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From Phrase to Discourse Level Patchwriting: Is it Possible to Unlearn?

Academic writing instructors often note that inexperienced student writers use extensive textual borrowing techniques. Although ample data exist on EFL writing development and views concerning textual appropriation, follow-up studies on the changes made to patchwritten sections during the writing process are lacking. This paper, through examples of different versions of theses written by non-native English (under)graduates, discusses the extent to which students are able to abandon patchwriting after receiving feedback on their writing. It is argued that one of the reasons for extensive patchwriting is a fossilized writing strategy many students employ and are unable to surpass regardless of the feedback they receive or their knowledge about plagiarism.

1. Introduction

One of the growing topics of concern in academic communities around the world is the originality of the manuscripts submitted for publication and the plagiarism issues surrounding written assignments in higher education. In source-dependent parts, such as the introduction, background and literature-review sections of papers, in which previously accumulated knowledge about a given topic is summarized, larger textual chunks may appear from published or unpublished texts. Novice authors often have difficulties paraphrasing and summarizing the works of others. What they do is work from texts rather than work from sources. Reasons for this can be various, including the lack of academic writing and reading skills, insufficient note-taking skills, erroneous ideas about expectations and rules, cognitively too challenging tasks or low language proficiency skills. Inexperience, hurried work, language difficulties or a permissive local academic culture may also lead to plagiarized texts.

From the writing mechanism and academic integrity points of view, the practice of using the texts of other authors has been labeled by different terms, including *textual borrowing* (Baily & Challen, 2015; Keck, 2014, Petrić, 2012; Shi, 2004), *source text borrowing* (Weigle & Parker, 2012), *substantial unattributed textual copying* (Office of Research Integrity, USA, 2015), *copy-paste plagiarism* (Haen & Molnar, 2014; Mozgovoy, Kakkonen & Cosma, 2010), *patchwork plagiarism* (Goh, 2013; Šupak Smolčić & Bilić-Zulle, 2013), *mosaic plagiarism* (Coughlin, 2015; Kohl, 2011), *semantic plagiarism* (Geravand & Ahmadi, 2014; Osman et al., 2012), *textual appropriation* (Shi,

2006, 2012), *transgressive intertextuality* (Abasi & Akbari, 2008) and *patchwriting* (Pecorari 2003; Howard, 1993, 1999; Howard, Serviss & Rodrigue, 2010; Li & Casanave, 2012). Although these terms are widely used, often interchangeably, very few studies report examples of textual borrowing parallel with the source texts that would help us understand the mechanisms behind text reorganization, the length and the number of the borrowed chunks and their proportion in the new texts. All these terms intend to indicate some degree of unacceptable copying from sources, without appropriate paraphrasing, summarizing or citation practices.

Howard proposes the use of patchwriting to indicate the writing practice of novice writers (especially L2 students) during which they put effort in summarizing or paraphrasing source texts but fail to follow academic conventions (Howard, 1993). She defines patchwriting as "copying from a source text and then deleting some words, altering grammatical structures, or plugging in one-for-one synonym-substitutes" (Howard 1993: 233). In her 1999 study, Howard suggests that patchwriting is a natural, passing stage of L2 academic writing and should be acceptable in a draft stage, but not in a final paper (Howard, 1999). Although Howard deliberately separates patchwriting from academic dishonesty, patchwriting in her view refers to a form of textual plagiarism in which strings of words are integrated into the writer's text, but not with the aim of deceiving the reader, but due to citation, paraphrasing mechanisms and course processing problems.

Other studies discussing paraphrasing have also attempted to differentiate between forms of textual borrowing, using different terminology. Campbell (1990) discusses exact copies, near copies and paraphrases, the later ones making more syntactic changes to the original texts. Shi (2004) distinguishes between two levels of paraphrases, i.e. closely paraphrased sections with syntactic and lexical changes and total paraphrases with no longer than three-word strings kept unchanged from the source texts.

Very few studies have reported parallel data to illustrate forms and degrees of patchwriting. Pecorari (2003) reviewed sections of MA and PhD theses written by foreign students at three British universities. The author investigated the proportion of source texts integrated into the students' papers and their relationship to the sources. Through retrospective interviews she was also able to answer questions of cultural differences, awareness of textual borrowing and paraphrasing difficulties. She found instances of patchwriting in all the 17 investigated papers, although with a varying degree. Some had a minimal overlap, while others had a larger than 70% match with the sources. The analysis of the student papers in parallel with the sources provided examples of the different writing mechanisms that students employed.

Howard, Serviss and Rodrigue (2010) looked at patchwriting from the perspective of how well novice student writers understand their sources. They

found that students write from individual sentences rather than summarizing the main ideas of the works they read. Following the methodology of Pecorari (2003), the authors selected second-year students' texts and matched them up with the sources, if these were available. The majority of the participants in this study were native speakers of English, although the L1 of the participants was not studied. The authors investigated instances of four strategies of using sources, namely summarizing, paraphrasing, patchwriting and copying. Anything that was used verbatim was classified as copying, regardless of the use or absence of quotation marks or citation of the sources. The laborsome nature of this method was highlighted. All the 18 papers contained paraphrased and summarized sections, 89% of them some form of patchwriting and 78% direct copying. Interestingly, 94% of the papers included information not cited and 78% of the authors indicated sources that did not contain the given piece of information. This study clearly shows that patchwriting is not exclusively a non-native writing problem and that it is often intertwined with other forms of source misuse (see also Pecorari, 2006, 2008; Shi, 2004).

