

Using Summarizing Techniques To Integrate Writing Into Reading Lessons For EFL Students

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Abstract – This study aims to investigate 1) whether summarizing techniques have effects on improving Students' writing skill , 2) investigate how much the summarizing techniques affect students on their Reading comprehension. The subjects in this study were 90 students at Ngo Quyen high school. The findings revealed that summarizing techniques have obvious effects to the subjects' writing skill and their summaries especially in cases of finding the main ideas, using summarizing techniques in reading comprehension develop students' Reading comprehension. Based on the findings, it is recommended that the teachers should use summarizing techniques for teaching students writing subject, which could prove more useful for students in both their writing skill and reading comprehension.

Keywords – Summarizing Techniques, Writing, Reading, EFL Students.

I. INTRODUCTION

English is an international language that allows us to communicate with people from over the world. Many various series of books, manual, newspaper, letters, emails and information are written in English. If we do not learn English, we are isolating ourselves away from almost half of the world's knowledge. As you know, writing is the fourth of the four language skills. Writing is a form of written communication. Writing English is a task that is often required in school. Regardless of the obstructions found by students, writing is a very important competence. Among the four skills in standardized tests, writing remains a popular way to evaluate students' proficiency in English, especially for academic purposes (White, 1987). Besides, reading skills are important for students because they are the chosen instruments to widen their knowledge. Recent thinking about the nature of reading and writing views the two skills as interdependent and transactive (Carson, 1993, Church, 1997, Spack 1998b). Reading, as well as writing, is seen as an active, constructive process (Barnett, 1998, Church, 1998, Reid, 1993, Spack, 1998b, Zamel, 1992). Reading and writing, since they are so closely linked, mutually reinforce each other and, therefore, promote learning when they are integrated in classroom activities. Their integration allows for multiple approaches to tasks, covering all learning styles (Cobine, 1995). Students become better readers, writers and thinkers when they learn reading and writing together (Carson, 1993, Spack, 1998). On the other hand, without the benefit of reading, students cannot become effective writers. Finally, integrated reading and writing activities help students cope in university courses (Badger and Thomas, 1992, Grabe, 1991, Reid, 1993, Spack, 1993, Zamel, 1993). In an academic setting, student success is dependent on their ability to interact with a text.

With those facts, a solution to students' low proficiency, particularly in writing and reading in high school was needed. The writer believed that one of effective ways of improving students' ability was by implementing the summarizing techniques to language teaching and learning. It was necessary to carry out an investigation, teachers should consider teaching students effective writing strategies, especially showing them how to utilize the skills and knowledge that they bring from their first language in order to cope with writing in the second language. Besides developing writing level for students, teachers who train students to use writing strategies can also help them develop their Reading comprehension. As a result, teaching students learning strategies is an important duty of the language teachers since learning strategies can help students monitor and take charge of their own learning.

This study seeks to investigate whether using summarizing techniques have any effects on learners' writing skill and their reading comprehension through the pre-test and the post-test and to investigate how much the evaluations of students towards the

summarizing techniques affect on their writing and reading skill. This paper particularly aims to answer the following questions: “Do the summarizing techniques have the effects of on students’ writing skill and students’ reading comprehension?”

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing skill

Writing is a significant part of assessment requirements and develops students ability to communicate clearly and appropriately in a range of settings. Moreover, writing is a medium of human communication that represents language and emotion with signs and symbols, (White,1987).. In most languages, writing is a complement to speech or spoken language. Writing is not a language, but a tool developed by human society. The result of writing is called text, and the recipient of text is called a reader.

Nature of writing

Writing is a skill which not all people can do. Someone needs a skill to write and the skill does not come by itself so that one has to learn to write to have the skill that human beings universally learn to walk and to talk, but that swimming and writing are culturally specific, learned behavior.” (Brown, 2001). Although both spoken and written languages, to some extents, are the same that they need to be learned, they remain different in this case. On the other hand, someone has to really learn to be able to write and commonly it also needs to be taught. Harmer (2004) seems to agree with the idea as he says that “spoken language, for a child, is acquired naturally as a result of being exposed to it, whereas the ability to write has to be consciously learned.”

The importance of writing

Writing also has importance in terms of its product that it has its specific purposes. Halliday (1985), as quoted by Nunan (1993), says that written language, the product of writing, is used for action (public signs, product labels, television and radio guides, bills, menus, telephone directories, ballot papers, computer manuals), for information (newspapers, current affairs magazines, advertisements, political pamphlets) and for entertainment (comic strips, fiction books, poetry and drama, newspaper features, film subtitles). In addition, the importance of writing skill can also be seen from the point of view of students’ future, in their world of work. On top of that, Barras (2005) put a further emphasis on the importance of writing ability, in relation to future jobs. He proposes the need of, not only the ability of writing, but also the ability of creating a good writing. This is based on a consideration that in the world of work, their writing, in some occasions, is the only way people are judged, i.e. for example when writing business letters to people who have never been met.

