

## **PLAGIARISM OR ACADEMIC THEFT: TYPOLOGY, INDICATORS AND THE WAY OUT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The present study is purely descriptive. It has for objectives: to bring the reading audience in contact with what it entails to commit plagiarism; it thus gives the meaning of plagiarism, tries to identify the different types of plagiarism, the practices underlying it and ways to avoid it. It is found that plagiarism is of four major types, namely self-plagiarism, accidental-plagiarism, deliberate plagiarism, and cyber-plagiarism. Another finding of this research is that a good number of people plagiarise out of carelessness and ignorance of what it entails and, therefore, unintentionally even though ignorance of the law is no excuse. The effective ways to avoid plagiarism are principally to paraphrase, cite sources of information in the body of the work and reference them in Works Cited at the end following the prescribed model of reference. It is recommended that special workshops be mounted to educate students and other researchers on all necessary information concerning plagiarism and sensitize them against getting involved with plagiarism.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Plagiarism, Academic Theft, Typology, Indicators, The Way Out*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Plagiarism, le plagiat in French, is also known as Academic theft. It is an all-important subject matter in our fast globalising world with marked increase in Information Technology and cyber/Internet activities and especially in our present-day Nigeria, where an ex-Vice Chancellor has described Nigerian Professors as “Internet Professors” (<https://www.latestnigeriannews.com/news>), and where of recent, a lecturer in the University of Ilorin, UNILORIN, now an Associate Professor, is alleged to have been “practicing outright duplication and self-plagiarism” for years” (<https://www.pulse.ng>). When Prof. Ikenna Onyido, former Vice Chancellor of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike and Director, Centre for Sustainable Development, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, blamed the drastic fall in quality of education in Nigerian Universities on lazy professors whom he qualified as “Internet Professors” (<https://www.sunnewsonline.com>), he probably was thinking in terms of lazy professors, who do not embark on in-depth researches using information sourced from printed materials beefed up with those from Internet sources, but in line with current trends in the country in this age where electronic media have provided more freedom of access to internet sources than before, simply click on internet to source for materials for their research output often without proper referencing. The likes of UNILORIN lecturer accused of plagiarism may not be completely ruled out in that affirmation considering the fact that, sometimes, individuals may plagiarise out of sheer laziness, not being ready to go an extra mile to produce a thoroughly original work, but instead, readily gives in to

lazy, insincere practices of cut and paste (copier-coller) word-for-word copying, translation of another person's ideas into another language and appropriating such as one's own, data manipulation, etc. For certain, Nigerian Professors cannot all be "Internet Professors," there still exists a handful of Nigerian Professors, who are solid and profound, who still churn out original scholarly works.

Research suggests that students plagiarise more out of carelessness than real intent (<https://www.enago.com/academy/>), and more importantly, out of a lack of the knowledge of proper referencing. What is referencing? Referencing refers to the way of acknowledging the sources of information which an individual uses to write research, an assignment, a project, a dissertation, a thesis, etc. Whenever a person draws on someone else's words, ideas or research write-up, that person needs to provide a reference, in other words, he or she needs to give the source of his/her information by way of reference. Referencing is a consistent method or process of acknowledging or crediting the sources an individual has used in writing a piece of work be it an assignment, an essay, a project of any sort. An individual is expected to reference all sources that the person has used in his/her write-up including words, ideas, facts, images, videos, audios, websites, statistics, diagrams and data (<https://www.murdoch.edu.au/library/>). Referencing enables the reader to access the writer's source documents as quickly and easily as possible so as to verify, if necessary, the authenticity of arguments put forward and their bases (<https://www.macmillanihe.com/page>).

With 40 years of experiences as a teacher, an academic, and a researcher, the writer of the present paper has the firm conviction that referencing shows the breath of one's research and provides details of the sources of information used in the academic writing. In short, proper referencing is the hallmark of good scholarship.

Unfortunately, a good number of students think that referencing betrays their lack of competence and originality. This is a very wrong notion. A good referencing in an academic work, on the contrary, announces the high level of research work done by the writer and showcases his/her academic excellence. This idea is buttressed by the comments that follow: Referencing the works of "established authorities and experts in your subject area" goes to amplify "your comments and arguments." It is a clear demonstration of your having read widely, examined, reviewed and analyzed other researchers' views and write-ups (<https://www.macmillanihe.com/page>).

The writer admits that once she has an article to evaluate in front of her, she first goes to the reference section to check for adequacy, relevance, and currency of cited references. This helps her to have an idea of the seriousness of the writer and the quality of the write-up.

There is no denying the fact that the absence of referencing or poor referencing in academic work is tantamount to the existence of plagiarism in the work. Notice, there are different degrees of plagiarism in a write-up. The good news or is it bad news for those prone to plagiarism is that plagiarism detection software have been developed and are being used in different universities all over the world. In Nigeria today, some universities have started using such software, for example University of Ilorin, Ilorin and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria both at 25% plagiarism level. It is important to note that although the University of Ilorin is the first tertiary institution in Nigeria to develop software to fight plagiarism, a disgraceful academic fraud has reportedly gone undetected in that university. According to the allegation, reported by The Nation, the said lecturer's "publications are generally filled with massive word-for-word copying, duplication, data fraud and so on" (<https://www.pulse.ng>).