Vieyra, Strickland and Timmerman (2013) analyzed proposals in which they searched for instances of direct copying, appropriation containing word changes, passages integrated through grammar changes and mixed types. The occurrences of patchwriting were also investigated for the type of sources, the existence and accuracy of the sources cited and the place of patchwriting in the proposals. As for the types of plagiarism, direct copied chunks were used the most often, followed by word changes, grammatical changes and complex types (also referred to as unsuccessful paraphrasing).

In recent years, small-scale interview studies in different educational contexts have also investigated L2 students' reasons behind their decisions concerning citing behaviors (e.g., Adam, Anderson & Spronken-Smith, 2016; Harwood & Petrić, 2012; Schembri, 2009; Shi, 2012). These suggest that students are trying to find a balance between perceived academic expectations (e.g., the number and proportion of citations needed in their texts), academic literary skills, their understanding of the sources they have access to, and the allocated time for the writing task. Students' perceptions concerning appropriate citation practices may be different when they are asked to judge the integrity of paraphrased and patchwritten texts written by someone else compared to their own writing (Shi, 2012; Polio & Shi, 2012).

The growing number of studies concerning citation behaviors and perceptions indicate that even novice writers have a general understanding about the need to acknowledge sources, yet they often patchwrite. The extent to which they do so in their text, however, is not clearly reflected in the terminology use described above. Pecorari (2003) calculated a percentage figure of the verbatim

source text use in patchwritten theses which provided a general degree of textual appropriation, yet, it was calculated for large textual chunks of ten pages in length. In this study I will use a more specific set of terms that indicate the length of the textual chunks borrowed verbatim. These often exceed the few-word strings as longer sequences are also kept untouched when placed into new academic papers.

Simply by examining the final writing product, it is very difficult to predict why an author has chosen a given writing strategy and what happened during the writing process. Some recently published studies have asked student writers about their opinion concerning patchwriting or, in general, their views on plagiarism (e.g., Harwood & Petrić, 2012; Li & Casanave, 2012; Schembri, 2009; Shi, 2012). These studies usually report general views on the topic, or retrospective analyses concerning the writing of specific passages. Other studies have followed students in their general writing and source use development over a period of time. Davis (2013), for instance, concluded that her postgraduate student participants' development of source use greatly varied and while all of them had their strategies to cope with source text reuse, not all mastered the desired level of academic writing in terms of source attribution.

Up until today very few studies have reported on the growth of L2 writers (students or academics) in respect to their patchwriting practices. This study aims to fill this gap by reviewing the changes made by students of English to their patchwritten thesis sections. It is discussed how the patchwritten passages developed after students had received feedback from their supervisors, peers and academic writing instructor or received a formal written evaluation of their theses. It is also discussed whether patchwriting can be considered a passing stage or rather a fossilized writing strategy.

2. Methods

Five (four undergraduate and one graduate) students were selected to participate in the study based on their patchwritten thesis draft or submitted thesis. By the time students start working on their thesis draft they do have a general understanding of academic integrity and have some academic writing experience. All this means, that, fortunately, few students rely on heavy textual borrowing during thesis writing, therefore, the potential participant group is small. The thesis is a major prerequisite of graduation and involves longer process writing supervised by instructors and thesis advisors. The student participants are non-native students of English with a Hungarian L1, enrolled to the undergraduate (Bachelor) and graduate (Master's) degrees. The language of the programs is English and involves minimum two semesters of academic writing instruction. One of these courses focuses directly on thesis writing during which students receive suggestions concerning the writing of different sections of their papers and feedback on their drafts. The thesis writing is also

supported by two semesters of individual consultation with the supervisor during which they discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their writing and ways to develop their thesis.

Once students were chosen to participate in the study, passages from their thesis (drafts) that best illustrate patchwriting practices were selected and then matched with their source texts to investigate the degree and changes in textual appropriation. Rather than concentrating on the quantitative analysis of plagiarized text portions in the final thesis versions, the same passages (if available) were followed up and the changes made by the students were analyzed. Since I acted as the academic writing instructor, supervisor and/or thesis evaluator for these students, I could closely monitor the changes in larger sections of their texts, especially those of students A, B and C. Neither the students nor the instructors were equipped with a plagiarism detecting software as part of the writing process through which textual borrowing could have been quickly checked.

In the texts three levels of patchwriting are distinguished based on the size and the integration of the borrowed chunks into the new text, namely *phrase-level*, *sentence-level* and *text-level patchwriting*. In the case of phrase-level patchwriting, larger than 3-word strings are kept together which should have been paraphrased. As for sentence-level patchwriting, full sentences are borrowed with some minimal integration such as the addition of a sentence-opening reporting structure or connectors. Text or discourse level patchwriting indicates the borrowing of consecutive sentences, sometimes even paragraphs, again with some minimal changes. These terms refer to untouched chunks and do not include the frequent forms of textual integration in which students substitute every second or third word with a synonym.

