

**Plagiarism?
I know
a definition,
but I don't know
what it means...**

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 - wide network of partners, professional expertise of project members, access to project data, possibility to conduct studies in all EU countries
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- Academic Conduct Officer
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Contents

- The word “plagiarism”
- Methods
- Results
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The word “plagiarism”

- The word “plagiarism” was derived from the Latin phrase “**plagiarius**” which means kidnapper, thief, and plunderer (Online Etymology Dictionary 2014).
- One historic meaning of the “plagiarism” word itself, but many definitions and interpretations

Substitutes

- Lack of direct substitutes for the word 'plagiarism'
- Briggs (2009) separated plagiarism alternatives into two groups, depending on the level of moral accusation:
 - **Copying/borrowing**
 - **Cheating/stealing**

“On the surface,
the meanings seem similar.
In practice, the meanings
are rigorously subject to
debates”.

(Yusof 2009)

Methods

- Results of research conducted by the author as part of her PhD study
- Involvement in IPPHEAE project
 - Survey
- Nine European countries: Cyprus, Eire (Ireland), Finland, France, Germany, Poland, Romania, Sweden and the United Kingdom (Group 9).
- The total amount of participants from the nine selected countries that completed the questionnaires: 2170.

FOCUS

- ***How do students understand and perceive plagiarism?***
- Comparing definitions of plagiarism presented by students in the Survey Question 1 with their real understanding of where the line between acceptable practice and plagiarism is – measured by a series of practical questions (Q15.a – 15.f).

Question 1

- ***Define in one phrase or sentence what you understand by the word plagiarism***
- Open question
- Answers translated into English
- 29 keywords noticeable in the answers

Results: Question 1

Less serious connotations of plagiarism:

- The act of “copy-paste”
- Copying
- Using / taking
- Presenting
- Imitating / replicating / duplicating

More serious connotations of plagiarism:

- Theft / Stealing / Usurpation / Appropriation
- Fraud
- Crime / offence
- Paying / buying

Links with legal context:

- Illegal / unlawful
- Breaking copyright law
- Intellectual property (*Note: also included under the “intellectual” category*)
- Publishing / posting

Not mentioning the original author:

- Not referencing / quoting / citing
- Not acknowledging the author / not giving credit
- Not mentioning the author / the source of information
- Without permission / knowledge of the author / unauthorised

False attribution of authorship:

- Taking credit / attributing work to yourself
- As my own / under my name
- Gaining advantage / benefit / for my own interest

Links with intentional nature of plagiarism:

- Cheating / dishonesty
- Deliberate/ intentional
- Unethical

Links with unintentional nature of plagiarism:

- Accidental / unintentional

Textual object of plagiarism:

- Words / text
- Speech/spoken words
- Directly / word-for-word / without changes / quoting

Intellectual object of plagiarism:

- Ideas / thoughts / information / work
- Intellectual property (*Note: also included under the “legal” category*)

