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To cite this version:

Miki Mori. Our speech is filled with others' words: Understanding university student and instructor opinions towards paraphrasing through a Bakhtinian lens. Ampersand, 2018, 5, pp.45-54. 10.1016/j.amper.2018.11.002 . hal-02106409

HAL Id: hal-02106409

https://hal.science/hal-02106409v1

Submitted on 23 Apr 2019

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Ampersand 5 (2018) 45–54

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Ampersand

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/amper

Our speech is filled with others' words: Understanding university student and instructor opinions towards paraphrasing through a Bakhtinian lens

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Academic writing
Plagiarism
Paraphrasing
Bakhtin
Attitudes
Citation

ABSTRACT

At the center of academic writing sits the practice of paraphrasing. Writers are constantly paraphrasing the ideas, findings and language of others. Despite this commonplace presence, it continues to be a challenging activity for both students to engage in and for teachers to instruct. Bakhtinian theory on language use and learning could help address struggles regarding paraphrasing observed in academia. Through a Bakhtinian lens, this article presents the attitudes towards paraphrasing held by undergraduate students and writing instructors at a large US university. Using classroom ethnographic methods, the author relies on observations, interviews and textual analysis to discover how paraphrasing is understood by a specific group of individuals and how Bakhtinian theory can explain it, specifically the aspects of dialogism, response and language appropriation. Three related themes identified connect paraphrasing to work and critical thinking, maintenance of voice and textual ownership, and its value as a preferred form of source use despite its associations to plagiarism. Theoretical and pedagogical implications are also discussed.

1. Introduction

> "One's *own discourse* is gradually and *slowly wrought out* of others' words that have been acknowledged and *assimilated*, and the *boundaries* between the two are at first *scarcely perceptible*." (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 345, italics added) [3].

The above quote comes from Mikhail Bakhtin, a 20th century Russian philosopher and writer whose ideas on language have been influential for academic disciplines such as Linguistics. In this quote, he discusses how people develop a sense of language. While eventually becoming something owned, language is not inherently individualistic; rather, it is social and belongs in a public space, where it is accessible to all. The process of language appropriation—of words becoming one's own and assimilating into one's discourse, proves to be challenging. Not only is it hard work, it is also precarious work—precarious because the boundary between one's discourse and another's is not always clear.

Bakhtin's discussion of "one's own discourse" can easily be applied to how writers develop language through engaging with outside sources. Certainly, scholarly writing involves dialogue with literature for use in argumentation, proof and contextualization. Because of this, citation lies at the heart of any academic writing activity via quoting, summarizing and paraphrasing. In educational settings, students often struggle with source incorporation, particularly paraphrasing, during which they are asked to put information "in your own words." For example, while I was discussing source incorporation with an undergraduate student, Candace, she expressed concern regarding when to paraphrase, what a paraphrase is, and how to avoid plagiarizing. She told me that she would often insert quotation marks around words when citing sources because she was afraid of accidentally plagiarizing, as she wasn't sure how to appropriately paraphrase a source. This was despite having taken writing classes, being in the last year of her undergraduate studies and receiving good grades in her classes. As we continued our discussion, she came to the conclusion that we are "always paraphrasing"at the university, such as while discussing course content and texts (Interview, 11/27/12).

Her comment prompts a number of theoretical questions about citation, discussing information in your own words, and language learning. For example, her observation emphasizes that language is social and that paraphrasing is a part of the appropriation process that occurs while interacting with exemplary speech (such as a published document for citation), which is partially why "our speech … is filled with others' words" with "varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of 'our-own-ness'" [3, p. 87]. If Candace is correct, then decisions must constantly be made regarding when to cite a source or not. It is perhaps with these ideas that a writing instructor, Denise, whom I interviewed on the topic of source use, expressed her opinion that paraphrasing remains one of the most difficult activities during source incorporation and that it proves to be"the biggest challenges and

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https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amper.2018.11.002
Received 24 August 2018; Received in revised form 14 November 2018; Accepted 18 November 2018
Available online 19 November 2018
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constraints" (Interview, 4/10/13). For those familiar with teaching academic writing, this opinion is not surprising. Beyond theoretical discussions of ownership, paraphrasing as a classroom practice involves a variety of assumptions about learning, which render it a challenging activity.

Nevertheless, paraphrasing often finds itself at the center of a significant issue in academia: plagiarism. Plagiarism, the inappropriate (and sometimes unlawful) use of another's ideas or words as one's own, is often connected to citation, paraphrasing and patchwriting, where original and new language are woven together. The debate over these activities has endured for decades, including discussion on how to approach them from an institutional level and in the classroom. Certain have called for the need to distinguish between transgressive and nontransgressive plagiarism, in which the latter act is not intentional [9], while others have gone further. For example, Pecorari's [36] article calling to end the debate on plagiarism incited various responses [15,38,44], with some calling for the continued vigilance against this act [47], and most agreeing that new perspectives and research need to be seen. For those who look to end the debate on plagiarism, it is stressed that while blatant copying is certainly not acceptable, there is unintentional plagiarism that occurs, such that continued use of scare tactics may inhibit students from appropriating academic language and writing skills.

All the same, concerns from participants in academia continue, including students like Candace and instructors like Denise. Pecorari [36] called for research looking at how paraphrasing may lead to language learning and writing-skills development. Seeing paraphrasing as a tool rather than a potentially unacceptable act could alleviate stigma. This is certainly an important point, but the field also needs a broader theoretical foundation on which to stand. Insecurity and confusion around source use may stem from epistemological issues, specifically what language learning via paraphrasing entails. Bakhtinian theory offers a base from which research and teaching can approach paraphrasing. It may help advance this perplexing topic by deconstructing how language is used and learned. Specifically, the concepts of response, language appropriation and dialogism effectively explain many of the obstacles and contradictions observed in teaching paraphrasing. Before describing the study, I contextualize the research on paraphrasing and patchwriting and provide background information on the Bakhtinian theory used.