Let it be pointed out that plagiarism is an academic menace going on in many universities in the world. Those universities with anti-plagiarism software are able to fight plagiarism and nip it in the bud; for example, an assignment submitted fails to be marked once the plagiarism detected exceeds the level of plagiarism allowed in the system; furthermore, if a student's project, dissertation, thesis is found to contain more than 25% plagiarism level allowed, it is discarded and the candidate will have to face some penalties.

It is important to note that plagiarism is not committed by students alone; it is also committed by teachers, lecturers, professors and researchers in general. Within academia, plagiarism is qualified as academic dishonesty or academic fraud or academic theft. Plagiarism is not in itself considered to be a crime. However, in academia and industry, it can be a copyright infringement. Plagiarism and copyright infringement overlap to a large extent even though one cannot describe both concepts as exact equivalents. Several types of plagiarism do not boil down to copyright infringement. Copyright infringement is defined by copyright law and stands to be "adjudicated by courts" (Green). Copyright infringement is a criminal and jailable offense.

On the contrary, it is not the law that defines or punishes plagiarism but institutions: educational institutions, commercial bodies like a publishing House and professional associations (Green). In academia, plagiarism is a very serious ethical offense and offenders are subjected to punishments such as suspension up to and including expulsion from school and work. The penalties, sometimes, attract public disgrace. It should be stressed that where plagiarism has to do with reproducing another person's copyrighted work, it becomes a criminal and jailable offense.

Let it be reiterated that there are varying degrees of plagiarism from most severe to mild. Therefore, when analyzing if a written material is plagiarised, the intentionality or unintentional disposition of the plagiarist comes into play. This stresses the importance of disseminating useful information concerning plagiarism to students and others in the academic community to sensitize them against involvement in plagiarism.

Cognisant of the disastrous consequences of plagiarism and the fact that some people engage in acts of plagiarism out of carelessness or sheer ignorance of what it entails and thus unintentionally, there is a pressing need to describe to the reading audience what plagiarism means, the different types of plagiarism; to identify the practices that are indicative of plagiarism as well as ways of avoiding plagiarism. The present study sets the foregoing as its quadruple objectives, using the descriptive method.

An attempt is first made to give the meaning of the term plagiarism. This is followed by the typology of plagiarism, indicators of plagiarism, ways to avoid plagiarism, recommendations, and conclusion.

### **Meaning of plagiarism**

Some individuals consider plagiarism to mean the practice of copying another person's work or borrowing the original ideas of another person. But plagiarism means more than these. The terms "copying" and "borrowing" tend to attenuate the seriousness of the offense (Anonymous). Some students have the misconception that plagiarism has to do with only

quoting the exact words of another person without acknowledging the source. No, this is a fallacy. The truth of the matter is that such practice of quoting someone else's exact words without referencing it is plagiarism but there are other forms of plagiarism apart from this glaring case. Paraphrasing or summarising another person's words or ideas without proper acknowledgement of the original source is plagiarism and a host of others. Definitions of plagiarism abound in print and on the internet. According to Oxford Dictionary of English, plagiarism refers to "the action" or "practice of taking someone else's word, idea etc., and passing it off as one's own; literary theft." Plagiarism is also defined as: "an act or instance of using or closely imitating the language and thoughts of another author without authorization and the representation of that author's work as one's own, as by not crediting the original author" (<http://www.Thesaurus.com>). It is alleged that Thoreau plagiarised a line written by Montaigne (<http://www.Thesaurus.com>). Plagiarism is also defined as: "A piece of writing or other work which reflects such unauthorized use or imitation" (<https://www.dictionary.com>). Another dictionary defines it as: "To use another person's ideas or work and pretend that it is your own" (<https://www.dictionary.cambridge.org>).

Certain characteristics feature in all these definitions: the appropriation of another person's thoughts, ideas, words, unauthorized use of such, failure to acknowledge a source of information or give credit to the original author, literary theft. All these are attributes of plagiarism. Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary captures all these features in its definition of plagiarism which follows:

- "To steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own
- To use (another's production) without crediting the source
- To commit literary theft
- To present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existingsource."

In summary, plagiarism is an act of fraud. As the anonymous author of the article "What is Plagiarism?" published on May 18, 2017, puts it: Plagiarism has to do with stealing another person's work and telling lies about the deed. Two offenses are committed concomitantly: stealing and lying. It is important to buttress the fact that plagiarism is a very serious ethical offense in academia and that it attracts severe penalties in some instances. In the context of the present study, plagiarism is defined as the unacknowledged use of another person's published or unpublished work which is in print or web-based or audio-visual and which can be an assignment, words or ideas, essays, projects of any kind – dissertations, theses, etc.

### **Typology of Plagiarism**

There have been several studies of types of plagiarism like those by White Paper (2012), Ayton (2016), Bowdoin College (2018) and Enago Academy (2018). In the context of this study, typology of plagiarism proposed by Bowdoin College and those ones by Enago Academy and Ayton will be examined briefly, while four major types of plagiarism identified in the study will be discussed extensively.