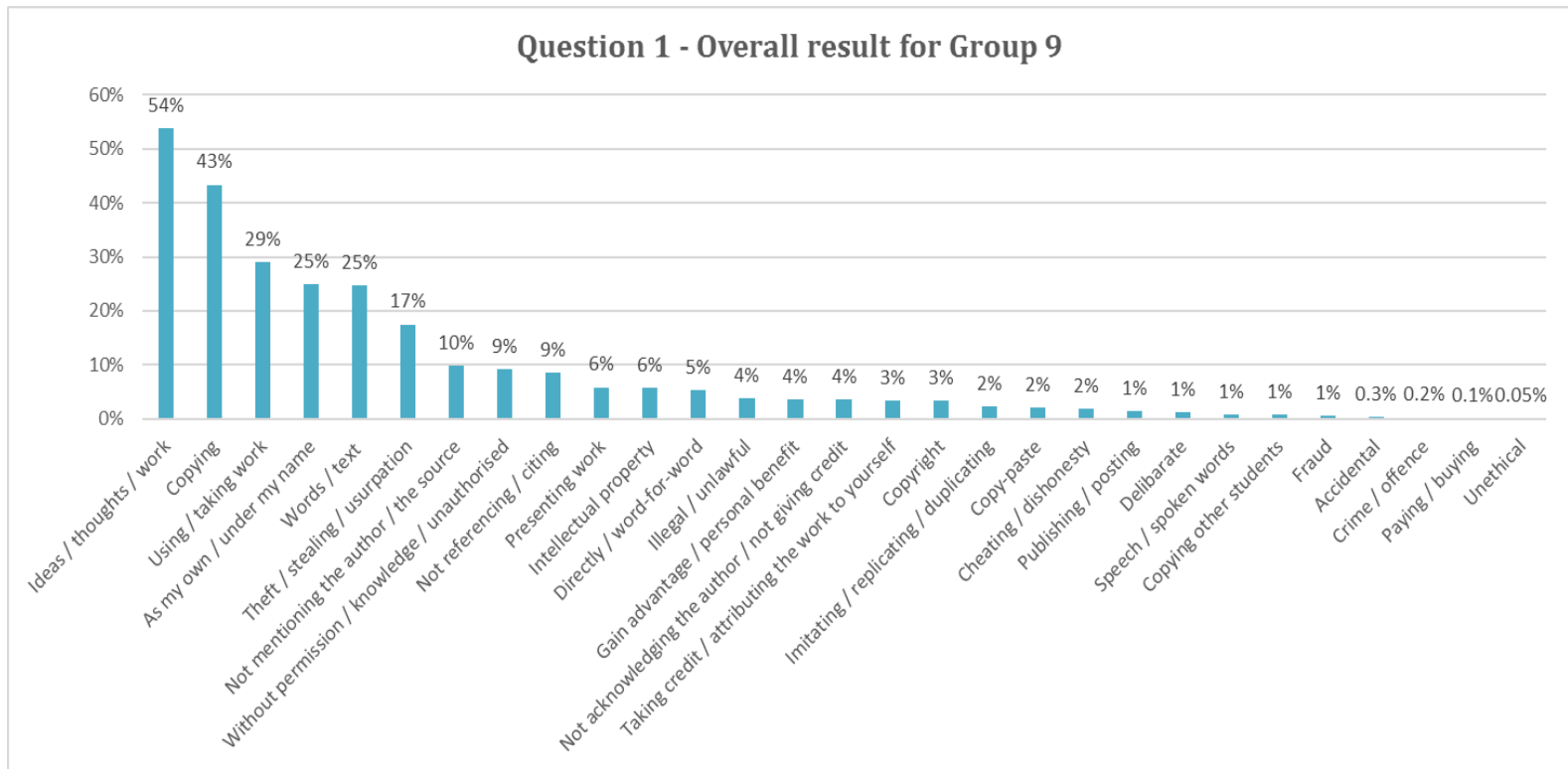
Plagiarism of other than external sources:

- Copying other students

Results: Question 1

- Overall **2170** participants from Group 9 took part in the Survey of which **2103** provided answers to Question 1.
- In **109** cases, it was difficult to judge whether participants understood the concept of plagiarism
 - 37 students used words like fraud, cheating, dishonesty, theft or stealing without further explanation, therefore their answers could not be classified as “showing understanding”.
- **17** participants’ responses did not present any understanding of plagiarism giving incorrect definitions, like “*Plagiarism means bribe*”, “*Stealing from the food store*”, “*To copy an exam / test*”.

- In 1971 cases (94%), it was possible to interpret definitions as **demonstrating understanding** and presenting appropriate meaning of the term plagiarism.