2. Literature review

2.1. The multifaceted paraphrase

In order to contextualize the study, it is important to understand what is meant by paraphrasing. In a general sense, a paraphrase is one of three ways to incorporate an outside source in writing along with summarizing and quoting, which together are called the "triad" [28]. The paraphrase involves a reformulation of an original text in order to remove linguistic similarities, while maintaining a reference to the source author and publication date. Beyond this general meaning, research does not show a unified definition of the paraphrase or its defining features that might distinguish it from a patchwritten or plagiarized text,[1] but in general, it is a linguistic reformulation of a text. Debate remains over what paraphrasing ought to entail [23,27,49]. That is, in addition to the question of form, questions remain for the function(s) of a paraphrase. Examples of these questions include whether or not the meaning changes from the source text to the paraphrase, or if it is possible to retell something in one's own words without leaving linguistic traces of the paraphrased text.

To illustrate how these two issues of form and function prove important in paraphrase research, Yamada's informative study [49]on university plagiarism policies demonstrates the need to unpack the termregarding what it is and what it does. Yamada found that in official statements, universities often end their discussion of plagiarism by stating the need for students to paraphrase, but that they do not often provide a good definition or example of paraphrasing. Second, she argued that administrators characterize plagiarism as something that can be addressed in a straightforward manner via paraphrasing. However, analyses of official sample paraphrases provided by universities showed that the paraphrases were more than just linguistic alterations, its typical *defacto* definition. Rather, the paraphrases involved sophisticated rhetorical moves beyond re-phrasing, and demanded critical thinking because of information added via inference (as discussed in Ref. [20]). For the form, the study shows how paraphrases are not simple reformulations of a source but involve the transformation of meaning. This changes their function from simple re-telling to knowledge creation. Concerning plagiarism policy, it appears that the term paraphrasing may be used as an (unconsidered) stopgap while having multiple meanings and uses attached to it.

For students, this understanding that paraphrasing involves more than just a reformulation has proven to be challenging, including L2 (second language) writers who have the additional task of mastering linguistic elements that their L1 (first language) peers already know. For example, Hirvela and Du [20] observed that while some L2 students performed well during in-class paraphrasing activities involving language reformulation, they were not able to incorporate sources via paraphrasing in a written assignment. The researchers argued this may happen due to issues concerning knowledge retelling versus creating, a topic discussed elsewhere in source use literature [1,40,41]. One student in the study was unable to paraphrase because of a perceived inability to transform information from the text. The researchers see this as a two dimensional aspect of paraphrasing, in that it is at times used to describe knowledge (re)telling and at other times knowledge transforming, despite the fact that descriptions of paraphrasing concern mostly the former. Keck [28] observed that L2 writers do not always understand this aspect of paraphrasing, seeing that they identified paraphrases that added information from the original text as inappropriate.

These observations bring into question the assumption that paraphrasing, and more largely, source incorporation, should be a neutral activity, since it has proven to be complex. Particularly, a paraphrase in its rhetorical realization may always involve some sort of evaluation or opinion, seeing that any writer has a reason for using a source, whether to support or refute a claim. Thus, it has been somewhat misleading to presume neutrality could exist when paraphrasing a text. Though there are ways to incorporate a source in a relatively unbiased manner, in the end, a paraphrase contributes to a writer's argument as a whole, making it reflect an opinion. As such, it appears that there is always a stance being taken, no matter how subtle [4,48]. Paraphrases involve a complex interaction between a student's own language—and ideas—and those of the authors incorporated into his/her writing. When paraphrasing a source, a writer includes his/her opinion, also known as stance [5] and evaluation [30]. The degree to which his/her opinion is expressed may vary, from the more neutral retelling to the highly evaluative transformation [20]. The paraphrase, far from being straight-forward, proves to be multifaceted.

2.2. Patchwriting and copied text

Paraphrasing, specifically ineffective paraphrasing, has been considered along with another phenomenon, patchwriting. In fact, approaches to theorizing plagiarism and paraphrasing have become more

[1] While an interesting topic, it is beyond the scope of this article to enter into details on plagiarism. Generally speaking, plagiarism, whether intentional or not, remains an important topic in academic settings. Paraphrasing often finds itself at the center of discussion on unintentional plagiarism. For in-depth analysis, see Refs. [7,23,34] and the *Journal of Second Language Writing's* December 2015 "Disciplinary Dialogues".

nuanced through Howard's development of this term, defined as "copying from a source text and then deleting some words, altering grammatical structures, or plugging in one-for-one synonym substitutes" [21 p. 233]. The term refers to intertextual writing that appears to have pieces of source author and authorial voice language, similar to a quilt composed of various fabrics sewn together in patches. It reframes analysis of student writing and has been used to refer to texts that have strings of words from different authors. However, like quilts, patchwritten texts vary in appearance and characteristics. The extent of seamlessness is variable. Some students may think they are effectively paraphrasing a text by changing out a few words but keeping the overall sentence structure the same. However, instructors often consider this inappropriate, identifying it either as a form of plagiarism or patchwriting. Clearly, the categorization of an (in)effective paraphrase, a plagiarized text, or a patchrwritten one depends on the context, the instructor, institutional policy, and thus varies greatly. While the objective here is not to make claims on defining these terms, some consider patchwriting as inappropriate paraphrasing (and thus plagiarism) while others do not. Those who consider it inappropriate define paraphrasing as having little linguistic trace of the cited text. Whereas patchwriting has identifiable language from the source text, a paraphrase does not, or it has minimal identifiable language at most.

Considering this, it is not surprising that patchwriting has been a topic of debate and inquiry, with some arguing that student attempts to learn language through patchwriting [18] and copying strings of text is not transgressive [16,22]. Yet others appear to use it as a way to manage stress in academia [1], and students may develop literacy and language abilities differently and gradually [12]. Nevertheless, patchwriting draws attention, perhaps due to ambiguity of voices involved and how one's voice is made clear (or occluded) and why [14]. It is a place where students can develop academic writing skills as well as address the questions of ownership, intertextuality, and learning [26]. Indeed, Pecorari even argued "today's patch-writer is tomorrow's competent academic writer, given the necessary support to develop" [34, p. 338].

