values” (Martin and Rose 2007: 59). This notion of the shared responsibility of staff and students to maintain academic integrity continues to be consistently reinforced throughout Institution_D’s policy. Such a powerful strategy is clearly one of the “interpersonal tools for developing solidarity between a speaker/writer and their audience” (Coffin and O’Halloran 2006: 83).

The issue of academic misconduct, as exemplified by plagiarism, is so crucial as to transcend the internal classifications in the institution and community. In the process, the experiential categories – student, teacher, etc. – become subsumed by a more urgent (moral, ethical, academic) imperative and reconfigured as interpersonal categories of those who are academically “ethical” versus those who are not, i.e., those who are “included” in the community, and those who are excluded.

Secondly, there is very direct reference to actual human beings undertaking this *protective* activity, in contrast to the abstraction involved in the discursive

choices when discussion of negatively appraised activities occurs. “Academic misconduct” [1.4] is treated linguistically in Table 5 as a thing or substance (D.10). It is unclear who is being negatively appraised (D.10 ~ unspecified – those who engage in it). Likewise, [1.6] where Institution_D is positively appraised (D.14) for “curbing the incidence of plagiarism and providing clear and fair procedures for handling allegations”, those who are negatively appraised (D.16) can only be classified in similarly vague terms (unspecified ~ those who engage in it).

This particular stratagem of manipulating what is in the foreground versus the background through the strategy of thingification, ensures that the negative judgment is directed at an activity or practice and effectively steered away from individuals or groups, thus avoiding a punitive or accusatory stance, in effect condemning the deed without condemning actual or potential transgressors. “Human individuals are thus less directly targeted for praise or blame for their behaviours, and the focus moves to the product or outcome of that behaviour” (Lee 2007: 183), effectively pulling students into the academic community without specifically pinpointing them as potential culprits. Institution_D’s policy employs a highly skillful discursive choreography as the particular philosophy of the authoring university regarding plagiarism is unveiled progressively in a comparatively lengthy document – a total of 50 printed pages – that results in the development of a more sustained, “educative” argument and detailed rationale, especially in comparison with the apparent targeting of “students” in Institution_C’s policy (example [2] and Table 5).

(2) Extract from Institution_C’s policy

(Positively appraised items appear double underlined; negatively appraised underlined.)

^[2.1] It is the University’s task to encourage ethical scholarship and to inform students about the institutional standards expected in learning, teaching and research. ^[2.2] Staff will inform students of the academic standards expected of them in their work and educate students in ways to maintain academic integrity. ^[2.3] Students have the responsibility to maintain the highest ethical standards of academic integrity in their work. ^[2.4] Academic misconduct by students in examinations or in other forms of assessment is unacceptable.

Here a very conspicuous divide is being established discursively between staff and students. The former [2.2] are positively judged for their part in informing (C.1 in Table 5) and educating (C.3) students as regards “academic integrity” (C.4) while the students [2.3] are required to meet certain academic expectations and are negatively appraised in regard to “academic misconduct” [2.4], (C.6). The creation of such a divide – reflected in the largely positive APPRAISAL instances (C.1 to

Table 5: Extract from Institution_C's plagiarism policy illustrating APPRAISAL instances

#	Instance	Attitude type	Appraised	Appraiser
C.1	will inform students	positive judgment: esteem: capacity	the university staff	the author, plus the university
C.2	academic standards expected	positive judgment: esteem: capacity	the university staff	the author, plus the university
C.3	educate students in ways to maintain [academic integrity]	positive judgment: esteem: capacity	the university staff	the author, plus the university
C.4	academic integrity	positive judgment: sanction: veracity	the university staff (in upholding academic integrity by educating students)	the author, plus the university
C.5a	the responsibility to maintain the highest ethical standards of [academic integrity]	positive judgment: sanction: propriety	the students who <i>will</i> act this way	the author, plus the university
C.5b	the responsibility to maintain the highest ethical standards of [academic integrity]	negative judgment: sanction: propriety	the students who <i>will not</i> act this way	the author, plus the university
C.6	Academic misconduct	negative judgment: sanction: propriety	"students"	the author, plus the university
C.7	unacceptable	negative judgment: esteem: normality	"academic misconduct"	the author, plus the university
C.8	preventing, detecting and managing [cases of plagiarism]	positive judgment: esteem: capacity/ tenacity	the university's plagiarism policy and the university itself	the author, plus the university
C.9	plagiarism	negative appreciation: valuation	unspecified	the author, plus the university
		negative judgment: sanction: veracity	those who engage in it	

C.4) associated with the staff and generally negative APPRAISAL (C.5b to C.7) associated with the students – is not only unlikely to foster collegiality but could also have a deleterious effect on the dynamics of pedagogy as suspected plagiarism cases “can transform a caring, reflective teacher into an academic cop, judge, jury and executioner” (Wilhoit 1994: 161). This “us-against-them” scenario established discursively is far removed from the academic camaraderie between students and staff that appears to be encouraged discursively by Institution_D’s policy.