There exist different types of plagiarism. All of them are violations of academic honesty. The most common types Some scientific researchers carried out a survey and came up with a ranking of plagiarism types where complete plagiarism represents the most serious offense while paraphrasing is the most common (<https://www.enago.com/academy>). They are as follows:

- **Complete Plagiarism:** Here, the plagiarist submits, under his or her name, work or study carried out by someone else.
- **Source-Based Plagiarism:** Here, the student cites a source which is not correct or which does not exist. This kind of incorrect source is misleading. It is also called source-based plagiarism where the individual concerned, after using a secondary source of data or information, cites only the primary source of information. This is a dishonest academic practice. Where the student does not have access to the primary source and has used only the secondary source, he/she is expected to cite that secondary source showing that the first reference was cited by the author of the secondary source. For example: According to Wellek and Warren:

The function of Literature is to relieve us – either writers or readers – from the pressure of emotions. To express emotions is to get free of them And the spectator of a tragedy or the reader of a novel is also said to experience release and relief. His emotions have been provided with focus leaving him, at the end of his aesthetic experience with “calm of mind” (cited by Aire 21).

In the Bibliography, the secondary source is listed: Aire Victor Osobase. *Thanatos and Eros: Death in Life and in French Literature*. Inaugural Lecture Series, Jos: University of Jos, 2004.

- **Data Fabrication and Falsification:** Here, the researcher chooses to make up data and research findings or to change or leave out some data to create a false impression. This type of plagiarism can have disastrous consequences in the area of medical research as it can affect adversely clinical decisions
- **Direct or Verbatim Plagiarism:** This is where a student copies the work of another author word for word, without making use of quotation marks or attribution. In this way, he makes it look like his own work. This resembles complete plagiarism except that it refers to sections instead of the whole work of the author concerned.
- **Self or Auto Plagiarism or Duplication:** This occurs when an author reuses a considerable portion of his/her previously published work without attribution. A good number of journals run manuscripts through a plagiarism-detection software before deciding to accept them for review.
- **Paraphrasing plagiarism:** This is the most common type of plagiarism. It entails using as one's own another's write-up with minor changes on the sentences. Although the words may differ, the original idea is still the same, hence, the occurrence of paraphrasing plagiarism.
- **Inaccurate Authorship or Misleading Attribution:** This occurs when a person contributes to a manuscript but when the publication is out, that person is not credited for it. When a student attributes a work by two or more authors to just

one author. Maybe his lecturer is the first author in the collaborative work; others being his mentees and he decides to leave out the other names and use only his lecturer's name. This is a dishonest academic practice. For example, the student uses in his write-up a work by Ifeoma Mabel Onyemelukwe and Pascal Iheanacho Ohanma. But he cites the work as authored by only Ifeoma Mabel Onyemelukwe. He deliberately leaves out Ohanma's name. All references must be correct and complete. If not, it smacks of plagiarism. The second form of this type of plagiarism occurs when a person gets credit for a work he did not contribute to. Whichever way it occurs, it is a violation of the code of conduct in research.

- **Mosaic or "Patchwork" or "Patchwriting" Plagiarism:** This occurs when a student borrows phrases from a source without quotation marks or where he uses synonyms for the author's words and language but still retains the general structure and meaning of the original work. Although Enago Academy posits that this kind of paraphrasing is deliberate, Bow-doin is of the opinion that it may be deliberate or unintentional. But whether intentional or not, mosaic plagiarism is a dishonest academic practice deserving punishment even if the course is footnoted as in the example in accidental plagiarism. ([https://www.bowdoin.edu>studentaffairs](https://www.bowdoin.edu/studentaffairs)).
- **Accidental or Unintentional Plagiarism:** When plagiarism is as a result of neglect, carelessness, mistake, or unintentional paraphrasing, it is called accidental or unintentional plagiarism. Students are likely to engage in accidental plagiarism. Therefore, universities need to emphasize the importance of education on this form of plagiarism.

Kelsey Ayton examines in her article ten common types of plagiarism as authored by White Paper (2012). A plagiarism detector, according to her, can be used to identify most but not all of the types listed as follows:

- **Clone:** When someone's work is presented by another person word for word without any changes to the original text, and without reference to the source, it is called clone plagiarism.
- **Remix:** When the plagiarist paraphrases contents from different sources to make one that fits together impeccably, it is referred to as remix plagiarism.
- **404 Error:** When the student cites sources that are incorrect or non-existent, it is referred to as 404 Error plagiarism. This name 404 Error emanates from the error message which shows up when an attempt is made to access an invalid or non-existent online source.
- **Retweet:** This happens when the writer depends excessively on the wording and sentence structure of the original text. In other words, he makes profuse references to the original text.
- **Hybrid:** When a writer embeds a well-referenced source with materials from other sources which have not been cited in the work. In other words, the writer has actually cited fewer sources than used in his write-up. Such is called hybrid plagiarism.
- **TRL-C:** Here, the plagiarised text is exactly the same as the original text but for minimal changes made in it. This type of plagiarism resembles cloning except that here, the writer affects a few changes to the original text.

- **Find-Replace:** In this type of plagiarism, the keywords and phrases of the original text get replaced with synonyms or closely related words.
- **Recycle or Self-Plagiarism:** This is arguably the most modest form of plagiarism were as stated by Ayton: “the writer uses his or her own previously produced content and fails to properly provide citation” (<http://www.plagiarismsearch.com/blog/top>).
- **Mashup:** Here, the writer’s content is obtained from a diversity of sources and presented without proper citation.
- **Aggregation:** In this type of plagiarism, although the writer indicates proper citation, the entire work is full of citation and “lacks original content” (<http://www.plagiarismsearch.com/blog/top>).