3. Results and discussion
3.1. Changes in patchwriting strategies

To illustrate an early phrase of Student A's writing, a passage taken from her thesis draft is side-by-side with the source sentences in Figure 1 in which the borrowed chunks are marked in bold. The assignment was completed by closely relying on source texts such as lecture handouts and internet sources, often with syntactic and semantic errors. After having produced a second draft using the same strategy and receiving specific guidelines concerning citation and paraphrasing, she abandoned the textual borrowing of long strings of words. This was achieved not by rewriting the originally patchwritten drafts, but by rather starting the writing process over. This is a rare case, as students often do not have time for such repair strategy or are unwilling to delete pieces of their texts they have put time and work into, even when they get clearly unfavorable feedback on them.

Excerpt from an English Studies BA thesis draft Student A	Lecture handout
Positive politeness is **face saving acts which are concerned with the person's positive face**, for example, **show solidarity, emphasize that both speakers want the same thing, that they have a common goal. Face threatening act (FTA)** appears **when** someone **is said that represents a threat to another individual's expectations** while **face saving act** appears **when** someone **is said in order to lessen the possible threat** (Brown and Levinson, 1987).	Positive politeness - face saving acts which are concerned with the person's positive face, e.g., show solidarity, emphasize that both speakers want the same thing, that they have a common goal… Face threatening act (FTA) - when sg is said that represents a threat to another individual's expectations regarding self-image. Face saving act - when sg is said in order to lessen the possible threat.

Figure 1. Excerpt from Student A's English Studies BA thesis and its relevant source

An example of Student A's writing produced six month later in her final thesis is reported in Figure 2. It shows phrase-level patchwriting in which she still struggled to paraphrase the source text, but did not leave unchanged full sentences or longer sections. Her text follows the source text very closely which was probably not fully processed and understood semantically and syntactically. This level of academic writing, indeed, was the result of months of writing development which started out as sentence and text-level patchwriting illustrated in Figure 1.

Excerpt from an English Studies BA thesis final version Student A	Nastri et al (2006, pp. 1029–30)
Clark (1996, cited in Nastri et al. 2006: 1029-1030) divides **the category** of declaratives into **(5) effective speech act and (6) verdictive speech act**. **The senders**, in both categories, are **require**d to make an utterance in institutional settings. **The effective speech act** is employed **to change an institutional state of affairs**, for instance, **a minister baptizing a baby** while the **verdictive** speech **act** is related to **changing a state of affairs**, for instance, the boss fires the employee.	The fifth category of speech acts is declaratives; according to Clark (1996), this category can be broken down into two subsets, the (5) effective speech acts and (6) verdictive speech acts. Clark maintains that although effective and verdictive speech acts are related, they are also subtly unique. Both the effective and verdictive speech acts require the sender to be in power within an institution. The effective speech act refers to those utterances that are able to change an institutional state of affairs, such as a minister baptizing a baby. Verdictive acts also refer to changing a state of affairs, but unlike effectives they refer to judgments made by persons vested with certain institutional power, such as an umpire calling a pitch a strike even if it was outside the strike zone.

Figure 2. Excerpt from an English Studies BA thesis and its relevant source

Student B's thesis section in Figure 3 shows a mixture of phrase and sentence-level patchwriting. It starts with an introductory sentence; then follows with phrase-level patchwriting in which key words and phrases are pasted together with some shortening of the original content. However, the last sentence is a direct copy from the source text introduced by a reporting verb phrase. It seems that student B got tired of trying to paraphrase and slipped into copying the

original sentence with minor modifications. Since it comes from one of the early drafts produced a few months before submitting the final version, it was possible to analyze the development of this section. Similarly to student A, thanks to the academic writing support, student B could also reconsider and repair her writing strategy. She produced a summary of the sections, although still closely relying on one of the source sentences. Interestingly, she went through one more stage and tried to show a weaker reliance on the source by substituting the word 'ambiguous' with 'vague', although the use of quotations marks would have been a better choice for this sentence integration.

Excerpt from an English Studies BA thesis Student B	Lance (1977, p. 43)
Version 1 Other interesting investigations about the concept of grammar were made by Donald M. Lance. He states that **when a** person **uses the word grammar**, they **may** imply to **a variety of theoretical constructs**. He points out that **the term grammar** is not **ambigous**, but **polysemous, having more than one basic meaning**. In his opinion, **grammar** means **studying** something and the focus is on rather the something than studying. He claims that the **historically primary meaning of the word is a description of the word-forms and sentence elements of a given language**.	When an individual uses the word *grammar*, he/she may be referring to any one (or more) of a variety of theoretical constructs. The term *grammar*, in other words, is polysemous—not ambiguous, but "having more than one basic meaning."… The term *grammar* may be used to refer to "the study of _____," but it is the "_____" rather than "study of" which demands most attention in a discussion of the term *grammar*. The basic—or historically primary—meaning of the word is "a description of the word-forms and sentence elements of a given language"…
Version 2 This view is supported by Lance (1977) who writes that grammar is not ambigous, but polysemous, having more meanings.	
Version 3 This view is supported by Lance (1977) who states that the meaning of grammar is not vague, but polysemous, having more meanings.	

