

UNDERGRADUATE EFL STUDENTS' PARAPHRASING SKILLS IN ACADEMIC WRITING AT A STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

The paraphrasing ability is one of the important skills for EFL students. The topic of paraphrasing is chosen because many students have problems in paraphrasing. This study explored the skills of the sixth-year students of the English Program Study and their perception on paraphrasing. The case study is chosen to collect the data through document analysis. Meanwhile, purposive sampling is used to choose the participants. The total of participants are nine participants in the 6th semester based on their achievement in academic writing courses. The results of this study showed that there are three students fell into a very poor level, four students fell into a poor level, and two students fell into the average level. By conducting this research, students can dig deeper and find out the actual level of their skills in paraphrasing, because the evaluation results from the document analysis are given to students when conducting interviews. However, this study is limited by the small scale of the participants. Therefore, further research can be conducted on a large scale to gain more students' paraphrasing skills.

Keywords: EFL Students, academic writing, paraphrasing skill

INTRODUCTION

This research intends to determine students' skills and perceptions of paraphrasing in academic writing. Paraphrasing skills are one of the course components in academic writing. Academic writing is the field that is used in formal education, especially in high-level classes. According to Alice and Ann (2007), it is the study of writing used in high school and college classes. In the process of teaching and learning English academic writing, paraphrasing is essential because it will show whether someone understands the source well enough or not. The students have to demonstrate their paraphrasing skills to comprehend a source text. In teaching and learning academic English writing, paraphrasing is one of the essential capabilities. According to Relia (2021), paraphrasing has many functions in academic writing, specifically for academic situations with all its literary texts. One example is when the students need to write a research paper, they must read many sources. Therefore, in the process of paraphrasing is needed to use someone else's theory or idea but use the student's own words. Students face problems with paraphrasing academic writing. Based on the preliminary observation of the 6th-semester students of English Education students at State Islamic University of Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, it was found that they have some issues with paraphrasing. Students encounter different challenges in rewriting sentences without

changing the context of the text. Some of them are confused about the suitable synonym and have difficulty changing the sentence structure.

Paraphrasing means conveying ideas in one's language without changing the text's meaning and content. According to Bailey (2006), paraphrasing involves changing a text while retaining its meaning. Writing paraphrases does not shorten long texts, but maintaining the meaning of the text does not change after the text is different from the original text. According to Alred, Brusaw, and Oliu (2009:372), paraphrasing is restating in one's own words to rewriting the essential ideas of another writer. Paraphrasing also is one way to borrow the ideas of experts and express them in writing then use different words to make them more likely to understand.

Several criteria were developed based on experts and books in making a good paraphrase. Although some experts have different arguments about a good criterion for paraphrasing, the main criteria of good paraphrasing have the same intention. According to Sorenson (2009), the criteria for good paraphrasing are; the paraphrase result reflects the paraphraser's vocabulary, reduces the original only slightly, displays careful reading of the original, responds the original idea accurately and entirely without reflecting personal thinking, uses clear, effective sentences, good mechanics, usage, and grammar.

To conduct this research, various related studies were found. The first research was conducted by Chi Do and Nguyen (2017). They explored the EFL learners' ability to paraphrase in tertiary education in Vietnam and the students' challenges in writing paraphrasing. The following relevant research was conducted by Gusparia (2017). The research used descriptive research and discussed students' ability to paraphrase students in the English study program at FKIP-UNRI. Another relevant research was conducted by Akbar (2020). The research purpose is to explore the paraphrasing skills of six English Department Students at the State University of Gorontalo, specifically in the literature review section of the research proposal. The other relevant study was conducted by Thadphoothon (2019). He used a qualitative method and investigated Thai students' perception and their challenges with paraphrasing skills. The subsequent relevant research was conducted by Sekar and Fatimah (2020). They investigated students' paraphrased text based on Keck's Paraphrase Taxonomy and McInnis' level of paraphrase appropriateness. This research also explores their perceptions of paraphrasing. However, the current research is different from other previous researches. The current research target is students' ability and their perceptions of paraphrasing ability using a qualitative approach of the EFL students at an Islamic institution in Indonesia.

METHOD

The approach of this research is qualitative research. Qualitative research focuses on understanding social phenomena from the perspective of the human participants in the research. According to Creswell (2008), qualitative research is a type of research in which the researcher depends on the perspective of participants, general inquiries, and general questions and collects data consisting mainly of words (or text) from participants. Based on Doringer (2022), qualitative research aims to answer the problem of learning.

Based on the explanation above, this research used a case study. A case study means investigating the process, discovering the meaning, and obtaining an in-depth understanding of the situation, individual, or group (Thomas, 2015). In addition, Creswell (2007) states that a case study is applied in deep exploration of a bounded system such as activity, event, process, or individuals based on extensive data collection. This research used a case study because this research is focused on a specific interest. In this research, the specific interest is the ability and perception of paraphrasing in academic writing. The researcher observed the

phenomenon as straightforwardly as possible without manipulation. This research is appropriate to use as a case study because it examines in-depth the phenomena that occur in students.