Furthermore, patchwriting has more recently been considered in light of formulaic language [37] and key terms of a text [27], such as whether or not *it remains to be seen* is a lexical bundle or a quotable, ownable phrase. The use of formulaic phrases in language use certainly bring into question the idea of ownership, which Bakhtin notes as a myth since language belongs to no one person [3], as it is part of a larger social fabric. Given the argument that language exists in social contexts [4], students' use of verbatim text in patchwriting reflects a normal use of language rather than being anomalous. At any rate, research on paraphrasing may benefit from work done on lexical bundles [6,10,25,35], including how they are used and learned by novices.

2.3. Bakhtinian theory and writing research

Applying Bakhtinian theory to writing research is not necessarily new. For example, researchers looking into writing development have both called for the incorporation of Bakhtinian theories [32,42,48] and incorporated them into their studies [1,2,19,24,26,29,31,33], and [43], as a way to approach the process of learning to use words—other people's words—in writing. However, little research makes the connection between Bakhtin and paraphrasing. Bakhtinian theory [3,4] lends itself for understanding source incorporation and paraphrasing in student writing in three ways. First, a central tenant states that all language is dialogic and involves a response to a previous real or imagined utterance [4, p. 94], a response that remains subjective, even if subtle, making it a non-neutral endeavor. In academic writing, response involves discussion of a cited source's claims. Because researchers work to make connections between present analyses and past theories and findings made by researchers, academic writing is dialogic at its core.

The second connection to Bakhtinian theory is the argument that language appropriation requires much work and people struggle when engaging in the process [4, p. 92]. This struggle stems from the fact that language is owned by no one person, and words have already lived many lives in various contexts, making it difficult to claim ownership of them and use them in innovative ways. Undergraduate students take writing classes in order to improve their academic writing skills by learning the genre and its language. Some of this learning comes through incorporating exemplary sources via paraphrasing, where language is manipulated and vocabulary appropriated. Bakhtinian theory would support this idea that the difficulties students go through during this process is in fact to be expected [3]. Struggle is at the core of academic writing development. These two aspects on language and communication bring into question the relationship between learning, paraphrasing, and plagiarism. Third, the dialogic nature and multiple voices claiming ownership of language serve to create double-voicedness [3], which occurs when a phrase or sentence is stated by more than one person. Academic writing varies in how clearly the voices can be identified such as whether or not a reader can distinguish where the student's voice and the cited source merge and eventually diverge. For example, in student paraphrases, it is unclear where the student's voice ends and where the paraphrased voice of the source author begins. Furthermore, Bakhtin notes as a given the fact that copied texts exists in writing when he states, "It goes without saying that not all transmitted words belonging to someone else lend themselves, when fixed in writing, to enclosure in quotation marks" [3, p. 339]. His theories complicate the exclusively negative association of intentional and unintentional plagiarism. These concepts from Bakhtin will be used to analyze and understand the perspectives and practices on paraphrasing.

2.4. Research questions

In addition to research on how paraphrasing may be instrumental in academic writing development, so too could the field benefit from research that demonstrates how concepts from Bakhtinian theory explain the struggles related to source incorporation and issues of ownership. This study seeks to do just that by analyzing through a Bakthinian lens the opinions held by students and instructors toward paraphrasing. Considering the important place that paraphrasing holds in academic writing and its simultaneous precarious juxtaposition with plagiarism, it is important to understand how students like Candace approach this endeavor in writing contexts. Proof that the paraphrase remains a topic meriting further research becomes evident when considering that Candace was in the last year of her undergraduate career at a prestigious university, who by many indications, was an intelligent, dedicated student. If she still had reservations about this activity, it is probable that other students also struggled. What is more, seeing that she was taking a writing class, it is important to understand how her instructor and writing instructors in general approach the paraphrase. In addition, given the possible implications of Bakhtinian theory on language learning and the nature of communication to shed light on paraphrasing practices, it is worthwhile to explore the intersection of this theory with the activity. In order to address these concepts in a feasible manner, I posed the following question to guide analyses: How do these students and instructors understand paraphrasing in terms of its role and use in academic writing? Application to Bakhtinian theory is discussed in the Discussion section.

3. Methods

Data analyzed in this article came from a larger classroom ethnographic study (ethnographic methods based on Watson-Gegeo [45,46] and observed in Ref. [39]) on undergraduate multilingual[2] students'

[2] For these analyses no particular patterns were observed concerning language background and/or proficiency and paraphrasing, so that this aspect of

Table 1
Student information.

Name	Instructor	Major	Native language	Citation practices[a]
Candace	Paula	Psychology and Human Development	Mandarin	Paraphrases with short quotations
Claudia	Annette	Spanish	Spanish	Mixture of paraphrases and quotations
Mara	Denise	Linguistics	English	Mostly paraphrases
Martin	Denise	Chemistry	Spanish	Mostly paraphrases
Raquel	Paula	Sociology	Spanish	Exclusively paraphrases
Wes	Paula	Archeology	Cantonese	Exclusively paraphrases

[a] As observed during analyses of one research paper written for the class.

writing experiences at a large US, West Coast university. Three class sections of a writing course and eight focal participants (students) were followed using case study methods [13] and Grounded Theory [17]. The study relied on classroom observational data, interviews and textual analysis of documents such as student drafts and reflections. All analyzed documents, including reflections, were those written for the class. During analyses, I drew conclusions based on triangulation of data, while looking for emergent patterns related to the themes of paraphrasing and Bakhtinian theory and guided by the research questions.

