Chapter XX
Bilingual Plagiarism in the Academic World

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ABSTRACT

This chapter is an essay about a new ethical problem that has become apparent to us in recent years. Bilingual plagiarism is the act of passing off the work of others (in particular, the writing of others) as one's own and disguising the plagiarism by intentionally translating the work into another language without giving due attribution to the original author. In an increasingly connected and multilingual world where access to vast amounts of text is relatively easy, bilingual plagiarism may well be an increasing phenomenon. It is undoubtedly difficult to detect. In the chapter we analyze the drivers facilitating, and mitigating against, this new (?) phenomenon. We offer an old-fashioned solution, that of reinforcing the values on which the modern university is founded.

AN UNSEEN PHENOMENON?

The motivation for this chapter developed after both authors repeatedly found their material plagiarized on various Web sites. Both authors are visual in their work. Our papers often have diagrams to describe research plans and resulting models. The first author's (Carmel) first experi-ence of bilingual plagiarism was when she found a diagram from a report written for the Australian government which is openly available online in a conference paper written in Spanish. Carmel does not read Spanish and would not otherwise know if text had been lifted and reused without due acknowledgement. The second author (David) had a similar experience when he found that a col-

league had plagiarized his work in Chinese. The only form of detection was, again, the diagrams, because David does not read Chinese.

We have heard suggestions that plagiarism is a great form of flattery but we prefer attribution and citation. Soon after these irritating, but not really major, events David was coordinating the reviewing for a conference. He received a request from an academic in China for 50 full papers to review. We had become sensitized to the issue of bilingual plagiarism and felt a little suspicious. Neither of us know any academic who has time to review 50 papers in a matter of a few weeks. The request was politely declined.

Now, undoubtedly these three experiences of actual and potential bilingual plagiarism are not an accurate reflection of the normal practices of most academics. However, for two academics to have these experiences in the same year was an alert that bilingual plagiarism may be a problem that we need to consider. Also, if some academic teachers behave this way, then it is not unreasonable to assume that we have some students behaving in a similar fashion.

THE MULTILINGUAL INTERNET

The world is increasingly globalized. One of the consequences of globalization is that information flow across linguistic and cultural boundaries is increasing. The statistics (Year 2004) in Table 1 show that, while English may currently dominate, this may not be a long-term phenomenon. Undoubtedly, a 2008 snapshot would show marked changes.

In China, the information infrastructure has made significant progress. Yan and Liu (2006) reported a survey covering citation analysis and investigation into academic Web sites over the period 1998 to 2002. Their data showed that the environment of scholarly communication and the information behaviour of scholars have changed dramatically in mainland China with the Internet now playing an increasingly important role in scholarly communication. The situation in China is particularly fluid as is expected in any rapidly expanding situation.

Table 1. Global Internet statistics by language (adapted from Global Reach, 2004)

Language	Internet access (M)	Percentage of population online	Population online (est. in M)	Total population (M)
English	287.5	35.8	280	508
Non-English	516.7	64.2	680	5,822
European languages (non-English)	276	37.9	328	1,218
All Asian languages	240.6	33.0	263	N/A

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