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Is There a Foreign Language Effect on Academic Integrity?

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Abstract

The establishment of international cooperative universities presents a unique challenge for educators and administrators due to cultural differences in practices around academic integrity. This is especially relevant in the context of Sino-foreign universities due to increased tolerance and decreased training concerning plagiarism in Chinese education. For many students enrolled in these universities, knowledge of academic integrity may be bound to the English language. Informed by research on the Foreign Language Effect, the present study investigated whether Mandarin-English bilingual university students ($n = 106$) respond differently to academic integrity dilemmas based on the language of presentation. Most interestingly, we identified a modulatory role of English proficiency with higher levels associated with a lower likelihood of plagiarism when dilemmas were presented in English. Additional findings suggest that separable dimensions of English experience interact to modulate responses to academic integrity dilemmas.