The role of the Teacher

In the past view of language teaching, the role of teacher in the classroom was an authoritative director and arbiter. Based on Brown (2001) view on the current language teaching regarding the teaching of writing, one role of the teacher is as a facilitator. Brown states “As students are encouraged (in reading) to bring their own schemata to bear on understanding texts, and in writing to develop their own ideas, offer their own critical analysis, and find their own ‘voice,’ the role of teacher must be one of facilitator and coach.” The teacher acts his role by providing students with guidance during the thinking process of composing. However, the teacher should not come too deep in this point in respect of student own ideas. He or she cannot force his or her thoughts on student writing. Students should be given freedom to generate their own ideas and opinion on their writing without any intervention from others. In addition, Harmer (2001) put emphasis on several roles of English teacher, among a number of others, which have special importance in the world of teaching writing. Those specially pointed out roles are as motivator, resource and feedback provider.

Different types of writing skill

Writing is one of the best ways of communicating your ideas to others. Different types of writing skills are highly required in coveted fields. Whether you are writing a letter, preparing a report, sending an email or writing a book, it is always advisable to make the content clear and concise so that the reader can easily comprehend the objective of writing. Knowing the skills of writing in varied forms will help you in recognizing and understanding the things you read in books, letters, newspapers or magazines. Good writing skills come from practice and knowledge. There are different types of writing including expository, narrative, descriptive, persuasive and creative. Formats of every writing style vary from each other. Once you decide what you are going to write and for whom, you are going to write then you can start writing. If you are writing a formal email to your senior manager then your language should be very professional. Try to convey the message in simple and short manner. If you want to share something with your friend then you can write causally.

Summarizing techniques

Summarizing is one of the most important academic skills for students to acquire. Students are required to summarize complex concepts and information in every subject area. Furthermore, teachers frequently use this complex task to evaluate students’ comprehension of concepts and materials. In second-language studies, the summarizedprocess becomes a valuable assessment tool to monitor students’ progress toward the acquisition of second language reading comprehension skills. A summary is a record in a

reader's own words that gives the main points of a piece of writing such as a newspaper article, the chapter of a book, or even a whole book. It is also possible to summarize something that you have heard, such as a lecture, or something that you have seen and heard, such as a movie. A summary omits details, and does not include the reader's interpretation of the original. It abstracts all the significant facts of the original —overall thesis, main points, important supporting details —, but, unlike a paraphrase, it omits and/or condenses amplifications such as descriptive details (Mc Anulty, 1981, p. 50, cited in Johns and Mayes, 1990). Effective summarizing leads to an increase in students' learning. Helping students recognize how information is structured will help them summarize what they read or hear. summarizing is a real world skill."

Lesson summarizing techniques

A summary is a brief statement or account of something. Students may be expected to read a passage and using their own words, write a summary of the main idea. Summarizing is also essential skill that is needed in the workplace and in the community. In some cases, writing a summary is an excellent learning strategy that allows students to monitor their own progress in learning course material. Summarizing is how we take larger selections of text and reduce them to their bare essentials: the gist, the key ideas, the main points that are worth noting and remembering.

Summarizing one of the hardest strategies for students to grasp and fully learn, and it is one of the hardest strategies for you to teach. You have to repeatedly model it and give your students plenty of time and opportunities to practice it. There are many different ways students can summarize material from class. Choose a method below that will fit in with the material presented and one that seems to work best with the students in class.

Reading and reading activities:

Reading can be seen as an "interactive" process between a reader and a text which leads to automaticity or (reading fluency). In this process, the reader interacts dynamically with the text as he/she tries to elicit the meaning and where various kinds of knowledge are being used: linguistic or systemic knowledge (through bottom-up processing) as well as schematic knowledge (through top-down processing). However, there are still different points of views on what reading is. These views are often grouped under three different reading models named the bottom –up, the top – down and the interactive ones.

Types of reading model

Extensive reading: There have been conflicting definitions of the term "extensive reading." (Hedge, 2003). This is seen most clearly in various trends adopted by ELT institutions. Students are urged to read independently by using the resources within their reach (Hedge, 2003, p. 200-201). Besides, there has been a growing interest in researching the value of extensive reading. Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) argue that SSR activity can be effective in helping learners become self-directed agents seeking meaning provided an SSR program is "based on student-selected texts so that the students will be interested in what they are reading. Students select their own reading texts with respect to content, level of difficulty, and length."