Figure 3. Changes made in a patchwritten section of the English Studies BA thesis of Student B

The excessive use of quotation marks may indicate novice writers' lack of paraphrasing and summarizing skills. This overuse often signals their difficulty in incorporating the quoted text into their own argument and evaluating it in the new context (Petrić, 2012; Shi, 2004; McCulloch, 2012). An example of this excessive use as a repair strategy of patchwriting is documented in Figure 4 below in which Student C copied full passages from the Common European Framework of References. As the entire literature review section of her MA thesis was a close textual reuse, she received a failing grade for her thesis which she could resubmit a year later. Since I acted as one of the evaluators for her thesis, in my written evaluation I explained the non-acceptability of extended,

text-level patchwriting, illustrated by a parallel textual analysis of some sections of the thesis and its sources. The paragraphs of the first version reported in Figure 4 suggest Student C's inability of source integration. The same section was slightly shortened and directly quoted in the new version of the thesis, with the inclusion of some introductory phrases and the indication of specific page numbers after each quoted section.

Excerpt from an English Studies MA thesis Version 1 Student C	Version 2
Size, range and control of vocabulary are major parameters of language acquisition and hence for the assessment of a learner's language proficiency and for the planning of language learning and teaching. **Users of the Framework may wish to consider and where appropriate state: what size of vocabulary (i.e. the number of words and fixed expressions) the learner will need/be equipped/be required to control; what range of vocabulary (i.e. the domains, themes etc. covered) the learner will need/be equipped/be required to control; what control over vocabulary the learner will need/be equipped/be required to exert; …**(CEFR:149, 150).	In connection with the vocabulary study the CEFR details that "size, range and control of vocabulary era major parameters of language acquisition and hence for the assessment of the learner's language proficiency and for the planning of language learning and teaching."(CEFR 2001:150) is also claims that: "users of the Framework may wish to consider and where appropriate state: what size of vocabulary (i.e. the number of words and fixed expressions) the learner will need/ be equipped/ be required to control; what range of vocabulary (i.e. the domains, themes etc. covered) the learner will need/be equipped/ be required to control; what control over vocabulary the learner will need/ be equipped/ be required to exert" (CEFR 2001:150).

Figure 4. Changes made in a patchwritten section of the English Studies BA thesis of Student C

Figure 5 also suggests that after having received the written evaluation of her failed thesis, Student C understood that text-level patchwriting is unacceptable, although kept using sentence and phrase-level patchwriting. She also continued identifying key sections from various pages of her sources, then reordering them into a new logic, and finally rewriting them with some connecting phrases.

Excerpt from an English Studies MA thesis Student C	Nation (2001)
Another part of vocabulary learning is **learning** words using **word cards**. Nation claims that cards are used **to describe the formation of associations between a foreign language word form** (**written** and *spoken*) **and its meaning** (Nation, 2001). The meaning is **often a form of** the **first language translation, a picture or a real object**. According to him this strategy is not suitable **for remembering**. Furthermore, it **does not help use the word**. It does not **exclude the possibility of putting** the **sample** of a **sentence** either or earning **collocations** displayed **on the card** (Nation, 2001). According to Anderson and Nagy **there is a** second **criticism of direct vocabulary** learning that **focuses mainly on teaching of vocabulary (Anderson & Nagy, 1992). The argument is that there are so many words in the language and it takes** too **much**	p. 296 Learning from word cards The term 'learning from word cards' will be used to describe the formation of associations between a foreign language word form (written or spoken) and its meaning (often in the form of a first language translation, although it could be a second language definition or a picture or a real object, for example). p. 297 This comment contains two criticisms: that learning from word cards is not good for remembering; that learning from word cards does not help with use of the word. Before looking at each of these criticisms, it is necessary to make the point that the use of word cards does not exclude the possibility of putting a sample sentence or collocations on the card.

time to learn a word effectively. Direct study is an inefficient procedure for vocabulary growth. **Learners** concentrate better **on reading** and **their long-term vocabulary growth will be greater** if they learn identically **from** the **context**.	p. 301 There is a third criticism of the direct study of vocabulary, one mainly put forward by first language researchers (Anderson and Nagy, 1992). Although this criticism focuses mainly on the teaching of vocabulary, it has had the effect of discouraging the teaching of *strategies* for direct vocabulary learning. The argument is that there are so many words in the language and it takes so much time to effectively learn a word that direct study is an inefficient procedure for vocabulary growth. Learners are better off concentrating on reading because their longterm vocabulary growth will be greater as a result of incidental learning from context.

Figure 5. Excerpt from Student C's English Studies MA thesis and its relevant source

To further illustrate this student's difficulty with source use, in Figure 6 below a loose form of text-level patchwriting is reported in which Student C selected a series of consecutive sentences and then rewrote the text in a way that it closely resembles the source. She indicated her source at the end of her paragraphs without page numbers, which is a common practice used by students who have heavy source text dependence. The indication of sources after long paragraphs does not turn their inappropriate textual borrowing practice into a legitimate one.