### **Four Major Types of Plagiarism**

From the review of the typology of plagiarism by Bowdoin College, Enago Academy and Kelsey Ayton, the present researcher finds that one common thing among the various types of plagiarism is that it is either intentional, that is, deliberate or unintentional or accidental apart from self or auto plagiarism and cyberplagiarism. Thus, the present research examines in details four major types of plagiarism identified namely: auto-plagiarism or self-plagiarism, accidental plagiarism, deliberate plagiarism, and cyberplagiarism.

### **Auto-plagiarism or Self-plagiarism**

This occurs where a student submits to different lecturers a copy of the same work or mixture of parts of earlier works without permission from all the lecturers concerned. A classic example is “to incorporate part of a term paper written in High School into a paper assigned in a college course” (<https://www.bowdoin.edu/studentaffairs>).

It also has to do with submitting the same piece of work for assignments in different courses without previous permission from both lecturers. Take, for example, asked to write on any of the themes treated by Seydou Badian in his novel entitled *Sous l’orage*, a student writes on “Le conflit des générations dans *Sous l’orage* de Seydou Badian and submits to the teacher of the course FRNC 205: Philosophical, Social and other Parameters of Francophone (Negro-magrehbean) African Literature. For the course FRNC 311: Francophone African novel, taken by another lecturer the following year, when asked to discuss a theme treated in a francophone African novel, the same student reproduces the same assignment on “Le conflit des générations dans *Sous l’orage* de Seydou Badian” which he had submitted the previous year to another literature teacher. The teacher may not know his act of fraud but some teachers may somehow get to decipher the fraudulent act of the student. In many cases, such act of plagiarism goes unnoticed. This type is what is called self-plagiarism.

Self-plagiarism also occurs when an author republishes his own previously written work and presents it as new without referencing the earlier work either partially or in totality. Self-plagiarism is also referred to as recycling, duplication or multiple submissions of research findings without disclosure. (<http://www.plagiarismsearch.com/blog/tops>, <https://www.enago.com/academy>).

### Accidental Plagiarism

This is the act of plagiarism that is a consequence of ignorance of the rules. Here, the individual fails to cite his/her sources or “mosquitoes them” or unintentionally paraphrases a source by using similar words, groups of words and/or sentence structure without attribution (<https://www.bowdoin.edu>studentaffairs>), The student plagiarises somebody’s ideas and words by replacing some of the words with his/her own words or summarizing or paraphrasing the write-up and feeling good that he/she has used his/her own words. Therefore, he/she fails to acknowledge the sources of information and falls into the trap of what is called accidental plagiarism.

This individual probably lacks the knowledge of how to do proper referencing in academic work. He does not know that even after summarising or paraphrasing another person’s ideas or write-up or translating it from English to French etc. he must still give credit to the source. He is probably ignorant of the rule that even after replacing a couple of words in another person’s sentence or statement, one still will acknowledge the source.

**Table 1:**

| Plagiarised Content  | Original Source  |
|--|--|
| Only two years later, all these friendly Sioux were suddenly plunged into new conditions, including starvation, martial law on all their reservations, and constant urging by their friends and relations to join in warfare against the treacherous government that had kept faith with neither friend nor foe. | “Contrast the condition into which all these friendly Indians are suddenly plunged, with their condition only two years previous: martial law; now in force on all their reservations, themselves in danger of starvation, and constantly exposed to the influence of emissaries from their friends and relations, urging them to join in fighting this treacherous government that had kept faith with nobody – neither with friend nor with foe.”<br>Helen Hunt Jackson, <i>A Century of Dishonor, a sketch of the United States Government’s Dealings with Some of the Indian Tribes</i> (New York: Harper, 1881) :178. |

It is possible that the student lacks knowledge/understanding of the format and even the referencing system required in the discipline in question. Take, for example, APA (American Psychological Association) style of referencing is used in Psychology, Education, Business and some Social Sciences and Humanities Disciplines. Some Social Science Subjects use the Harvard Style, Medicine the Vancouver referencing style whereas some Humanities subjects use the Modern Languages Association of America (MLA) style of referencing. A host of universities use Cite Them Right by Richard Pears and Graham Shields as their referencing standard. This user-friendly book/online platform enables you “to reference just about anything from a tweet to an online journal to a television show” (<https://www.macmillanihe/com>page>). In the Department of French of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, the approved referencing style is MLA and currently, the 2007 Model of MLA style sheet is in use.

The individual guilty of accidental plagiarism may be lacking understanding of the rights of authors and publishers. Acknowledging the sources of information used in an academic write-up is indeed very important. Much as it is indicative of the level of research work carried out by the student, revealing that he/she has read wide and has consulted various sources of information, it also enables the student not to infringe on the right of authors and publishers. Where a student is ignorant of copyright or intellectual property rights, he or she is likely to be involved in accidental plagiarism.