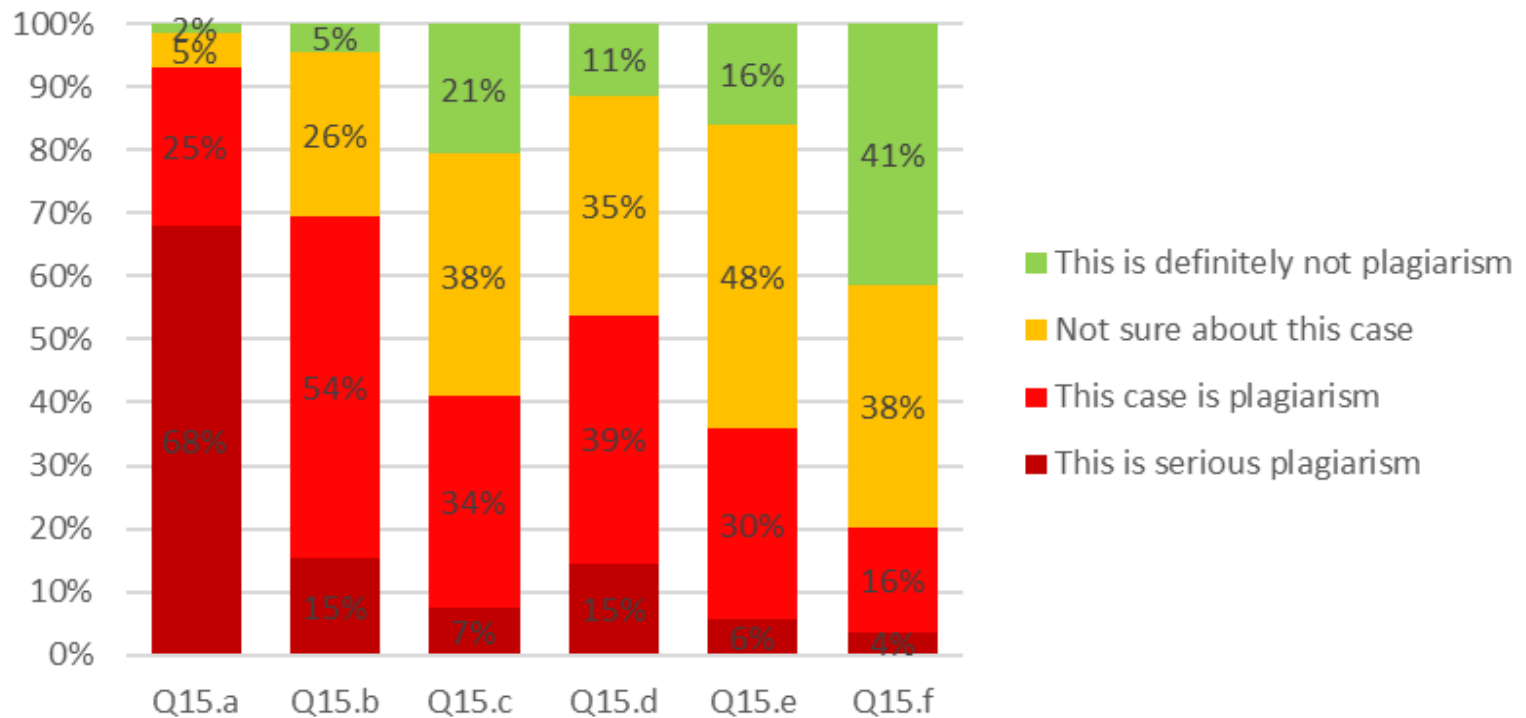


Questions 15.a – 15.f

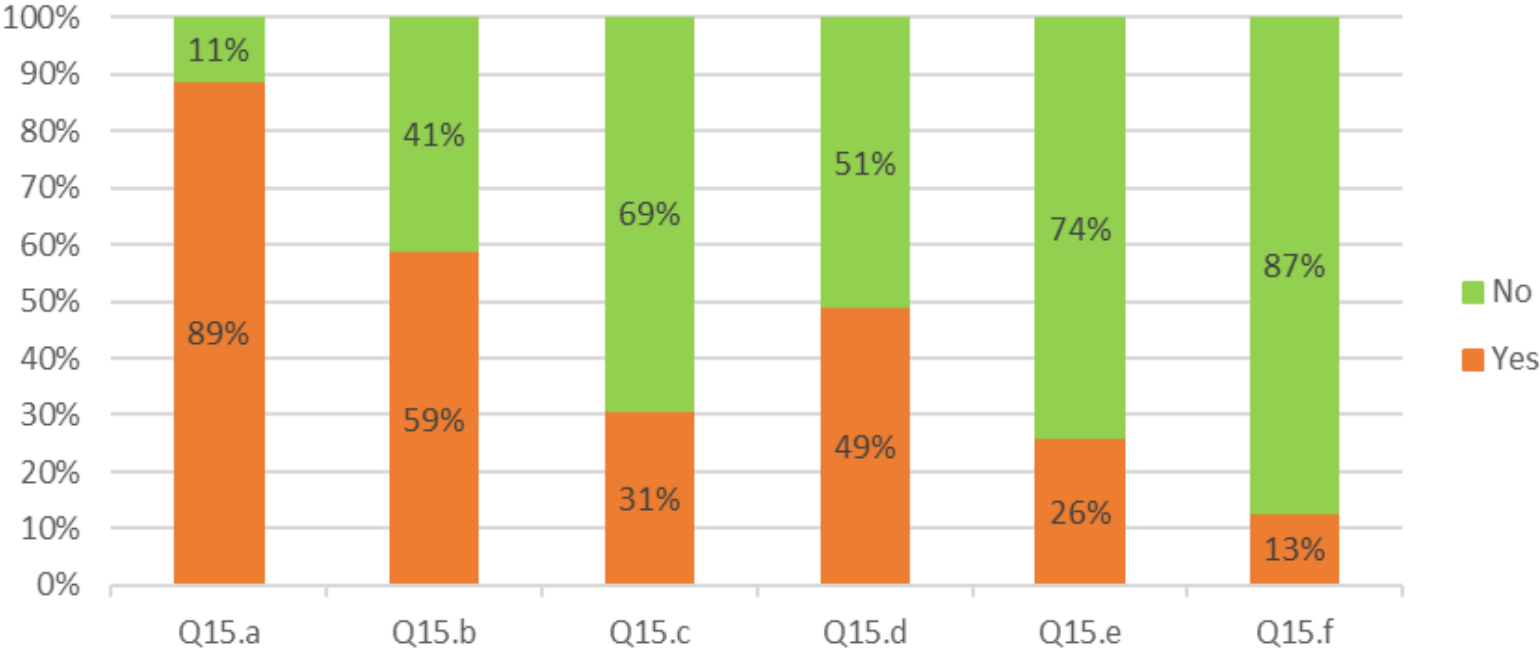
Assuming that 40% of a student's submission is from other sources:

- a) and is copied word for word into the student's work with no quotations
- b) and is copied word for word into the student's work with no quotations, has correct references but no in text citation
- c) and is copied word for word into the student's work with no quotations, but has correct references and in text citations
- d) with some words changed, with no quotations, references or in text citations
- e) with some words changed, with no quotations, has correct references, but no in text citations
- f) with some words changed, with no quotations, but has correct references and in text citations