Specifically, I observed 176 hours evenly spread across three class sessions of classroom interaction of a required, upper-division writing course for students hoping to find careers in education (thus an average of 58 hours per class session). During observations, I looked for any instances where source incorporation were discussed by the students or instructors, including issues related to citing sources, creating bibliographies, quoting, summarizing, paraphrasing, plagiarism, and academic dishonesty. The observations served to address the research question, in which I tried to understand student and instructor perspectives. The three writing instructors, Annette, Denise, and Paula, were experienced, PhD-holding, full-time lecturers who had taught academic writing for numerous years. I interviewed each of them regarding issues of source use and asked several open-ended questions such as “What are the biggest challenges and constraints you find in this writing class?” “In your opinion, is it best to paraphrase or quote in education/social sciences?” “Where do students learn to use outside sources?” and “What is the most important part of using outside sources for your students to be able to do?" The six students whose opinions are voiced in this article were students in one of the three instructors’ classes and came from a variety of linguistic and educational backgrounds (see Table 1).[3] I met with each student on average 5 hours, during which we talked about the class, their drafts, and their writing and educational experiences. Interviews generally focused on their current writing drafts and included asking about their educational and writing background, such as where they used to learn outside sources. When pertinent to the conversation, I also asked questions regarding paraphrasing and plagiarism.

The writing class had multiple goals, but the main goal was to improve student writing skills and prepare them for post-graduate education and work. Specific objectives including discussing readings and subjects on education, writing a total of 6000 words in multiple genres (a personal statement, a research paper, a lesson plan), drafting and revision, incorporating feedback from the instructor, and holding peer-review sessions. Students were regularly required to incorporate sources discussed in class, including articles, films, and websites. For their research paper, they were asked to do independent research and incorporate over a handful of outside sources into their paper. Discussion of source incorporation and paraphrasing was observed across sections and class resources were provided online for students.

4. Results

In addressing question one, data analyses revealed three main themes. First, paraphrasing is useful because it serves as proof that intellectual work has been done; second, paraphrasing helps students to maintain ownership of their texts by ensuring the dominance of their own voice; and third, paraphrasing is a dangerous yet fundamental way to incorporate a text in academic writing. Analyses of how Bakhtinian theory can explain these themes will be discussed for each theme in the Discussion section.

Before addressing the three themes, a general context of paraphrasing for the writing classes is provided: Paraphrasing was portrayed by some to be the default way to incorporate text, with quoting being reserved for very special language or source authors. For example, Raquel explained that in general she was asked to paraphrase for her courses, and one of her sociology professor's explained students were “wasting time on, you know, getting into it when you can just get to the point and she would be like ‘that's why you have a reference page’” (Interview, 4/24/13). In addition, the instructor Denise discussed paraphrasing as being the preferred way of using sources for many genres including sciences and social sciences, but that there was a “litmus test” for whether or not you had to use a quote, saying “if it can be paraphrased, without losing some of the importance” then do not quote it (Interview, 4/10/13).

4.1. Display proof of understanding: Do some work and “really think”

The first theme that emerged from interviews was the notion that paraphrases are preferred because they serve as proof of critical thinking and intellectual work. For example, Claudia discussed how professors wanted her to paraphrase and some asked her to stop quoting, saying “a paraphrase would be better” (Interview, 11/7/12). She noted:

> … [they] want you to paraphrase. They would like that much better rather than giving specific quotes. Because if you do that you're not really thinking. You're just copying what the book says but if you can paraphrase or change it around then they can see that you're actually analyzing.
>
> (Claudia, Interview, 11/7/12)

Claudia frames paraphrasing as work that demonstrates thinking and analyzing. With this understanding, it can be beneficial to both the writer and the instructor because it helps a student analyze a text and the instructors are given a visual display of such thinking. The paraphrase serves as a way to demonstrate academic literacy in critical thinking including analysis, synthesis, and inference.

Paraphrasing was also characterized as involving work, which made it more difficult than other forms of source use. Claudia discussed this idea as well, when she reported understanding its value, saying that a paraphrase is useful because “you're at the same time citing the other sources and analyzing them,” adding “so now I tend to do that. But before I loved doing the quotes. It was easier” (Interview, 11/7/13).

(*footnote continued*)
student background is not explored.

[3] The two students who did not discuss paraphrasing were excluded from this article.

Claudia recognizes that paraphrasing is more labor-intensive but useful since it forced her to think through the source's ideas and analyze them. It is "easier" to directly insert a quote in a text or to "go get the quote and put it there" rather than breaking down the wording and rephrasing it. Like Claudia, the instructor Annette brought up the idea of work and paraphrasing as the means through which to incorporate a source (Observation, 11/28/12). References to paraphrasing involving the work of critical thinking and manipulation of language were discussed during class by the instructors, such as to not "just copy and paste" (Paula, Observation, 1/29/13) and discussing the act of taking notes on it as being "labor intensive" (Denise, Observation, 11/1/12). What is desired here is the proof that a student has spent time engaging and manipulating a text, thus demonstrating a certain amount of work and critical thinking.

4.2. The loudest voice: Maintaining ownership of a text

In addition, paraphrasing was valued in terms of reassuring the reader that the student had full control of the text and it was not "overtaken" by other's words, as can happen with quotes. For example, in discussing a sample research paper, one student in Denise's class noted that the text had too many quotes and that s/he should add his/her own words and language (Denise, Observation, 10/24/12). In addition, when discussing a draft and a quote that he had used, Martin mentioned Denise had advised them not to use too many quotes since "it's better to paraphrase. It seems like more your paper then." (Interview, 12/4/12). He had a similar point of view, stating that he didn't understand why some of his classmates just "quote, quote, quote" rather than paraphrase. In this sense, a paraphrase helps maintain ownership of the text since the language is that of the student, even if the ideas are not. Similarly, there were references to quotations "taking over" a student's essay, such as when Martin discussed one of the reasons why he preferred to paraphrase:

> Sometimes I want to use a long quote, but I don't think using such a long quote will work, so I rather paraphrase to get in all the information I need while keeping the quote small, so it will not take over my paper.
>
> (Martin, Email Correspondence, 3/19/13)

In this correspondence, Martin expresses the need to maintain control of the text despite wanting to use someone else's words; he also recognizes that in a text there is often a mixture of types of source incorporation, including paraphrasing and quoting one source at the same time.

The idea of "someone else" taking up space in one's text was also observed when the instructor Annette discussed the potential issues involved in using long block quotes in a text. She said that not only might the reader skip over them, but also:

> They sort of take away from your argument because you're pulling in almost like too much of somebody else instead of doing that work more yourself.
>
> (Annette, Observation, 11/28/12)

In this sense, reformulation of sources via paraphrasing helps a writer maintain ownership of a text, a valuable characteristic of argumentative writing. The act of "pulling in … too much of somebody else" connects to the amount of work and effort a writer has to go through when paraphrasing. Quoting may demonstrate that a student has a weak argument because there was not much done to paraphrase someone else's ideas. Not only is there a lack of effort, but a lack of ownership and voice.