The major issue here is that the offender plagiarises out of sheer ignorance. But let it be stressed here that ignorance of the law is no excuse. This lack of intent does not absolve the student of responsibility for plagiarism. Cases of accidental plagiarism are treated as seriously as any other type of plagiarism and are penalized similarly. This highlights the importance of this paper. It is meant to educate, sensitize the academic community to existing rules concerning plagiarism to help curb the incidence of the social phenomenon of academic theft.

### **Deliberate plagiarism**

Contrary to accidental plagiarism, where the offender is totally ignorant of the rules, in the case of deliberate plagiarism, the offender copies consciously his work from that of one or more persons. In a certain MA student's write-up for proposal defence, it was found that he copied verbatim, word for word several pages from two to three different published works. In a particular instance, he even copied the mistake of the author wholesomely. Having pointed out these flaws and corrected him, after a few months he came back with the work for correction and it was found that the student was still persistently copying other writers. It was evident that his case was deliberate plagiarism symptomatic of gross laziness and weakness. The student quietly withdrew from the programme.

Usually, in a case of deliberate plagiarism, the title(s) of the book/books the offender copied from are not reflected in the bibliography or works cited. Why? That is what the offender considers to be a cover-up, that if the book/books are not cited in the references; his criminal act will remain uncovered. Let it be pointed out that committed researchers/academics can easily detect sentences or ideas of specific renowned authors in any work where they are cited even without acknowledgment of the source. There was the case of a Ph.D. student who translated into French some concepts developed by a researcher in a Ph.D. work written in English and used those concepts as if they were his own findings. The same student translated three to four pages of the same Ph.D. work into French and used them in his work without acknowledging the source properly. This problem was nipped in the bud, for the student was made to do the correct thing.

In a certain Department in one university, a Ph.D. viva was suspended because it was alleged that the candidate copied profusely from the work of another Ph.D. candidate. The student was punished by being given an extension of six months to purge his work of all iota of plagiarism.

Sometimes, a student goes to another university to seize/steal a past project from the library, appropriate the work and submit for one degree or the other. This is deliberate plagiarism that is very rampant in the country. I usually advise my students to be hard-working and to try to produce their own original work. An individual is bound to be happier with and proud of the work he wrote by himself than turning another person's labor to be his own.

A very common practice today in Nigerian universities is the hiring of professional project writers. Such professional writers charge exorbitant sums and varying amounts to produce all manner of projects – undergraduate projects, dissertations, and theses. This is deliberate plagiarism on the part of the student who engages the services of a professional project writer. These professional project writers see what they do as their means of livelihood especially in a country where there is massive unemployment and where the majority of the youths are wallowing in acute joblessness and abject poverty. Despite the ugly

socio-economic situation in the country, one cannot find any reasonable justification for their fraudulent acts. In fact, they are conscienceless and their fraudulent act is a criminal and jailable offense.

### **CyberPlagiarism**

This consists of cut and paste (copier-coller) information from the web without indicating the sources. This is the modern form of plagiarism. In a scholarly work, copying in parts or as a whole the content of a website or documents available on the Internet without admitting it or showing the source is referred to as cyberplagiarism.

### **Indicators of Plagiarism**

The following are indicative of plagiarism:

- Submitting someone else's work as your own
- Copying a text written by another student or an article lifted from a newspaper or a website without proper referencing
- Copying another person's dissertation, thesis or undergraduate project or any other type of project
- Copying words, or paragraphs or ideas from another person's work without crediting the source
- Failing to enclose a quotation in quotation marks, except, when the quotation is indented
- Giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- Changing words but copying the sentence pattern of a source without proper referencing
- Copying numerous words or ideas from a source with the result that it makes up the bulk of the person's work, whether credit is given or not ("Fair use" rules). In other words, relying too heavily on other people's work.
- Interweaving various sources together in the work without citing proper references of the sources.
- Using a particular argument or a particular demonstration without indicating the source.
- Using an artistic reproduction, graphics, illustrations, geographical maps, statistics, photographs etc. without indicating the origin or source.
- Translating a work from one language to another (for example, from English to French or vice versa) without mentioning all the sources in the work where the translated excerpts are used.
- Paraphrasing or summarising information obtained from a particular source without reference to the source
- Rewriting a section without making it sufficiently different from the initial text (even if the quotation is correct).
- Downloading and using an article uploaded on the internet without citing a source, that is, using it as your own.
- Engaging/paying someone to write the project for you.
- Citing and referencing sources of information which you never used in your writ-up.
- Reproducing or recycling your own previously published works without acknowledging the source.
- Submitting to a teacher a piece of assignment you have previously submitted to another teacher for a course/module.

## **Ways to Avoid Plagiarism**

The effective ways of avoiding plagiarism are to paraphrase, cite the sources of information used in the write-up and reference them accordingly. By referencing, the writer is simply divulging that some material in the write-up has been borrowed. By accurately referencing, the readers are given the necessary information that will facilitate their gaining access to these sources of information. An attempt will be made here to examine in details the various ways of avoiding plagiarism.