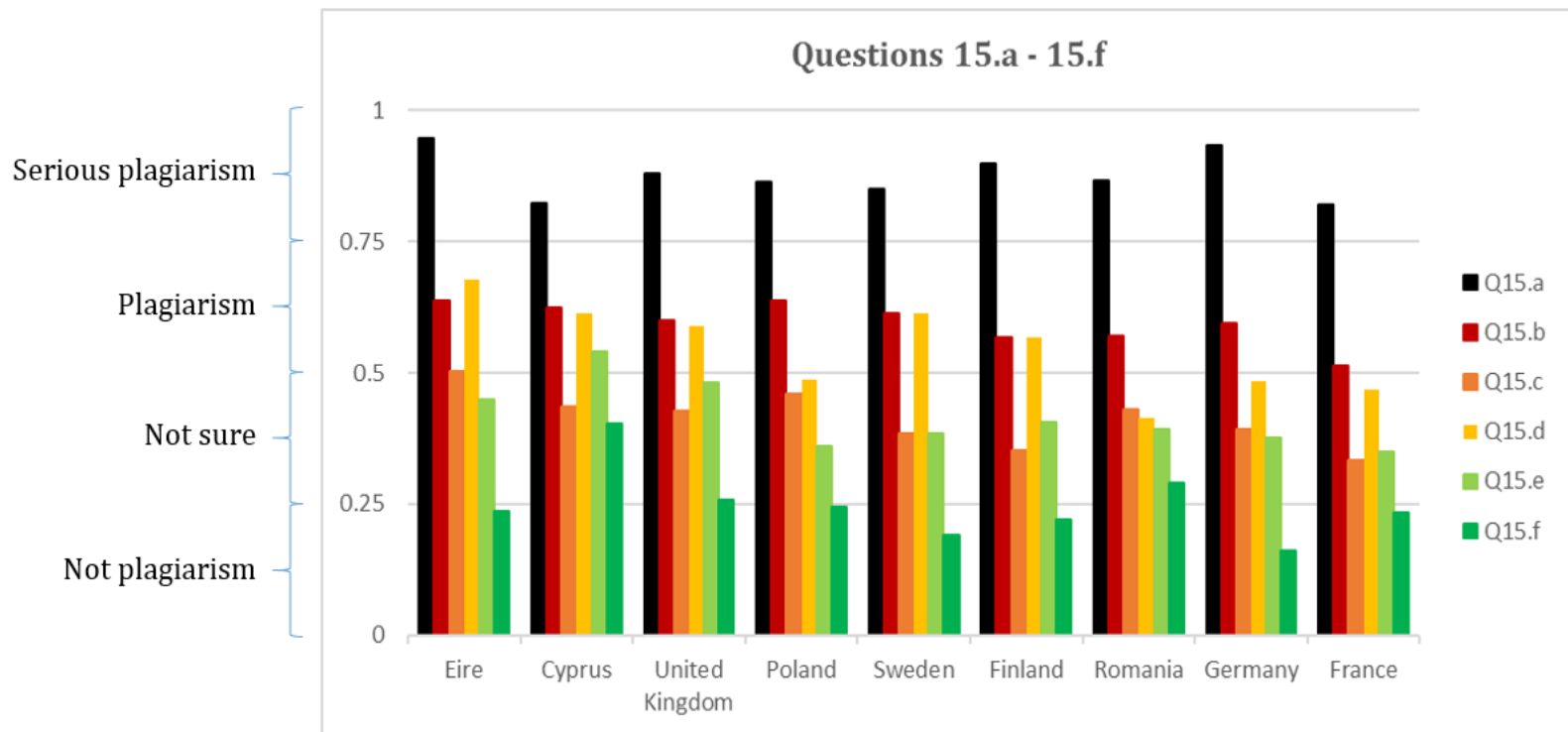
Questions 15.a - 15.f for Group 9



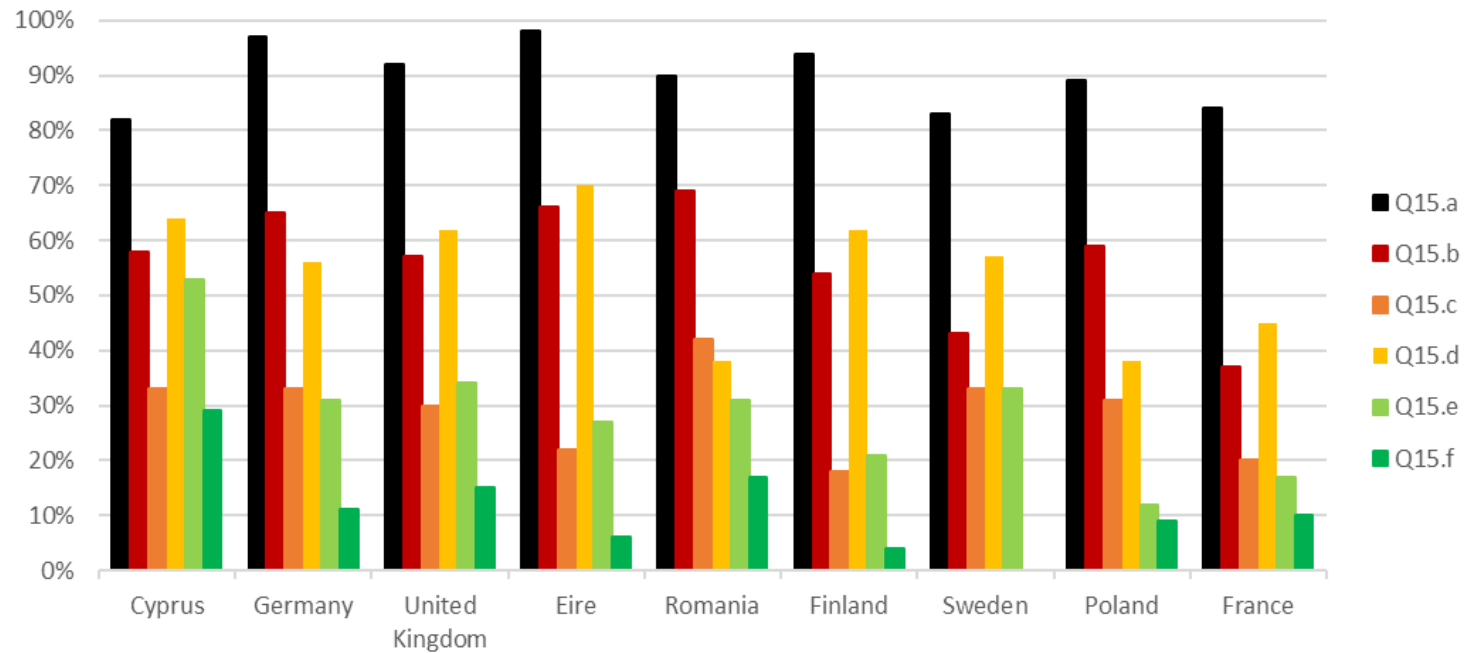
Q15.a - Q15.f - Should the penalty be applied? - for Group 9



Country by country analysis



Questions 15.a - 15.f - should the penalty be applied?



Conclusions (1)

- Plagiarism is a **complex** concept with **unclear** boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- There are some cases of plagiarism which are not considered to be misconduct or, according to students, should not be penalised, therefore some students may treat them as perfectly acceptable. This confirms some reasons for **“accidental” plagiarism** (Gillet 2001) due to lack of understanding of rules and referencing standards.

Conclusions (2)

- The first step in tackling the problem should be to **define the concept of plagiarism** and to make sure that students are aware of its meaning.
- On the other hand, having a definition included in the university policy or checking if students are familiar with the expression **does not guarantee full understanding** of the rules and recognising differences between acceptable and unacceptable practice

Conclusions (3)

- The biggest challenge is to **make sure that students fully understand of what constitutes plagiarism** which can then become a stepping stone towards learning how to avoid it.
- Educate students by offering them **more training** in academic writing, appropriate citation and referencing techniques, as well as avoidance of plagiarism.
- The concept of academic dishonesty should also be **discussed in every module, assignment brief and anti-plagiarism campaigns**. This should then increase students' awareness and understanding and thus reduce incidents of accidental plagiarism.

Literature

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Thanks!
Any questions?