Naturally, while the discourse may appear thus, the actual implementation of the policies also needs to be considered and whether the policies as they are enacted really do reflect the discourse. Such issues are beyond the scope of this paper but are clearly worthy of further research. This is especially so in light of work by Abasi and Graves (2008: 229), who claim that universities’ moralistic and draconian stance on plagiarism, as reflected in university documentation, has resulted in compromising the roles of academic staff as they endeavor to comply with diametrically opposed discourses – one legalistic and the other pedagogical – and that this situation has adversely affected the successful absorption of graduate students into the academic community.

Overall, the plagiarism policies feature a variety of discursive approaches which can be positioned along a cline (Figure 1) from “othering” to “including” discourse, essentially in accordance with various combinations of discursive realizations. The specific realizations distinguishing the “othering”/“including” polarities of discourse are provided in Appendix A.

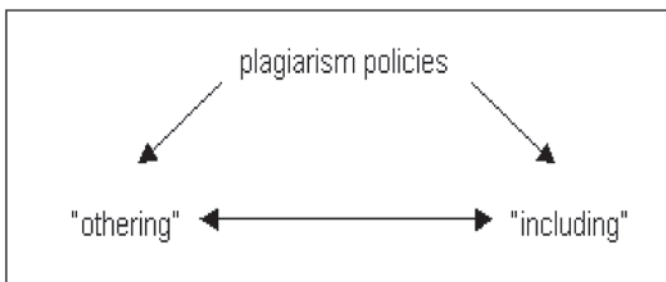


Fig. 1: Discursive cline of the plagiarism policies

Several leading researchers (Holliday 2006 ; Kubota 1999, 2001, 2002; Pennycook 2001) have explored this notion of “other,” more specifically in relation to the “othering” of students (and colleagues) categorized as being from non-English-language countries, when comparing them to native English speakers. This has particular ramifications for the stereotyping of ESL students along “rigid

cultural boundaries” particularly of Western culture versus Eastern culture (Kubota 1999: 14). Leask (2006: 187) argues for such a divide in the academic community along much broader lines in that “All students are to a large degree ‘cultural others’ seeking acceptance into the academic cultural community.”

In the case of the plagiarism policies, this “divide” is being created discursively between a morally upright, ethical discursive “self” (the universities and the academic culture they represent) and a morally reprehensible, unethical discursive “other” from which the “self” is linguistically distancing itself. This division is reflected not only in the content of the policies but is reinforced by the particular discursive preferences of the authoring universities. While Martin (2004: 326) may pose the question “How does language negotiate feelings in order to make us belong?” the opposite can also be true – *how does language negotiate feelings in order to make us excluded?* – a question that is certainly applicable to various extracts of the texts analyzed.

A proposed location of the universities along the cline of interest is illustrated in Figure 2. The discursive realizations of Institution_B’s policy appear robustly aligned with the “othering” discourse and the text is laden with grammatical metaphors that frequently lend themselves to double coding (Appendix A). Mention of human participants is avoided. Overall, a potentially “alienating” relationship with readers (“the others”) seems to prevail, not least by the projection of a monovocal, authorial image (“the self”) that eschews confrontation or debate, in accordance with the overarching linguistic approach to the plagiarism policies in general.

Compare this with the somewhat more “including” discourse of Institution_C (example [2]) where nominalization is less prominent, actors are named (“Staff” [2.2]/“Students” [2.3]) and APPRAISAL instances are generally not prone to double

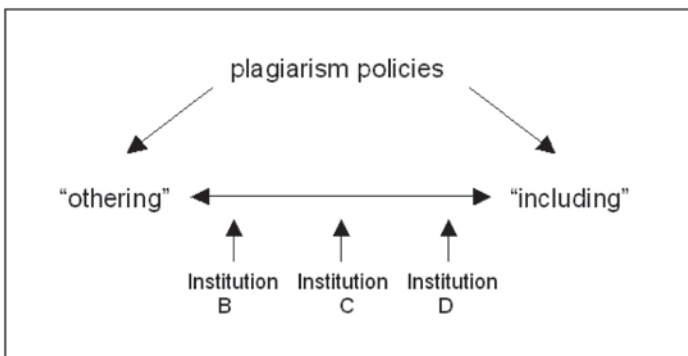


Fig. 2: Plagiarism policies along the “othering”/“including” cline

coding (Appendix A). Nevertheless, as discussed earlier, the noninclusive environment created by the prominent discursive division between staff (generally positively appraised) and students (generally negatively appraised) according to their roles allotted by the university in the plagiarism scenario, suggests a more traditional divide between *enforcers* and *perpetrators*, placing Institution_C somewhere toward the middle of the cline.