### **Paraphrasing**

While on the verge of writing an essay, an assignment or any kind of project (dissertation, thesis, etc.) and you stumble on certain information you deem pertinent to your research paper, read it, try to understand it. Then put it in your own words. Ensure that you do not copy verbatim more than two words at a stretch from the borrowed content in front of you. Endeavor to write the text strictly in your own words and reference all the sources of information. Wherever you use more than two words together at a stretch you must use quotation marks. The emphasis here is on paraphrasing. It should, however, be noted that whether you successfully paraphrased in your own words or you borrowed two or three words from the source text and enclosed in quotation marks you must reference in both cases ([https://www.ivypanda.com>blog>how to av](https://www.ivypanda.com/blog/how-to-avoid-plagiarism/)). Take, for example:

An example of plagiarism: La loi du pays interdisait de réclamer des dommages et intérêts de leurs maîtres, même pour les crimes les plus abominables.

The writer replaces some words with synonyms e.g. défendait interdicit; une rémunération des dommages et intérêts; haïeux abominables.

But he fails to acknowledge the source of information and so falls into the trap of plagiarism.

An Example Free of Plagiarism: Même blessés, torturés ou raillés, les esclaves ne pouvaient faire pression pour obtenir une rémunération de leurs maîtres selon les lois des Etats-Unis à cette époque (Thomas Jefferson). Here, the writer paraphrased successfully and still referenced the source of information as per the in-text citation (Thomas Jefferson). ([fr.wikihow.com](http://fr.wikihow.com/avoid-plagiarism)).

### **Citing**

It is important to learn to cite properly as not citing properly is tantamount to plagiarism. The writer has to adhere strictly to the document formatting guideline (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.) approved for use by the educational institution or the institution which granted the research request. This usually involves the inclusion of the author(s) name(s) and the date of publication of the cited text. In some models of in-text citation (MLA), the writer is expected to include the page of the source text from where the information is obtained. Consider these examples:

### APA in-text Citation

- Onwuejeogwu (1981), Cole and Aniakor (1984) have richly talked on the richness, place, and functions of Igbo artifacts in the society.
- Falola (2001:1) observed that culture and tradition reflect the people's creativity, their adaptation to environments and the impact the external world has had on them.
- It is probably in the same vein that Emejulu (1977: 94) attributes Edouard's act of wife-lending to "the moral decadence promoted by the town and slum where sexual taboos are no longer categorically imperative."
- Dumont (1962:134) has observed that:

Ces dots tendent à prendre une valeur excessive et constituent un obstacle au développement. Dans le centre et le sud Cameroun, comme au Sénégal, une dot de 100000 à 250000 CFA est devenue courante.

Notice that in example i, there is no quotation in the cited content. The authors' names and years of publication of their works are supplied. In example ii, even though the writer does not make use of any direct quotation, the page of the source text where the information is obtained is added. In example iii, the writer in the discourse adds the exact words of the author Emejulu. Therefore, those words are enclosed in quotation marks. As in example ii, the page reference is given. In example iv, the quotation, which starts 0.5 inch from the margin and makes an allowance of 0.5 inch at the right-hand corner, is indented because it is up to three or more lines. Notice that the indented quotation is not enclosed in quotation marks. That is the rule.

It should be pointed out also that sources of the four in-text citations are acknowledged in the list of references arranged alphabetically going by the author's/authors' surname(s) under the title Works Cited. They are as follows:

Falola, T. (2001). *Culture and Customs of Indonesia*. Greenwood Publishing Press, (sic.) London.

Onwuejeogwu, M. A. (1981). *An Igbo Civilization, Nri Kingdom and Hegemony* (sic.) London: Ethnographica.

These two examples were drawn from the following reference:

Onyejegbu, N. (2018). "Traditional leadership in Contemporary Ibo Society: The Onitsha Ado Paradigm." *IKORO: Journal of Contemporary African Studies* Vol. 10, Nos. 1 & 2, February.

Dumont, René. 1962. *L'Afrique noire est mal partie*. Paris : Eds. du Seuil.

Emejulu, James. 1977. « Mongo Beti et la recherche d'identité pour une certaine lecture de Perpétue. » Paris X : Nanterre.

These two examples were drawn from the following reference:

Onyemelukwe, I. 2000. "The Girl child and Obstructed Progress in Beti's Perpétue et l'habitude du malheur." *The Pioneer: A Multidisciplinary Journal of Studies* Vol. 4, No. 4, March.

### MLA in-text Citation

- The general notion, according to the liberal feminists, is that women are more or less confined to domestic chores termed their responsibility. They are limited to a main job of wife-mother, with anything else they did tending to take a backbeat to child care and housework (Lorber 20).
- To this Simone de Beauvoir laments over the nature of ladies saying that “Women are so attached to men more than they are to themselves. Even the issue of classism, instead of turning them against the men, turns them against themselves” (23).
- Frederick Engels shares this idea. He stated:

The problem of women is attributable to their specific fixed roles in the traditional family. Women’s roles in the family exclude them from participating in public work and relegate them to the domestic and private work at home. Thus, the emancipation of women could follow only when they are allowed to participate in public work (223).

Notice that in example i above, the writer paraphrases completely the source text. There is no need to use quotation marks because this is not a direct quotation. In example ii, the researcher cites the view of Simone de Beauvoir in relation to the nature of women. At a point, he uses a direct quotation from the source text and so is compelled to use quotation marks. In ii as in i, he cites the respective pages from where the information is obtained. In example iii, the writer quotes Frederick Engels’ ideas concerning women emancipation. Notice that this quotation is indented. According to the 2007 Model of MLA style sheet, once a quotation is up to five lines or more it must be indented and it starts 1 inch from the margin and aligns on the right-hand corner. Equally here, the writer gives the page from where the material is sourced. The page reference comes at the end of the quotation and it is enclosed in brackets after which is the full stop or comma as the case may be. This is contrary to the APA style of referencing where the page is separated from the year of publication with a colon within brackets next to the author’s/authors’ name(s).