Excerpt from an English Studies MA thesis Student C	Nation (2001, p. 263)
Nation adds that **most English content words can change their form by adding prefixes or suffixes**. According to him the **affixes** can be **divided into two types** such as **inflectional and derivational** ones. **The inflectional affixes are all suffixes in English**. **They include** ' for **plural, 'ed', -ing, -s third person singular, -s** for **possessive**, **-er** for **comparative**, **-est** for **superlative** as it was mentioned above. They **do not change the part of speech of the word; they are attached to and are added after a derivational suffix**. Derivational affixes include prefixes and suffixes (Nation, 2001).	Most of the content words of English can change their form by adding prefixes or suffixes. These affixes are typically divided into two types: inflectional and derivational. The inflectional affixes in English are all suffixes. They include *-s* (plural), *-ed*, *-ing*, *-s* (3rd person singular), *-s* (possessive), *-er* (comparative), *-est* (superlative). Unlike most derivational suffixes, inflections do not change the part of speech of the word or word group they are attached to and are added after a derivational suffix, if the word has one.

Figure 6. Excerpt from Student C's English Studies MA thesis and its relevant source

An example of text-level patchwriting is reported in Figure 7 in which student D has an almost verbatim reuse of consecutive paragraphs. The rewriting of the source is restricted to the renumbering of the sample sentences and the minimal paraphrasing of some connecting elements such as reporting verbs.

Excerpt from an English Studies BA thesis Student D	Barikmo (2007, p. 23)
LBH was also **supported** by **Mufwene (1999**, cited in Barikmo, 2007:23) **in a study comparing the first-language acquisition patterns of an English-speaking child with Bickerton's (1984) rubric for bioprogram grammar acquisition. The child in this study had a basic sentential structure of NP – PredP before the age of 28 months, and her nonverbal PredPs did not require a copula as she had not yet acquired the adult syntax rule requiring PredPs to** relate **to VPs with** the help of **copula**. During the **acquisition** process **the copula first** appeared **in imperative constructions such as** *Be careful*. **Bickerton argued that the most radical creoles (those closest to bioprogram grammar) exhibit this same tendency to allow adjectives and prepositions to head PredPs and not require copulas (Example** 30).	Mufwene (1999) also found support for the LBH in a study comparing the first-language acquisition patterns of an English-speaking child with Bickerton's (1984) rubric for bioprogram grammar acquisition. The child in this study had a basic sentential structure of NP – PredP before the age of 28 months, and her nonverbal PredPs did not require a copula as she had not yet acquired the adult syntax rule requiring PredPs to translate to VPs with dummy-verb, or copula, insertion. Acquisition of the copula was gradual, and was first attested in imperative constructions such as *Be careful*. Bickerton argued that the most radical creoles (those closest to bioprogram grammar) exhibit this same tendency to allow adjectives and prepositions to head PredPs and not require copulas (Example 41).
(30)   **a. Jean tall. (Gullah)**

          b. Jean taller 'n/more tall 'an she brother. (p.112)

[Barikmo, 2007: 23, 41] | (41)   a. Jean tall. (Gullah)

          b. Jean taller 'n/more tall 'an she brother. (p.112) |
| **Mufwene** claimed **that the subject's grammar supported the structural claims of Bickerton's hypothesis**. **The UG orientation of Bickerton's LBH** seems to **be valuable, though Mufwene suggested that UG features of acquisition are also available to adults and hence** they would be effective **in the creolization context**. | Mufwene asserted that the subject's grammar supported the structural claims of Bickerton's hypothesis, though genetic claims were not similarly supported. The UG orientation of Bickerton's LBH was deemed valuable, though Mufwene suggested that UG features of acquisition are also available to adults and hence would afford them agency in the creolization context. |

Figure 7. Excerpt from an English Studies BA thesis and its relevant source

As Student D failed her thesis for excessive textual borrowing, she also had a year to work on her thesis after getting written and oral feedback. As a result, she partly changed the focus of her work, resulting in some new and old chapters mixed in her new version. What is interesting to note is that Student D kept almost untouched full sections of her original work, compared to Student C who tried to lower the number of large textual chunks borrowed directly from her sources (see Figure 8). Version two remained almost identical, with the exception of the changes made to the numbering of the sample sentences, which however does not match (this suggests that only surface editing was done) and the fusion and shortening of the last two sentences. This may indicate an attempt to summarize, but the problem is that most likely the source text was not checked for textual appropriation. After several rounds of reading her text, the student may have felt that it was her own production or was unable to identify patchwritten sections on her own. In either case, a real development in terms of textual appropriation is not visible.

Excerpt from an English Studies BA thesis Student D Version 1	Version 2

Bickerton argued that the most radical creoles (those closest to bioprogram grammar) exhibit this same tendency to allow adjectives and prepositions to head PredPs and not require copulas (**Example** 30).
 	
(30)   **a. Jean tall. (Gullah)**
 	
        b. Jean taller 'n/more tall 'an she brother. (p.112)
 	
[Barikmo, 2007: 23, 41]
 	
Mufwene claimed **that the subject's grammar supported the structural claims of Bickerton's hypothesis**. **The UG orientation of Bickerton's LBH** seems to **be valuable, though Mufwene suggested that UG features of acquisition are also available to adults and hence** they would be effective **in the creolization context**.
	Bickerton argued that the most radical creoles (those closest his bioprogram grammar) exhibit this same tendency to allow adjectives and prepositions to head PredPs and not require copulas (Example 15).
	