Institution_D's policy continues a progression toward the right along the same cline, not only with the ample allusions to participants (staff/students) but the profusion of personal pronouns (1st person plural, e.g., "We value the pursuit of excellence in everything we do", Appendix A) and minimal reliance on grammatical metaphor (hence avoiding double coding of APPRAISAL instances), to establish a distinctive "including" discourse that if continued to be reflected in the actual culture of the university could well signal the beginning of a tentative departure from the traditional "punitive" stance of plagiarism policies to one that is self-styled by the universities (Institution_A, Institution_D) themselves as "educative" (Appendix B).

Not only do Institution_A and Institution_D display more discourse that includes particular lexis – "educative"/"education"/"educational" – in their policies overall, such discourse is then further developed into the concept of "academic apprenticeship" with the pedagogical affiliation that implies.

Institution_A

Teaching staff can provide information and opportunities that will assist a student's progress from a high level of dependence on the works of others to a stage where they are using the work of others to augment their own interpretation of a concept, issue or event.

Institution_D

Every first year course includes a period of "academic apprenticeship" for students in transition to tertiary study, introducing them into the conventions and language of academic writing as these apply to that unit of study.

Indeed, Institution_A has proceeded to develop this approach into one involving a very specific progression in academic maturation based on the concept of "Student as Apprentice Researcher" (McGowan 2006), with students moving progressively through the following stages – pre-university, early apprentice researcher, emerging researcher and finally competent researcher. It is noteworthy that this concept is presented as being embedded within a "Plagiarism Framework" (McGowan 2006) and being applicable to any students (not only international ones) unfamiliar with the academic culture.

5 Conclusion and implications

The current research was undertaken to explore what was believed to be a widespread and ingrained punitive stance in Australian plagiarism policies. Some parts of the findings supported the original premise, with some of the policies continuing to demonstrate a negative, punitive discourse that is also often “excluding.” In other cases, particularly Institution_A and Institution_D, the plagiarism policies appear to be shifting from this entrenched stance toward an “educative” (pedagogically oriented) one, possibly reflecting more progressive and enlightened contemporary views in the academic community. Issues have been raised both linguistically and pedagogically that could be addressed by more extensive research in the future, in particular, a corpus study of the plagiarism policies of all 39 universities.

In conducting an APPRAISAL analysis it was noted that abstraction and thinification were extensively used throughout the policies and this led to an application of double coding rather than adhering to the specific distinctions between Appreciation and Judgment indicated by Martin and White’s traditional APPRAISAL framework.

In considering the evaluative prosody in the policies positive, evaluation was being created and reinforced by the universities and their alignment with “academic integrity,” which contrasted with the denouncement of plagiarism and academic misconduct through negative evaluations and discursive exclusion from the academic community. However, this general trend was not universal.

One of the major findings was the emergence of “othering” versus “including” discourse in the smaller subset of policies. For example, the ample use of the 1st person pronoun “we” in a great deal of Institution_D’s policy suggested a concerted effort to create an inclusive academic community, at least discursively. Overall, the findings indicate the emergence of some discursive trends in contemporary plagiarism policies that appear to confront the traditional punitive stance. Such trends focus on the educative, pedagogical aspects of initiating students into the academic community, on the basis of their being apprentice researchers.

In the meantime, if one acknowledges as a result of reading this paper that indeed there is a paradigm shift on the horizon in the notion of “plagiarism” as reflected in the policy discourse of Australian universities, then this may signal the emergence of a markedly different academic philosophy that not only encompasses the *cultural others* but welcomes them into a dynamically transformed and revitalized academic culture, one in which they are valued as novice scholars and appropriately nurtured to eventually achieve authentic intellectual adulthood.

Appendix A

Key realizations of “othering” discourse and “including” discourse with examples from the plagiarism policies.

