Revisiting the Definition of Plagiarism: Is Chat GPT Expanding the Scope?

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As part of my job as a director of the English language program in higher education, I meet with students suspected of academic misconduct, such as plagiarism. Since the launch of Chat GPT, I have spent considerable time dealing with cases of misuse of technology. As I listen to teachers' doubts about the authenticity of student work and students' explanations, my understanding of plagiarism has blurred despite spending years trying to understand the definition of plagiarism.

I obtained my PhD in applied linguistics from Sophia University in 2022, developing an in-class assessment tool to measure the plagiarism knowledge of Japanese L2 academic writers. To develop an assessment tool, one must know what s/he wants to measure - the construct. Through the literature review, I have learned that plagiarism is a vague and wide-ranging construct with negative feelings attached, as it is often associated with academic dishonesty.

In this presentation, I will first focus on the development of the construct of assessment (i.e., plagiarism knowledge) and the operationalization of the construct. I also want to touch upon how the traditional sense of plagiarism has evolved to include and expand into the misuse of AI tools represented by Chat GPT. In the second half, I plan to share an initiative to teach the appropriate use of digital tools and the reflection of such teaching practice. Finally, I would like to end with a positive outlook. Though I face new challenges with the rapid development of technology, I strive to maintain the core values I gained from my doctorate research. "Don't police plagiarism: Just teach!" (Howard, 2002, p. 46).