	(26) a. Jean tall. (Gullah)
	
	        b. Jean taller 'n/more tall 'an she brother. (p.112)
	
	[Barikmo, 2007: 23, 41]
	
	Mufwene claimed that the subject's grammar supported the structural claims of Bickerton's hypothesis so the UG orientation of Bickerton's LBH seems to be valid.

Figure 8. Changes made in a patchwritten section of the English Studies BA thesis of Student D

Another testimony of student D's main strategy of source dependent writing being the identification and rewriting of key passages from sources is seen in Figure 9. These sentences come from a completely new section of her resubmitted thesis and indicate a better attempt to paraphrase, as longer than 3-word chunks kept together are rare, but the entire section closely mirrors the original one with some syntactic changes and synonym use. Overall, she fails to draw on, synthesize and evaluate information coming from different sources, or express her own voice. The rewriting of secondary sources also brings the risk that the original meaning of the primary sources is lost or distorted; yet the final student product may mask her inability to do independent academic work.

Excerpt from an English Studies BA thesis Version 2 Student D	Senghas (1995, p. 543)
Kegl & Iwata (1989, cited in Senghas 1995) examined this **early stage** of **Nicaraguan sign** system and **compared it to American Sign Language**. They concluded that NSL's **status** can be **evaluated** as a **creole**. **The oldest member of the community who entered the schools** in the late 1980s used simple **signs** and **gestures**, so-called **home signs**, and **they developed** a **pidgin** language **called Lenguaje de Signos Nicaraguense (LSN) which** is still **used today** among them. **Younger deaf children who** joined **the deaf community** received this pidgin as an **input** and they enrich it to a **full-fledged sign language** called **Idioma de Signos Nicaraguense (ISN)**. ISN is the **result** of "**abrupt creolization**" according to **Bickerton**'s definition.	Kegl & Iwata (1989) described some of the earliest stages of Nicaraguan signing, comparing it to ASL and evaluating its status as a creole. So far, two distinct forms of the sign language have emerged. The oldest members of the community, who are now in their mid- to late-twenties, entered the schools in 1978, each with a different, highly idiosyncratic homesign or gesture system. Upon contact they developed a now partially-crystallized pidgin called Lenguaje de Signos Nicaragüense (LSN) which they continue to use today. Younger deaf children (many as young as four years old) who entered the deaf community since that time were exposed to the pidgin LSN used by the older children. From this impoverished language input they produced

(**1984**: cited in Senghas 1995)	something richer: the new creole Idioma de Signos Nicaragüense (ISN). ISN is a full-fledged, primary sign language, resulting from the process of nativization, or abrupt creolization as Bickerton (1984) defines it.

Figure 9. A patchwritten section of the English Studies BA thesis of Student D

Two final examples of heavy source dependence and the changes made to patchwritten sections are reported in Figures 10 and 11 for Student E. She had experience with academic writing, having completed her thesis in her other major (written in her L1) a semester earlier and having had smaller seminar papers in English on the topic that served as a basis for her BA English Studies thesis. The unacceptability of unattributed source text reuse had been pointed out to her and was also reflected in the evaluations given to her for her L1 thesis and a seminar paper in English, and it is likely that she had slipped through with other assignments without her source dependence being noticed. I myself had given her zero points for a patchwritten assignment handed in as the final project in a linguistics seminar and discussed the issue with her in person. Thesis writing took place the following semester and she continued with the same writing strategy of mainly sentence, but also text-level patchwriting, which is illustrated in Figure 10. The source text is somewhat shortened and simplified, and key sentences from Nijakowska (2010) combined with some linking devices.

Excerpt from an English Studies BA thesis draft Version 1 Student E	Nijakowska (2010, pp. 85–86)
Nijakowska also defines **the acquisition of skilful word decoding (reading) and encoding (spelling) as the most fundamental and primary behavioural symptoms of dyslexia**. The author claims that **phonological processing disorders constitute a characteristic trait of dyslexia, while linguistic functioning with reference to semantic, syntactic, or pragmatic levels may well be within average**. She highlights that there are **multiple warning signs and areas of poor performance** which **can be identified in children before or at the beginning of their school education**. Those **areas of weakness** which can be **identified in post-infantile and pre-school stages** are, for example, the **late development of speech**, **poor** phonological **skills**, and **late development of motor ability**.	The most fundamental and primary behavioural symptom of dyslexia seems to be a pronounced and persistent difficulty in the acquisition of skilful word decoding (reading) and encoding (spelling), forcing the child to lag behind his/her peers with regard to literary development. ... Phonological processing disorders, by definition, constitute a characteristic trait of dyslexia, while linguistic functioning with reference t syntactic, semantic or pragmatic levels may well be within average ... Multiple warning signs and areas of poor performance, to a considerable extent indicative of later low-grade reading skills, can be quite accurately identified in children before or at the very beginning of their school education, when any adeptness regarding reading and spelling skills in naturally not yet evident (Bogdanowicz, 2002a; Johnson et al., 2001; Ott, 1997). Areas of weakness indentified in post-infantile and pre-school stages, including, for instance, late development of speech, poor epiphonological skills or late development of motor ability, constitute the warning signs or indicators of the risk for dyslexia denoting high probability of later learning difficulties (Bogdanowicz, 2002a; Ott, 1997).