As in the case of APA in-text citations, the sources of MLA in-text citations are acknowledged at the end of the text in a list of references arranged in alphabetical order of surnames followed by first names and details of the publication.

De Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex Trans*: Parshley. New York: Vintage Books, 1974. Print.

Engels, Frederick. *The Origin and History of the family, Private Property and the State*. Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1978. Print.

Lorber, Judith. *Gender Inequality: Feminist Theories and Politics*. California: Roxbury Publishing Co., 1998. Print.

These examples were drawn from an article in a journal:

Okoye, Chuka. “Womanism Philosophy and the Question of National Development.” *KASUJOF: Kaduna State University Journal of French*. Maiden Edition (2010): 203-225.

In MLA in-text citations, when you cite more than a work of a particular author, you use short titles to differentiate the various works cited and still give the page references and acknowledge the works as end-text citations or Works Cited. Also, alphabetize the works in the references. For example, an MA student in her research work cites three different works of Jacques Chevrier. In the body of the work, she uses short titles to indicate the work in question: (Chevrier, Afrique(s)-sur-Seine) (Chevrier, Littérature 10) etc. In the Works Cited, she references these works in alphabetical order of the titles of the works. In the first reference, all details are given but in subsequent ones, the author's name is represented by three hyphens with a full stop at the end:

Chevrier, Jacques. « Afrique(s)-sur-Seine. Autour de la notion de Migritude », Repères, Revue des littératures du Sud, n<sup>o</sup> 155-156. Identités littéraires. Juillet – décembre 2004. <<http://www.adpf.asso.fr/librairie/derniers/pdf/155-156-3pdf>>  
 - - - . *Littératures Francophones d'Afrique noire*. Paris : Edisud, 2006. Print.  
 - - - . *Littérature nègre*. Paris : Armand Colin, 1984. Print.

Notice, no matter the model of in-text citation, the cited source must be referenced at the end of the write-up under reference list, Works Cited or what is also called end-text citations.

### Quoting

Each time, the writer quotes what has been said by another person, it must be quoted correctly, in fact, exactly as it appears in the source text. No individual likes to be misquoted. It should be pointed out here that no correction needs be effected on a quotation. If you notice any mistake in a quotation do not correct it; instead use (sic.) to indicate at the point of the error that you are aware of the presence of that error. When you quote, put the quotation in quotation marks. According to MLA, 2007 model of the reference style sheet, when a quotation is up to five lines or more, you do not have to enclose it in quotation marks but indent it. Below is an example of a quotation enclosed in quotation marks:

- “African women have been conditioned from birth to look at the essence of their fulfillment within the realms of marriage and motherhood” (Ohale 131).
- An indented quotation patterned after MLA style sheet: The omniscient narrator describes the savagery of the war through his experience at the war front:

Then the bedlam erupted as shells began to rain down in the trenches as if the machines and guns were guided by an unseen power. Each shell that exploded took lives with it. Cries of men rose and commingled with the sound of the explosion. As Udo lay trembling and calling on his mother, a solid but wet object fell on his back and rolled down beside him. With the gentlest of movements, he stretched his hand and touched it. He gave a stifled cry – it was a human head severed at the neck which still nestled in the steel helmet. Then he lost consciousness (438).

This is p. 438 of Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets*.

The two quotations were drawn from:

Orabueze, F. O., Tina Okoye, and Ifeyinwa Ogbazi. "The Principles of International Humanitarian Laws and the Nigerian Civil War: a Review of Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets*." Chioma Uzoho, Scholastica Ezeodili and Tina Okoye, eds. *The Dignity of a French Teacher: Celebrating Prof Julie Agbasiere*. Awka: Afab Educational Books, 2013: 191-217.

It is necessary to highlight here that a good number of institutions of higher learning do not subscribe to the use of indented or "block quotes" or quotations exceeding forty words. A researcher is expected to write in his own words. He should be able to paraphrase adequately his source material. There is no denying the fact that following this method is quite tasking and time-consuming. Nevertheless, the end result is very good and that is what matters. You must endeavor to give an accurate quotation so as to avoid being accused of plagiarism.

### **Citing your own Material**

If you use part or whole of earlier research while writing an assignment, an essay, a project of any sort without acknowledging the source, it is termed self-plagiarism and is treated on the same platform as other types of plagiarism. Therefore, in order not to fall into the trap of this type of plagiarism, cite your previously published or unpublished material in your current write-up the way you would cite those from other authors. This has to do also with using in your write-up what you have submitted for assignment in your present or earlier class or any other course work. Such practice is prohibited except if you cite yourself accurately.

### **REFERENCING**

One effective way of avoiding plagiarism is acknowledging properly/accurately in your write-up all sources of information whether published or unpublished or in web by means of referencing them in the body of the work and at the end of your research paper producing a list of authors of works cited arranged in an alphabetical order of surnames, followed by first names and other details of the works. Here, you must adhere strictly to the guidelines governing the model of referencing style sheet approved by your educational institution. Take, for example, where the model of referencing is MLA, 2007 edition, the following examples should be noted;

Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. London: Heinemann, 1958. Print.