4.3. Dangerous and confusing, yet important

The third and most prominent theme on paraphrasing is its status as something desired but dangerous due to its close relation to plagiarism, which again is a transgressive act antithetical to the academy. This last theme, rather than relating to a specific positive trait of a paraphrase, such as proof of work or ownership, demonstrates the conflicting messages on paraphrasing instructors may give and students may harbor. These inconsistencies may stem from a contradictory understanding of what a paraphrase is and what it ought to do. To start, the instructors clearly expressed their concern for unintentional plagiarism via incorrect paraphrasing with their students. Specifically, for Annette it was in the context of putting something "from a source's words to your own" (line 2) that created concern for plagiarizing. She discussed how paraphrasing involved "translating" language but was closely related to patchwriting:

> Let's go to paraphrasing. Paraphrasing is when you basically translate a short passage from a source's words to your own … You have to be really careful when you paraphrase. It's sort of the most dangerous area for plagiarism. You have to compose your own sentences completely. And you have to be careful not to just use the author's sentence but like replace every four words or something. That's called patchwriting. And that's technically plagiarism. So I think this one is probably the most difficult to do. I generally encourage students to pick a summary or quote and if there's a particular reason why you want to paraphrase, I can help you with that.
>
> (Annette, Observation, 11/28/12)

While presenting this option of the triad for source incorporation, Annette presents the paraphrase as a "dangerous area" for something that is "technically" plagiarism. The danger lies in how complete of a transformation a text is from the source author to the authorial voice. Patchwriting remains somewhere in-between because the original sentence structure remains the same but the writer "replace(s) every four words". Paraphrasing is defined by what it is not (patchwriting) and as a process of writing "your own sentences completely". Annette seems to recognize the difficulty student writers may have in actually following through the process of producing acceptable sentences or texts. The description of patchwriting as "technically" plagiarism suggests an awareness of the controversies around transgressive and non-transgressive source use. Nonetheless, paraphrasing gets established as a place to tread cautiously despite its apparent usefulness in academic writing.

The other instructors also referenced the delicate balancing act one must perform when trying to walk the line between paraphrasing versus patchwriting. For example, when discussing the requirements for the annotated bibliography of the research paper, Paula drew attention to such a "line." In one part of the annotated bibliography, students must summarize the reference in 100 words. Paula stated,

> This should be in your own words. I don't want you to just copy and paste the abstract, which is tempting to do. Right? Think about issues of plagiarism and over paraphrasing … There's a fine line between paraphrasing and plagiarizing, right? If you have a question about—email me the original abstract and your paraphrase and I can tell you, OK?
>
> (Paula, Observation 1/29/13)

A contrast is made between having something "in your own words" and doing minimal manipulation of language from "copying and pasting." The use of "just" suggests a need for students to involve themselves in some work when paraphrasing their sources. Later in the conversation, she made the connection between plagiarism and paraphrasing, stating that the line between them is "fine", such that students might want to proceed cautiously. Paula mediates this tension by offering to check the paraphrase. She offers to help them as they work through modeling and manipulating the language of the referenced text, and the email is a practice session of sorts.

This offering of support with navigating through paraphrasing an outside source was also seen in Denise's class after discussion of paraphrasing and plagiarism. To start, while reviewing the three ways to

incorporate a text, Denise also framed paraphrasing as challenging and potentially dangerous, saying,

> Denise Now paraphrase, and I know I'm going to stop here, is the trickiest. I want to hear why it's the trickiest … Why is paraphrasing trickier?
>
> Student Because you don't want to plagiarize.
>
> Denise Because you don't want to plagiarize and because you work with a smaller chunk of material. Maybe you want to paraphrase two to three sentences, a paragraph, right? And you want to write it in your own words but it's very hard to move away from the words of the author. And that's where you can do what we call often "plagiaphrasing" ok? Where you're trying to paraphrase but you're actually plagiarizing … So we're going to come back to this but this is the tricky part so I'm going to help with that.
>
> (Denise, Observation, 10/16/12)

Denise discusses paraphrasing as not impossible but still "tricky" and "the trickiest". When asked why, a student quickly responds that it was due to plagiarism. This suggests that the instructors are not alone in seeing paraphrasing and plagiarizing as being two sides of the same coin. Rather, students too seem aware of this potential danger in paraphrasing. Also, rather than referring to patchwriting, Denise calls the semi-paraphrase an act of "plagiaphrasing" recognizes that this often is done unintentionally and that it is difficult to "move away from the words of the author", as Bakthin argues [4]. This is despite the fact that the "plagiaphrasing" is a reformulation of "a small chunk of material". Like the other instructors, paraphrasing gets positioned as a tool to use with caution due to its challenging nature. The part of paraphrasing that is "tricky" seems to involve the idea that "you're trying to paraphrase but you're actually plagiarizing". The unintentional characteristic of plagiaphrasing would appear to render students powerless against preventing plagiarism. Certainly, it is difficult to avoid something when it's not clear what it looks like. Finally, like Annette and Paula, Denise explains that she can provide support for students.