Figure 10. Excerpt from Student E's English Studies BA thesis and its relevant source

When copying was pointed out to the student and rewriting was requested, the second version kept the passage almost untouched, with the addition of two pairs of quotation marks (see Figure 11). This was surprising given the fact that she had received multiple rounds of feedback and was attending a parallel academic writing seminar. When during an individual consultation I, who acted as the supervisor, asked her about her seeming reluctance to change her writing strategy, she said that her peers had reassured her that "changing one or two words or adding some quotation marks were enough". She also added that her writing had been accepted elsewhere. These are both very important points to note. This student is a clear testimony that patchwriting can be considered not a passing developmental stage, but a fine-grained writing strategy which, if remains unnoticed or uncorrected, is practiced over and over. It may also give students a quick academic satisfaction with relatively easy cognitive load and time saved. Peer advice also seems to be stronger than instructors' multiple feedback. Only upon a strong warning of a definite failing grade for the thesis did the student understand (a month before final submission) that she had to change her writing practice. Version 3 in Figure 11 indicates that she, indeed, was both linguistically and cognitively capable of writing appropriate summaries, following citation requirements and producing fresh language in good academic style, unlike Student C, but was rather unwilling to put more work in it than what she felt would be sufficient for a minimal pass.

Excerpt from an English Studies BA thesis draft Version 2 Student E	Version 3 (final)
Nijakowska also defines **the acquisition of skilful word** "decoding" **(reading) and** "encoding" **(spelling) as the most fundamental and primary behavioural symptoms of dyslexia**. The author claims that **phonological processing disorders constitute a characteristic trait of dyslexia, while linguistic functioning with reference to semantic, syntactic, or pragmatic levels may well be within average**. She highlights that there are **multiple warning signs and areas of poor performance** which **can be identified in children before or at the beginning of their school education**. Those **areas of weakness** which can be **identified in post-infantile and pre-school stages** are, for example, the **late development of speech**, **poor** phonological **skills**, and **late development of motor ability**.	Nijakowska (2010) highlights the warning signs and areas of weakness which can be noticed in children in the kindergarten or at the beginning of their school education. The identification of these difficulties has an important role in the early diagnosis. The author gives guideline for teachers to recognize these symptoms which can be noticed in various educational situations. Among the weaknesses which can appear in preschoolers the problems with the awareness of phonological structures or sound structure of words, the late development of speech, and the underdeveloped motor ability can manifest themselves during everyday situations and games.

Figure 11. Changes made in a patchwritten section of the English Studies BA thesis of Student E

3.2. General discussion of the results

In order to get beyond the over-generalized claim that EFL students plagiarize, there is a need to better define what they do with the source texts they manipulate with. The fact that novice student writers pass through patchwriting

that should be considered a natural, intermittent stage also seems to be an oversimplification of the issue. Reference to the three different levels of patchwriting in this study allows for a more precise picture of how EFL academic writing shapes and develops over time. The five students discussed above show somewhat different writing developmental paths in an EFL higher education context in which they receive academic writing classes, have individual consultations with thesis supervisors and learn about institutional plagiarism rules. However, the academic writing development in their cases is accelerated, often beyond their linguistic, academic literacy and cognitive skills. Undergraduate students start to write longer texts in which they are required to manipulate with multiple sources usually in their final, third year. The intensive text writing phase of their thesis work is typically the very last semester, in better cases the last two semesters. This should be preceded and aided by massive source text reading, which is difficult for those who are weak in their L2 English. Previous studies conducted in L1 and ESL/EFL contexts have pointed out that one of the reasons for source text misuse is the little reading students do and the reading comprehension difficulties they have (Howard, Serviss & Rodrigue, 2010; Jamieson & Howard, 2013). The same studies have also pointed out that students write from single sentences and do not show a global understanding of their sources. These problems are even more marked for EFL students who have weak literary skills in their L1 and L2 and limited reading-writing practice. In view of this, the leap that students should make from producing short essays and summaries to becoming emergent writers of their disciplinary academic community is rather large. There is little room for development under these circumstances and patchwriting can easily become an end rather than an intermittent stage. If we consider the multidimentionality of writing development and also the time pressure and the linguistically and cognitively too challenging tasks, students may boil down the writing tasks to the filling up the pages with words.

The overreliance on source texts and individual sentences easily lead to very close textual appropriation and inadvertent plagiarism (Howard, Serviss, & Rodrigue, 2010; Jamieson & Howard, 2013). What Jamieson and Howard (2013) call in their large-scale study 'sentence mining' in the case of L1 students is manifested more as paragraph mining in the examples of the EFL students discussed above. Patchwriters in this study seem to write not from single sentences, but from paragraphs or larger sections of texts which they partly reorganize and rewrite, but do not necessarily understand and process. Their source use means the partial rewriting of the chosen textual chunks following the logic of the sources; therefore, there is no real integration or new interpretation of ideas coming from different authors. Their source use is more alarming than what has been reported previously. They mainly use older printed sources available in libraries, the literature review sections of sources available

online and simplified lecture handouts to form their own literature reviews. Often they adapt literature review sections of other studies, which makes the reader believe that the ideas, the connections shown between sources and the texts are the students' own work. Many students, indeed, believe that the selection of textual chunks that somewhat fit together, their partial reordering and rewriting is hard enough work and justifies the final product being treated as their own.