This research used purposive sampling to collect the data. According to Sugiyono (2016: 85), purposive sampling is a sampling technique of data sources with specific considerations. In this study, the sampling technique used is non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling technique. The reason for using the purposive sampling technique is that not all samples have criteria that match the phenomenon under study. Therefore, the purposive sampling technique was chosen to stipulate specific considerations in this study. Nine students were taken purposively in this research. It consists of three students with excellent achievement in writing paraphrasing, three students with medium achievement, and three students with low achievement.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section examines the entirety of the research findings. The purpose of this research is to explore students' paraphrasing skills in academic writing. There is a research question related to this research. Data was obtained through document analysis. In order to answer the research aims and objectives, research findings were examined methodically and accurately in order to provide accurate interpretations and draw conclusions. The document analysis was used to answer the following research question: What are the students' paraphrasing skills in academic writing.

Table.1 The result of students paraphrasing skill

NO	Name	Paraphrasing Categories
1.	Students 1	Very poor
2.	Students 2	Poor
3.	Students 3	Very poor
4.	Students 4	Average
5.	Students 5	Very Poor
6.	Students 6	Very Poor
7.	Students 7	Poor
8.	Students 8	Poor
9.	Students 9	Average

Student 1

Original text:

Critical thinking is arguably one of the central requirements and desired outcomes in 'Western' universities. The international student population is expected to adopt the established Western academic discourse in order to meet the requirements of successful writing at university and to be able to claim membership in that community.

Student's paraphrased:

In 'Western' universities, critical thinking is undoubtedly one of the most important requirements and desired outcomes. To achieve the standards of successful writing at university and to claim participation in that community, the international student population is required to adopt the established Western academic discourse. Most students are confused about what is expected of them when it comes to academic writing. Background of international students who see the cultural heritage of Confucius as a barrier to acquiring critical and analytical skills.

Student 1 falls into a very poor category because the student copied most of the words from the original text. They copied words: *requirements and desired outcomes, successful writing at university, in that community, and the international student population, to adopt*

the established Western academic discourse. They should replace the sentence with the correct synonym, but they copied the words. Therefore, the similarities are quite high between the original and paraphrased texts. They also added content that did not match the main idea of the original text, such as "*Background of international students who see the cultural heritage of Confucius as a barrier to acquiring critical and analytical skills.*" Therefore, the sentence appears to be a fragment that can confuse the reader and make it hard to understand what the paraphraser conveys.

Student 2

Original text:

Critical thinking is arguably one of the central requirements and desired outcomes in 'Western' universities. The international student population is expected to adopt the established Western academic discourse in order to meet the requirements of successful writing at university and to be able to claim membership in that community.

Student's paraphrased:

Critical thinking is undoubtedly one of the essential prerequisites and desired outcomes in 'Western' institutions. To achieve the standards of effective writing at university and to claim participation in that community, the international student population is required to adopt the established Western academic discourse.

Student 2 falls into poor category. The student replaced some words using their language, such as "**undoubtedly one of the essential prerequisites**" and "**To achieve the standards of effective.**" However, in the results of the paraphrased text, more words are copied than changed. In terms of the use of synonyms, the student replaced some words from the original text, such as **arguably; undoubtedly, central; essential, requirements; prerequisites, universities; institution, expected; required, to meet; to achieve, requirements; standards, successful; effective, membership; participation.** In the use of synonyms, a selection of words did not follow the context of the original text.

Student 3

Original text:

Critical thinking is arguably one of the central requirements and desired outcomes in 'Western' universities. The international student population is expected to adopt the established Western academic discourse in order to meet the requirements of successful writing at university and to be able to claim membership in that community.

Student's paraphrased;

Critical thinking is widely regarded as one of the most important requirements in "Western" universities. To meet the requirements of successful writing at university and to claim membership in that community, students is expected to adopt the established Western academic discourse.

Student 3 falls into very poor category because the student used inappropriate words in the first sentence in their paraphrased text. This can cause a change in the meaning of the original context. The student used the word **widely regarded** dan **most important**, even though the topic in the original text is not as written in the paraphrase. However, in the following sentence, students can write the contents according to the original text by copying most of the words in the original text.

Student 4

Original text:

Critical thinking is arguably one of the central requirements and desired outcomes in 'Western' universities. The international student population is expected to adopt the established Western academic discourse in order to meet the requirements of successful writing at university and to be able to claim membership in that community.

Student's paraphrased:

Critical thinking is seemingly one of the central prerequisites and wanted results in 'Western' colleges. The universal understudy populace is anticipated to embrace the set up Western scholarly talk in arrange to meet the necessities of effective composing at college and to be able to claim participation in that community.

Student 4 falls into average category because the student almost used their entire vocabulary to replace words from the original text while maintaining the meaning contained in the original text. As in the paraphrasing result, they changed the sentence "**Critical thinking is arguably one of the central requirements and desired outcomes in 'Western' universities**" to "**Critical thinking is seemingly one of the central prerequisites and wanted results in 'Western' colleges.**" It can be seen from the text that they changed five vocabularies from the original text to reduce the level of copies.