Besides the instructors, students were aware of the "dangers" of paraphrasing due to the possibility of plagiarizing, even if unintentionally. Driven by this fear, some students reported changing the way they incorporated outside texts. Some found it challenging toidentify an acceptable paraphrase. Rather than deciding which of the three ways to use a source based on its rhetorical effectiveness, decision-making was motivated by the need to avoid unintentionally plagiarizing. To illustrate, Candace, fairly concerned about accidentally plagiarizing, reported changing her approach to source incorporation. Rather than paraphrase, Candace used quotes. When discussing a paper for the course and her use of paraphrasing, we discussed the following:

> Miki And then do you paraphrase anything? You use some quotes here, right?
>
> Candace Yeah, uhh, well this one is talking about like research.
>
> Miki Alright. Yeah do you find you're often able to say it in a different way? Does that make sense? Like paraphrase it?
>
> Candace Paraphrase it?
>
> Miki You know—
>
> Candace I usually just quote it because I feel hesitant to paraphrase because I don't know if it is like plagiarizing, so.
>
> Miki Yeah.
>
> Candace I usually just quote it.
>
> (Candace, Interview, 11/5/12)

Not only does she recognize the idea that paraphrasing and plagiarizing are closely related, but she also frames the argument as though she did not know what an inappropriate paraphrase might look like. Candace appears to express the thought that paraphrasing requires more work than something such as quoting and that a (legitimate) paraphrase is not easy to discern. For her, the safest and preferred option is to quote, which may not be the most effective writing practice given the value placed on paraphrasing in academia and the rhetorical benefits of it. In addition, Candace discussed another way to avoid paraphrasing since she "never really knew how to do like the paraphrase thing and then you like cite at the end" (Candace, Interview, 11/27/12). She reported only citing a source when using a direct quote, suggesting that paraphrases were not cited, an act typically considered plagiarism in the academy. She had just been discussing confusion over common knowledge of courses, such as what is learned in lecture or a textbook, and whether or not to cite a source. Her thoughts certainly suggest a gap in the area of academic literacy that involves source incorporation and paraphrasing.

Another student, Wes, had a similar experience with his essay, although he exclusively paraphrased sources. In a written reflection on the drafting experience, Wes considered the citations in one particular paragraph that primarily summarized and paraphrased a single source but in which nearly every sentence had an end-of-text citation. We had met earlier to discuss this paragraph and I suggested removing some of the end-of-text citations since it was clear that he was summarizing and paraphrasing the source across multiple sentences. Later, he expressed concern over my suggestion when he noted,

> I was very reluctant to trim remove [sic] those citations because I was not sure whether it was a good idea to risk not giving credits to my sources.
>
> (Wes, Reflection Assignment)

First, despite the fact that he engages in paraphrasing, he does not seem to have mastered how to cite his sources. Second, Wes was concerned about unintentionally plagiarizing. Once again, this fear preoccupies a writing student, perhaps more than rhetorical considerations of source use, such as why I suggested him to remove some of the end-of-text citations to begin with. In addition, Wes' uncertainty about citation practices was not a unique experience, as another student, Mara, expressed frustrations over how she was taught to use the triad for source incorporation. She discussed being unaware of any standard practice that should be followed, noting that it was clear that quotes should be used sparingly but adding,

> But it's incongruent. Because I thought that if I relied too much on quotes, it just sounds like I'm not trying to make the effort of digesting the information I'm just parroting back the stuff. So … I thought I've always been told it's an issue of integrity and not plagiarizing. And yeah no one has ever told me really when it's more beneficial to go with quotes or paraphrasing. Come to think of it it's always been lumped together. Do either but cite.
>
> (Mara, Interview, 11/21/12)

In addition to demonstrating an assumption that paraphrasing involves making an effort of "digesting the information" rather than "just parroting back the stuff" Mara frames the utility of source incorporation in terms of plagiarism and recognizes the compromising position some students feel when considering the setbacks of quoting and paraphrasing. Her statement about summarizing and paraphrasing having been "lumped together" in her courses also suggests that others may think of the triad as having equal importance. Her comments highlight the ambiguities and variability in beliefs about paraphrasing.

During another interview, Candace expressed similar concerns, confusion and fears with paraphrasing. When I asked again about her practices, she gave a response that suggested struggling with issues of paraphrasing, learning and knowledge:

> I just felt like the paraphrasing maybe it was like confusing to me, so I didn't really want to use it in my writing because I was scared—I thought I would use it wrong or I would plagiarize, so I just decided

> to avoid it altogether … But I mean like—I guess you're like always paraphrasing … Like whatever you learn in class and we discuss in an essay ideas and concepts like that … I always thought of that as paraphrasing. So I don't really know like whether to cite that or not. Because I feel like if you did, like your entire paragraph would be like cited.
>
> (Candace, Interview, 11/27/12)

One theme that emerges from her response is the amount of concern she has over plagiarism, so much so that it drives her to avoid engaging in an important activity in academia. At the same time, Candace seems to be questioning the practice of paraphrasing when she notes that "you're like always paraphrasing" such that citing each paraphrase would result in "your entire paragraph" being cited addresses fundamental concerns some students might have regarding what ideas are their own and which are not. Just as Wes cited nearly every sentence in a paragraph, Candace too observes that perhaps this practice is not that unusual. These observations speak to (not) knowing the appropriate ways of indicating language or ideas that could belong to both a source or an instructor and a student, marking a double-voiced nature. That is, a paraphrase could be half one's own and half another's [3] and in classroom settings, students are learning new concepts and associated language, but at what point a concept or word becomes "known"or owned remains a dilemma.

5. Discussion

This study sought to uncover how certain students and instructors understand paraphrasing and how Bakhtinian theory can explain their opinions. Three interrelated themes were found. First, paraphrasing is a preferred way to incorporate a text because it demonstrates a level of critical thinking and work in contrast to quoting, which does not require much effort. It indicates to instructors that a student has done the work of reformulating ideas and language of another text. Second, paraphrasing helps writers maintain control of their text and prevents it from being overtaken by the voice of another, such as in a long quotation. It helps students assert themselves as owners of their essays. Last, paraphrasing is presented as something that is dangerous, confusing, and closely related to plagiarism. Nevertheless, students and instructors alike recognize the utility of paraphrasing in academic writing for its various uses, including its *defacto* preferred status in some fields.

5.1. Response and struggle are part of the job

As for Bakhtinian perspectives on work and thinking during paraphrasing, the quote at the beginning of the article discusses language appropriation as something that is "slowly wrought" [3, p. 345] which implies people will struggle during language creation and active engagement with the source text. It seems that this idea—that language appropriation should be a challenging act, is shared by gatekeepers in academia. Students are expected to struggle with source incorporation. It is supposed to be a challenge, including via the use of paraphrasing. A student essay that primarily contains paraphrases proves to the instructor that the student is engaging in an activity involving hard work while improving language skills.