Bâ, Mariama. *Un chant écarlate*. Dakar : NEA, 1981. Print.

--- . *Une si longue lettre*. Dakar : NEA, 1979. Print.

Cazenave, Odile. « 40 ans d'écriture au féminin. » *L'engagement au féminin, Notre Librairie* 172 (2009) : 9-14. Print.

Guidère, Mathieu. *Méthodologie de la recherche*. Paris: Ellipses Editions Marketing S.A, 2011. Print.

<<http://www.espacefrancais.com/la-litterature>. retrieved 7th March, 2018>.

Monénembo, Tierno. *Les coqs cubains chantent à minuit*. Paris : Seuil, 2015. Print.

Sanusi, Ramonu et Mufutau Tijani. *Comprendre la littérature africaine d'expression française*. Ibadan : Graduke Publishers, 2011. Print.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Qu'est-ce que la littérature ?* Paris : Gallimard, 1948.

<[www.ricochet-jeunes.orgrecherche](http://www.ricochet-jeunes.orgrecherche)> Retrieved 20th October 2018>.

Accurate referencing is considered to be a sure way to prevent plagiarism ([https://ivypanda.com/blog/how to av](https://ivypanda.com/blog/how-to-avoid-plagiarism)).

Attainment of successful referencing demands that as you read along while collecting data for your research paper, you take note, at the time of use, of full details of names of the authors, the title of the work, place of publication, publisher, year of publication. Give the URL address and date of access for all web pages, e-journals and e-books ([https://www.macmillanihe.com](https://www.macmillanihe.com/page)>page).

### Using Plagiarism Checker Services

Students, in short, researchers are advised to use plagiarism checker services such as WriteCheck to access the degree of plagiarism in their research papers. Such plagiarism checker services enable them to access their paraphrasing and other anti-plagiarism skills. A good number of educators and educational institutions, journals and publishing houses make use of plagiarism checker software to check researcher's papers, projects like dissertations and theses. Where they detect plagiarism above the limit allowed, for example, 25% as in UNILORIN, the work is rejected. Students and researchers should not take the risk of failing to use plagiarism checker services to check their research work for plagiarism ([writecheck.com/ways-to-avoid-palgiarism](http://writecheck.com/ways-to-avoid-plagiarism)).

Let it be emphasized once again that plagiarism is a very serious ethical offense in academia. One cannot afford to be careless with taking all necessary steps to purge one's research work of plagiarism. Remember, plagiarism detected visibly in one's research could result in the loss of one's academic degree or career/job.

### Read Wide and Have a firm grip of the subject matter

You need to read a lot of books (printed works) supplemented with the information you get from the internet. Relying solely on internet sources is not encouraging. It should be pointed out that printed books tend to give more authoritative information than the internet. Therefore, do not consult blindly Internet sources. Do not be lazy to read up several printed books.

The obvious advantage of reading wide is that you get more and more familiar with the subject matter. When you have a firm grip of the subject matter, you are in a position to write expressing yourself in your own words rather than copying other people's words/language and falling into the trap of plagiarism.

### Recommendations

In view of the adverse consequences of plagiarism when detected in a person's research work, the following recommendations are made:

- Plagiarism should be taught as a key learning component of Research Methodology at all levels of higher education – polytechnics, colleges of education and universities. As Enago Academy puts it: this will “address the gravity” of both accidental and deliberate plagiarism (<https://www.enago.com/academy>).



- Special workshops should be organized to educate postgraduate students on, among others, the meaning of plagiarism, the various types of plagiarism, the implications of plagiarism and how to avoid plagiarism. This will sensitize students and researchers against committing the fraudulent academic act termed plagiarism.
- Every educational institution should begin to use anti-plagiarism software to check the degree of plagiarism in the research output of its students and apply adequate penalties/sanctions where there is an allegation of plagiarism.
- Students on their own should make all efforts to avoid plagiarism in their research work. This entails working very hard, reading wide, developing actively their skill of paraphrasing or writing in their own words, as well as the knowledge of accurate citing and referencing.
- Students, teachers, lecturers, professors, all researchers should be encouraged to check their research papers for plagiarism using plagiarism checker services such as WriteCheck. This will help them nip plagiarism in the bud.

## CONCLUSIONS

It has been established in this study that plagiarism is a cancer worm in academia and that it is not only students who plagiarise but teachers, lecturers, professors, academics, in short, researchers can also plagiarise. The study establishes that there are four major types of plagiarism, namely: auto-plagiarism or self-plagiarism, accidental plagiarism, deliberate plagiarism, and cyberplagiarism. It is found that a lot of plagiarists plagiarise out of carelessness, ignorance and a lack of knowledge of all the practices indicative of plagiarism and more importantly out of a lack of knowledge of how to make accurate citations and referencing. Thus, such individuals plagiarise accidentally or unintentionally.

However, whether accidental or intentional, there is no excuse for plagiarism. There is, therefore, a pressing need to do away with this fraudulent act – plagiarism – in the academic community. All hands-on-deck to eliminate the ugly practice of plagiarism or academic theft among members of the academic community.

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