Student 5

Original text:

Critical thinking is arguably one of the central requirements and desired outcomes in 'Western' universities. The international student population is expected to adopt the established Western academic discourse in order to meet the requirements of successful writing at university and to be able to claim membership in that community.

Student's paraphrased:

Critical thinking is the argument of the core requirements and outcomes in Western Universities. Most international students think that they need to adopt the Western academic discourse to meet the requirements of successful writing at university, and it may claim membership in that community.

Student 5 falls into a very poor category because they did not change the structure from the original text. The student also copied almost part of the words from the original text. They did not use much of their own vocabulary to make changes in their paraphrased text, so the similarities between the original text and their paraphrased text are quite significant. It can be seen from the sentence "...**to adopt the Western academic discourse to meet the requirements of successful writing at university, and it may claim membership in that community.**"

Student 6

Original text:

Critical thinking is arguably one of the central requirements and desired outcomes in 'Western' universities. The international student population is expected to adopt the established Western academic discourse in order to meet the requirements of successful writing at university and to be able to claim membership in that community.

Student's paraphrased:

One of the requirements for international students to enter western universities is critical thinking that can produce good writing that adopts western academic discourse so that they can become members of the community.

Student 6 falls into a very poor category because it seems that the student makes a summary from the original text. They changed two sentences into one sentence from the original text. The student also did not use the clear changing of synonyms, it could not be identified because students replace the structure of the text with a structure that is much different from the original text and omits almost some words from the original sentence.

Student 7

Original text:

Critical thinking is arguably one of the central requirements and desired outcomes in 'Western' universities. The international student population is expected to adopt the established Western academic discourse in order to meet the requirements of successful writing at university and to be able to claim membership in that community.

Student's paraphrased:

In 'Western' universities, critical thinking is probably one of the most important prerequisites and outcomes. In order to achieve the prerequisites of successful writing at university and to be able to claim participation in that community, international students are expected to adopt the established Western academic discourse.

Student 7 falls into poor category because the student almost copied all the words from the original text. According to Keck (2014), if the students copied more than five words in a sentence, the similarity is 50%. So, it can be categorized as a near copy. The student copied the sentence "**...of successful writing at university and to be able to claim participation in that community, international students are expected to adopt the established Western academic discourse**". It can be seen that they did not use their own words in paraphrased results. Also, they did not make any structural changes to their paraphrased text.

Student 8

Original text:

Critical thinking is arguably one of the central requirements and desired outcomes in 'Western' universities. The international student population is expected to adopt the established Western academic discourse in order to meet the requirements of successful writing at university and to be able to claim membership in that community.

Student's paraphrased:

Critical thinking is one of the main requirements and desired outcomes of western universities. They hope that the international student population can adopt western academic discourse to fulfill the writing requirements in order to refer to claim membership in that community.

Student 8 falls into poor category because the student did not make many changes in their paraphrase. They almost copied all the words in the text. Therefore, the similarity is very large, around 50% or more. They copied the sentence "*the international student population can adopt western academic discourse ... requirements in order to refer to claim membership in that community.*" student copied more than 5 words. Therefore, the student is included in near copy category. The student only replaced a few words using synonyms, including: *central*; *main*, *expected*; *can*, *to meet*; *to fulfil*. The rest, they copied almost all the words listed in the original

text. The student also did not change structures such as part of speech or word order to replace the structure of the text.

Student 9

Original text:

Critical thinking is arguably one of the central requirements and desired outcomes in 'Western' universities. The international student population is expected to adopt the established Western academic discourse in order to meet the requirements of successful writing at university and to be able to claim membership in that community.

Student's Paraphrased:

One of the main prerequisites and objectives of "Western" universities is probably critical thinking. To succeed in writing at university and be able to identify as a member of that community, the international student population is required to adopt the traditional Western academic discourse.

Student 9 falls into an average category because the student did not use their own sentences entirely to paraphrase, they copied many words from the original text so the similarity is large. The student only replaced a few words in the original text using synonyms. The words they changed were *arguably; probably, central; main, requirements; prerequisites, desired outcomes; objective, expected; required, the established; the traditional, successful; succeed, to claim; to identify, membership; member*. The student also replaced changes in sentence structure on. In the text, it seems he changed word order as in the first sentence, they wrote "*One of the main prerequisites and objectives of "Western" universities is probably critical thinking*" they changed the word of the sentence and retains the meaning of the original text. Then in the second sentence they wrote "*To succeed in writing at university and be able to identify as a member of that community, the international student population is required to adopt the traditional Western academic discourse*".

CONCLUSION

Based on findings and discussions in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that from 9 students, there are four students at a very poor level, three students at a poor level, and two at an average level. There are no students who have good skills in paraphrasing. Therefore, student's paraphrasing skills are at poor levels. In line with Sorenson (2017), if the students cannot rewrite the original text to their paraphrased result, it is categorized as poor. The student has used an improper paraphrasing technique, and the student's paraphrasing results also did not meet the aspects of a good paraphrase.

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