In addition, Bakhtin discusses how language learning remains difficult because language itself has already been owned by others and has its own meanings and associations:

"Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated—overpopulated—with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process" [3, p. 293].

Therefore, if one goal of a writing class is to have students learn academic language while reading exemplary texts, then the paraphrase serves as a useful tool to achieve these goals. Paraphrasing someone else's words and ideas requires students to engage this non-neutral medium and to expropriate it. Rather than passively reading and learning, students develop language through this "difficult and complicated process," which may explain why instructors prefer students to paraphrase rather than quote. Indeed, this may be a way for students to show proof of their understanding and learning process. These arguments align with findings that lower-graded undergraduate essays use more quotations than higher-graded ones [29].

5.2. Language appropriation, ownership, and the loudest voice

Not only is a paraphrase important for showing that work has been put into the writing process, it also serves as a marker of ownership. While the writing process is social, the written text is private and individually owned, particularly in student writing. Since students submit an essay for an individual grade, they are expected to be the owners of its language. A paraphrase helps ensure this. Bakhtin discusses at length the process of language appropriation and ownership, saying language "… becomes 'one's own'" only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention" [3, p. 293]. When paraphrasing, a student is asked to take the ideas and language of another and transform them into something that is her own via adaptation and intent.

Furthermore, the argument that a paraphrase demonstrates ownership relates to the act of response and interpretation. It involves response to and struggle with the ideas and language of others in the process of language appropriation [3,4] in a Bakhtinian sense. A student responding to a cited source is an individual activity. While other forms of source incorporation, such as a quotation or a summary, involve response, paraphrasing an outside source involves both a reaction to ideas and to language. A paraphrase is at once an understanding and a response Moreover, considering the paraphrase as a response to other's ideas, course concepts or research findings, it may be where "understanding comes to fruition" because "understanding and response" occur together, such that "one is impossible without the other" [3, p. 282]. He also argues that the two acts demonstrate "active understanding" [3, p. 281], such that response via paraphrasing serves as a marker of ownership and an indication of work, both valued traits in academia.

Thus, the second theme of ownership and voice is related to the first of work and thinking, in that a paraphrase indexes multiple valued academic traits and activities; response and understanding are one and the same, such that engaging outside sources involves not only creating opinion but also language. Asking students in writing assignments to paraphrase a source involves much more than asking them to re-phrase and re-word a text. It involves much more than paying attention not to plagiarize and showing effort has been made. These arguments support Yamada [49] and Hirvela and Du's [20] research arguing that paraphrases are more than retelling. Certainly, Bakhtinian epistemology asks individuals to go beyond the adage of reformulating a cited text "in one's own words," since response is above all creative. A paraphrase in its most basic sense is a re-creation.

5.3. No line to be found: Dialogism, double-voicedness, and patchwriting

One of the main concerns coming from the instructors and students is finding "the line" between a paraphrase and plagiarism. In addition, Annette and Denise discuss patchwriting as a transgressive act, which should be avoided by the students. While the instructors all propose individual aid to students to avoid patchwriting, there is little to no discussion of its role in the writing process, despite the fact that it may be a step in language development [18,21,34]. Furthermore, the overall uneasiness expressed by the instructors and students suggest the epistemological conflict at the core of source use and ownership in

academia: knowledge is shared, but degrees and grades are individually owned. Language and ideas are to be shared *and* to be individually owned. For Bakhtin, this discord is normal since discourse is always double-voiced and can serve "two speakers at the same time" [3, p. 324]. This apparent paradox concerns several concepts related to double-voicedness, including authoritative discourse, internal persuasiveness and the essence of paraphrasing. The authoritative discourse, as its name implies, holds symbolic power and does not allow space for transformation when it is appropriated. Because of this, transforming an authoritative text proves challenging. Certain cited sources and academic discourses could be considered authoritative. What is needed is for the cited sources to contain internally persuasive discourse that can be approached, responded to and appropriated. Bakhtin notes "the internally persuasive word is half-ours and half-someone else's" [3, p. 345]. This may appear in the form of patchwriting as seen in the reference to the assimilation of another's internally persuasive discourse being "tightly interwoven" with one's own language (p. 345). Not only is this interweaving expected, but a paraphrase must also not entirely disassociate itself from the source. A paraphrase, created in one's own words, "must not completely dilute the quality that makes another's words unique; a retelling in one's own words should have a mixed character" (p. 341). According to Bakhtinian theory, there is in fact no line to be found between the student's language and the source's, between a paraphrase and a patchwritten text. Perhaps the unease expressed by the teacher and students comes from this inability to delineate that which is necessarily mixed. These perspectives have been shared by researchers looking into paraphrasing and source use [8,20]. Furthermore, these ideas are in conflict with the system of publication, copyright, and authorship. In reality, words, strings of texts and ideas can in fact be owned (see Ref. [7]).

One central point of conflict expressed by the instructors and the students was the fact that paraphrasing is presented as a simple tool to use when citing, yet it is also just a few misplaced words away from a transgressive act in academic institutions. Complexity and apparent conflict in discourse are considered normal in Bakhtinian theory:

"Within the arena of almost every utterance an intense interaction and struggle between one's own and another's word is being waged, a process in which they oppose or dialogically interanimate each other. The utterance so conceived is a considerably more complex and dynamic organism than it appears when construed simply as a thing that articulates the intentions of the person uttering it" [3, p. 354–355].

While not specifically discussing paraphrasing, the word "utterance" could easily be replaced with "paraphrase," showing that it is a complex site of struggle, long from being one of three easy alternatives for incorporating a source. Given this idea, it may only seem evident that the instructors and students express concern and confusion. At its essence, paraphrasing is a "complex and dynamic organism" and certain manuals and administrative documents construe it as something much simpler. Although not explicitly discussed, the opinions expressed by instructors during observed classroom interaction and interviews suggest an underlying acknowledgment of this unsettling aspect of paraphrasing.