As for the proposal of patchwriting being a necessary developmental stage (Campbell, 1990; Hirvela & Du, 2013; Howard, 1999; Luzón, 2015), which students grow out of, the examples discussed above show a more varied picture. The two students (A and B) who could minimize their patchwriting and had only some occasional phrase-level textual borrowing in their final theses had the following things in common. Their phrase and sentence-level patchwriting was pointed out to them early and as part of a thesis writing seminar during which they received continuous writing support with the possibility of oral peer and tutor feedback. At that time they only had a short, first draft which they could rewrite or start completely over. Neither of the two had stronger than average general English proficiency, but followed the advice given to them in terms of accelerated academic reading, better note-taking and more writing practice. In contrast, the students (C and D) who filled pages with closely copied texts (and, therefore, failed their theses), showed different developmental paths. Their erroneous writing strategy had not been pinpointed or successfully corrected during the draft stage. Patchwriting was so much deeply rooted and practiced in their writing that even the serious negative academic consequences (such as a failing final grade and no degree) could not push them to write better. After the first unsuccessful submission, they had to work on their own (although consultation with the supervisor was an option if they requested it), were most likely unable to identify the problematic parts and rewrite them so that their texts met academic writing conventions, and also had weak English proficiency. While some new sections continued to have text-level patchwriting, there was some evidence that these students also tried to lower the extent of direct source text reuse, but this only resulted in a lower level patchwriting. Some sections remained untouched, received surface editing or were excessively quoted. Based on this, it can be concluded that for them patchwriting remained a fossilized stage of writing strategy that could not be surpassed.

Patchwriting not being pointed out to students early in their source-based writing tasks or students being incapable of changing their sentence and text-level patchwriting bring the risk that with new tasks or new draft versions students may keep practicing unacceptable writing. While some students would suspect that textual borrowing is not adequate, the majority could gain a growing reassurance that their texts meet the requirements. Student E's case nicely illustrates that students who practice patchwriting and slip through with it

may even get dubious about or resistant to instructors' corrective feedback. Her case also indicates that students may opt for the minimum and not push for the more challenging summaries and paraphrases even when they have the necessary language skills for it.

There are positive examples that text analyzing tools such as Turnitin can be successfully integrated into the learning process (Graham-Matheson & Starr, 2013; Baily & Challen, 2015), but this is not yet available in the academic context discussed in this paper. Up until such softwares are widely available for the instructors and used to check even draft versions and shorter assignments, the screening of texts for patchwriting is based on intuitions, careful reading and laborious checking of suspicious sections with the help of internet search engines. As the examples have shown, many of the patchwritten passages look good on the surface and the massive textual borrowing masks students' real academic literacy skills, therefore, many instances of patchwriting are likely to remain unnoticed. There are studies, however, that voice the concern that text-matching tools by themselves are unable to stop heavy source dependence and plagiarism, and a more complex writing support and intervention are needed (e.g., Hu, 2015; Sutherland-Smith, 2011). Students' awareness raising about the complexity of academic writing development may secure that students who are linguistically and cognitively ready for producing longer academic texts do not fall short of the task and practice illegitimate writing strategies.

4. Conclusion

In recent publications on source reuse in L2 academic writing the need to better understand the role of textual appropriation in writing development has been voiced (see Pecorari, 2015; Petrić, 2015). The research question of the present study was concerned with the extent to which graduate and undergraduate EFL students to whom patchwritten thesis sections had been pointed out were able to develop their writing strategy while working on their theses. This paper argued for the need of a more precise terminology and detailed understanding of forms of textual appropriation all of which can be called patchwriting. Through the examples of EFL English Studies thesis versions, three levels of patchwriting were identified. Extensive source text dependence was documented, the majority of which was based not on the selection of single sentences, but on longer textual strings. These source text chunks were partly reorganized and rewritten by those who relied on sentence and text-level patchwriting.

The students' texts were followed up to see whether the patchwritten sections were changed in a way that they did not contain textual reuse any more. The analysis revealed that while early intervention and writing support helped some students abandon phrase and sentence-level patchwriting, those who had pages of close copies in their early drafts were more likely to remain within the frames of patchwriting in their later versions. It was concluded that patchwriting can

become a fossilized stage in academic writing that students cannot grow out of without close writing support, good language proficiency skills, subject knowledge, reading practice and adequate note-taking skills, all of which minimize the risk of copy-paste steps.

The discussed examples of students' writing development may serve as teaching material used in writing classes or consultations with other EFL students. A critical analysis of what constitutes patchwriting and the changes students made to their texts may also help both writing instructors and subject lecturers to understand what writing mechanisms students employ and what they can expect to see from other students. While the examples were limited to five students in one specific EFL higher education context, they can serve as illustrations of forms of patchwriting that most likely happen elsewhere, both in L1 and L2 academic writing. In line with previous studies (e.g., Harwood, 2010; Howard, Serviss, & Rodrigue, 2010; Jamieson & Howard, 2013; Pecorari & Petrić, 2014; Petrić, 2004), the present discussion also concludes that teaching and learning source use should not focus exclusively on the mechanisms of citation, because these are only one component of source-based writing. Only when students understand how to and why they need to analyze and understand their sources when they refer to them in their text, will they strive for a more independent, higher level writing and grow out of extensive patchwriting.

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