Classification	Realizations	Examples	University
“othering” discourse	greater reliance on abstraction	“Academic integrity, honesty, and a respect for knowledge, truth and ethical practices are fundamental to the business of the University.”	Institution_B
	participants not identified/ lack specificity	“Dishonest practices contravene academic values, compromise the integrity of research and devalue the quality of learning.”	Institution_B
	appraised/appraisers lack specificity	“... academic integrity is viewed as fundamental to the very nature of universities.”	Institution_C
		“Academic misconduct degrades the value of the University’s awards.”	Institution_D
	double APPRAISAL coding predominates (especially the Appreciation/Judgment combination)	“academic integrity” ~ (positive appreciation/positive judgment) “honesty” ~ (positive appreciation/positive judgment) “academic misconduct” ~ (negative appreciation/negative judgment)	Institution_C Institution_C Institution_D

<p>“including” discourse</p>	<p>less reliance on abstraction</p>	<p>“Academic misconduct by students in examinations or in other forms of assessment is unacceptable.”</p>	<p>Institution_C</p>
	<p>participants identified/ specified</p>	<p>“Staff will inform students of the academic standards expected of them . . .”</p>	<p>Institution_C</p>
	<p>appraised/ appraisers are specified</p>	<p>“Students have the responsibility to maintain the highest ethical standards of academic integrity in their work.”</p>	<p>Institution_C</p>
	<p>use of pronouns (e.g., 1st person plural)</p>	<p>“We value integrity, respect and transparency in personal and collaborative action.”</p> <p>“We value diversity for its contribution to creativity and the enrichment of life.”</p> <p>“We value the pursuit of excellence in everything that we do.”</p> <p>“We value knowledge and skills and critical and imaginative inquiry for their capacity to transform individuals and the community.”</p>	<p>Institution_D</p>
	<p>single APPRAISAL coding predominates</p>	<p>“Academic misconduct by students in examinations or in other forms of assessment is unacceptable.”</p> <p>(“academic misconduct” ~ negative judgment; “appraised” = “students)</p>	<p>Institution_C</p>

Appendix B

“Punitive” versus “educative” lexis as illustrated by direct quotes from the plagiarism policies with lexis of interest indicated by *underlined italics*.

Punitive terms	Educative terms	University
<p>Dishonesty in the preparation or presentation of any assessable work is regarded as academic misconduct. Academic fraud, <i>plagiarism</i> and research misconduct are <i>major categories of academic misconduct</i>. The University will <i>impose serious measures</i> on students who are found to have <i>breached</i> this policy.</p>	<p>... the use of electronic text-matching software and that software is used as an <i>educational</i> tool to support academic integrity.</p>	Institution_B
<p>The purpose of this plagiarism policy is to outline the principles under which <i>preventing</i>, <i>detecting</i> and <i>managing</i> cases of plagiarism are applied.</p>	<p>Staff will inform students of the academic standards expected of them in their work and <i>educate</i> students in ways to maintain academic integrity.</p>	Institution_C
	<p>The [Institution_D] approach to plagiarism is <i>educative</i>. ... Informing and <i>educating</i> staff and students on strategies of how to avoid plagiarism; The policy aims to establish an <i>educative</i> framework for the shared responsibility of staff and students to prevent plagiarism that is culturally informed and <i>inclusive</i>.</p>	Institution_D

<p>The <i>penalties</i> associated with plagiarism are designed to <i>impose sanctions</i> that reflect the seriousness of the University's commitment to academic integrity.</p>	<p>The University is committed to assisting staff and students in maintaining high standards of academic integrity by implementing appropriate <i>educational</i> programs . . .”</p> <p>University rules, policies and guidelines tend to focus on the <i>punitive</i> aspects of procedures rather than the <i>educative</i> and often fail to articulate to students why the conventions of citing and referencing are an integral part of developing scholarly writing skills, and why plagiarism is considered a serious offence in the academic environment.</p> <p>The principal methods that should be used to reduce plagiarism are <i>educative</i> and involve ensuring that students are aware of the expectations and standards associated with an assessment task for a particular discipline.</p>	<p>Institution_A</p>
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Bionote

Louise Kaktiņš lectures in academic communication at the Sydney Institute of Business and Technology (SIBT), Macquarie University. She has had extensive experience in developing courses related to English for Academic Purposes, effective professional communication, academic literacy, and professional ethics. Her research interests include the first year experience (FYE) of tertiary students, academic literacy, and the cultural context of plagiarism and what this means for future directions in academia. Address for correspondence: P.O. Box 2014, Homebush West, NSW (2140), Australia (louise.kaktins@mq.edu.au).

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