In addition, dialogism accepts how "in all areas of life and ideological activity, our speech is filled to overflowing with other people's words, which are transmitted with highly varied degrees of accuracy and impartiality" [3, p. 337]. Rather than being something dangerous or unacceptable, patchwriting is inherent to communication. However, some students seem so concerned of committing an academic "crime" that they miss the potential benefits of paraphrasing for their own writing development. Even if it a challenging and complex activity, it is one that students should strive to engage in for learning. Indeed, for Paula, paraphrasing is "an art form" (Interview, Paula, 4/3/13) in its difficulty to master. This idea of an art form hearkens back to D'Angelo's argument that there is an "art of paraphrase" and that it is beneficial for students to learn how to do it [11], p. 255].

5.4. Practical considerations of source use and Bakhtinian theory in academic settings

Concerns regarding unintentional plagiarizing and patchwriting while paraphrasing centered on where in a text there is a clear demarcation of the self and other. Specifically, for students and instructors, the challenge comes from understanding paraphrasing and source incorporation to involve a "blend" [8] as cited in Ref. [20] and an integration (Paula, Interview, 4/3/13; Paula, Observation, 1/31/13; Annette, Observation, 11/28/12; Denise, Observation, 10/16/12) of voices. Because of this, student drafts in which they are appropriating academic language may look like patchwriting. Nevertheless, the paraphrase's double-voiced nature should be recognized in academic writing contexts, even if this understanding undermines the degree of transgression in patchwriting. Formulaic language and key terms highlight this double-voicedness, and research on the subject suggest that the need for recognition of its place in collective knowledge [27,37].

This epistemological grey area of appropriate forms of paraphrasing creates pedagogically tense situations for teaching the paraphrase. This was observed during the teachers' discussions of paraphrasing, where they at once promoted it and yet gave plenty of warnings of its dangers. They seemed concerned about opening up students to the vulnerability of unintentional plagiarizing with its serious academic and administrative repercussions. Entwined in this struggle are the fears of unintentionally plagiarizing. Framing paraphrasing as a "tricky" and dangerous exercise are corollaries to the fact that the parameters of an appropriate paraphrase were not clearly identified by the instructors nor known by the students. Indeed, the "unintentional" in unintentional plagiarism suggest a lack of control. If students do not feel they have control over their paraphrases, their language, then it seems unlikely that they can remain the orchestrator of the source authors' voices, ensuring that a paper is not "taken over" by someone else's words. While the instructors all expressed willingness to help students individually with their paraphrases, little time was spent in class going over exemplary paraphrases.

Given that the students were in their last year of undergraduate studies, these feelings of insecurity and confusion show that the topic of paraphrasing may have been under taught during these students' years of studying in secondary school and at the university. Research in graduate student settings devoted to this subject suggests the same [2,41]. Despite its importance in academic writing, the paraphrase may well be a topic not thoroughly or effectively covered in writing courses. To help students understand the rhetorical uses of paraphrasing as well as its technical parameters, writing instructors could dedicate more of their syllabus to this activity, in addition to source incorporation in general. Rather than being a technicality to master or a question of formatting, source incorporation is a multifaceted endeavor that merits substantial time devoted to it. Institutional support through writing and educational success centers could also help students during the writing process while supporting writing instructors, who often have fairly loaded syllabi with other topics such as research, reading comprehension and genre analysis. Nevertheless, paraphrasing could be incorporated into such topics, as they all involve source use. For example, analyses could include looking at how certain genres prefer paraphrasing over quoting and why. Seeing the interaction of information at play in paraphrasing may lend to deeper understanding of this subject, since student writers may be challenged by understanding not only the form but also the function of a paraphrase.

Finally, challenges observed in academia may not only stem from questions of course planning. Academia may need to reconsider their assumptions regarding the paraphrase, including epistemological notions of language, learning and communication. Specifically, given the analyses of student and instructor perspectives on paraphrasing, adopting a Bakthinian approach to language use and learning could help instructors, administrators and students engage in paraphrasing in

a more productive way. The theory discussed may help alleviate tensions over plagiarism and patchwriting by accepting the latter as part of a normal process of language appropriation and communication. Adopting such a theoretical framework would require serious reconsideration of how language, ownership and writing are understood. Despite this, having Bakhtinian theory as a lens through which to teach academic writing could advance the field as a whole, as it focuses on two important aspects, language learning and discourse, in a unique, comprehensive and effective manner. This is not just the responsibility of instructors; rather, more support among the various actors at the university is needed regarding paraphrasing and plagiarism in general [44].

The study, while shedding light on some perspectives on paraphrasing, is limited in its scope. Further research looking at perspectives elsewhere, held by other individuals in other contexts is required for a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. Studies linking perspectives with practice would also help policy makers and instructors better understand the processes of paraphrasing and how to approach them in the classroom. Moreover, more studies are needed in which students reflect on their paraphrasing, as seen in Shi, Fazel, Kowkabi [41]. In the end, a central goal of writing instruction in university settings is to foster student intellectual development and encourage them to engage in knowledge appropriation, retelling, and recreation, all while forging new and hybrid academic identities (see Ivanic for writing and identity [26]).

6. Conclusion

To conclude, paraphrasing claims its place in a variety of discussions, including issues of formulaic language and common knowledge, origination and negotiation of ideas, ownership of a text, and language and writing development. It holds an indispensable place in academic writing despite its complexity and link to the transgressive act of plagiarism. A closer look at how students and teachers understand the paraphrase reveals its perceived functions and highlights pedagogical areas of improvement for writing classes and academia. Yet, if Candace was right in noting that we are always paraphrasing in academia, then it is important to rethink how we consider its role in education. Bakhtinian theories provide a useful framework through which we can reconsider its role, and could help educators and administrators maneuver through policies and practice. Specifically, this theory believes that language is social, such that formulaic language [37] and lexical bundles [25] are to be expected in writing. In addition, response via paraphrasing involves a minimal amount of interpretation and transformation of ideas and language, as has been observed [20,41,49]. Finally, the theory supports calls to normalize patchwriting [22,34] since the inability to find the line between an appropriate paraphrase and one that seems too much like the original is to be expected.

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