Intensive Reading: In intensive (or creative) reading, students usually read a page to explore the meaning and to be acquainted with writing mechanisms. Hafiz and Tudor (1989) argues that it is "only through more extensive reading that learners can gain substantial practice in operating these strategies more independently on a range of materials."

The importance of teaching reading

Hedge (2003) states that any reading component of an English language course may include a set of learning goals for the ability to read a wide range of texts in English. The last goal can be implemented at an advanced level. Consequently, students can check the authenticity of the text by looking at the following indicators: whether the article gives the name of the author or no, the date of publication, the aim of the article, etc.

The key to reading comprehension

Most researches on reading now focus on the effective reading strategies that increase students' comprehension. Guthrie (1996) argues that most researchers study a single cognitive strategy, rather than conducting a long-term study of multiple strategies. Besides, few studies have addressed the issues related to "motivation" and "engagement". Since "each learner will have different strengths to build on and different weaknesses to overcome" (Hedge, 2003), there is no one defined reading methodology. In her functional approach to reading, Moorman & Ram (1994) focus on science fiction genre since "stories offer many opportunities for creative reading". Carrell et al (1989) argues that besides "being effective for vocabulary development, semantic mapping has proved to be a good alternative to traditional pre-reading and post-reading activities" (*ibid*, p.651). In fact, most contemporary reading tasks include pre-reading activities. Therefore, I believe pre-reading activities can be followed by SM strategy since the former aim at increasing learners' motivation. While semantic mapping is used as a tool to assess students' schema, the experience text-relationship (ETR) method emphasizes comprehension, i.e., reading for meaning. This method is based on discussion aimed at linking what the reader already knows to what he/she will encounter in the text. It has essentially three simple steps: experience, text, and relationship.

Activities used in teaching reading

The basic LEA technique uses the students' ideas and the students' own words in the preparation of beginning reading materials. The students decide what they want to say and how to say it, and then dictate to the teacher, who acts as a scribe. Drucker (2003) suggests the following procedure teachers can take before reading a text relate the passage students are going to read to something that is familiar to them. Similarly, Abraham (2002) states that an interactive approach "demands that the teachers activate the students' schema" during the pre-reading phase by helping "students recognize the knowledge that they already have about the topic of a text". The aim of while-reading stage (or interactive process) is to develop students' ability intackling texts by developing their linguistic and schematic knowledge. Hedge (2003) argues that although some oppose the interactive activities carried during the while-reading phase, there are only few research studies that show the "effects of intervention and their outcomes". Moreover, "many students report positively on the usefulness of while-reading activities."

Current researches on the effects of using summarizing techniques to integrate reading comprehension and writing

Many researchers found that summarized process connected with reading and writing. Corbeil (2000) pointed out that "the summarized process in second language becomes a valuable assessment tool to conduct students' progress towards the acquisition of second language reading comprehension skills". Also, cultivating students' writing skill through reading is important (LIU,2008).Brown, Day and Jones cited in Moghaddam (2007) declared that summarized involves additional and deliberate processing strategies than what are required in comprehension. Palmer (2003) stated that summarizing is based on a learning process, and the perfect comprehension of a text will be a necessary step in order to teach students to condense information in a new piece of discourse. The use of summarizing techniques in high school is not strictly emphasized. When students were asked to read and summarize a text, they usually struggle to write by themselves without the knowledge in summarizing technique (Laosooksri, 2006). Many researches in the field of summary writing found that students' summary writing showed many problems such as distortion of the contents of the texts, copying the same words as the original text, identifying the key points of a text, lack of coherence, and lack of ability to paraphrase. Moreover, they have some difficulties in reducing text to its gist in the absence of space constraints (Hahn and Garner, 1985).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The participants

The participants of the study were 90 students 10th form at Ngo Quyen high school, most of them have been learning English for nearly five years. Ten teachers of English at Ngo Quyen high school, especially those who are teaching English to the 10th form students. Based on a placement test, there were two intact groups. Participants were randomly assigned into one experimental group and one controlled group. Forty-five of them were considered as experimental group and the rests 45 were the students of who were considered as the controlled group. It was assumed at the beginning that all of the subjects were at the same level abilities on reading comprehension, so the score of the pre-test was analyzed. It was found that the subjects of the two groups were at the same level of reading comprehension. Their pre-test scores were not significantly different, that is, before the summarizing techniques treatment, the subjects of both groups had the same levels of English reading comprehension. The experimental group was assigned to study the passages given to them, write a summary, and learn to be able to present it orally (summary group= SG) and write a short passage about the passage they have been read by themselves. Second, the control group was assigned to read the passages and be prepared so that they could write down the main ideas of the passage by themselves (control group= CG).

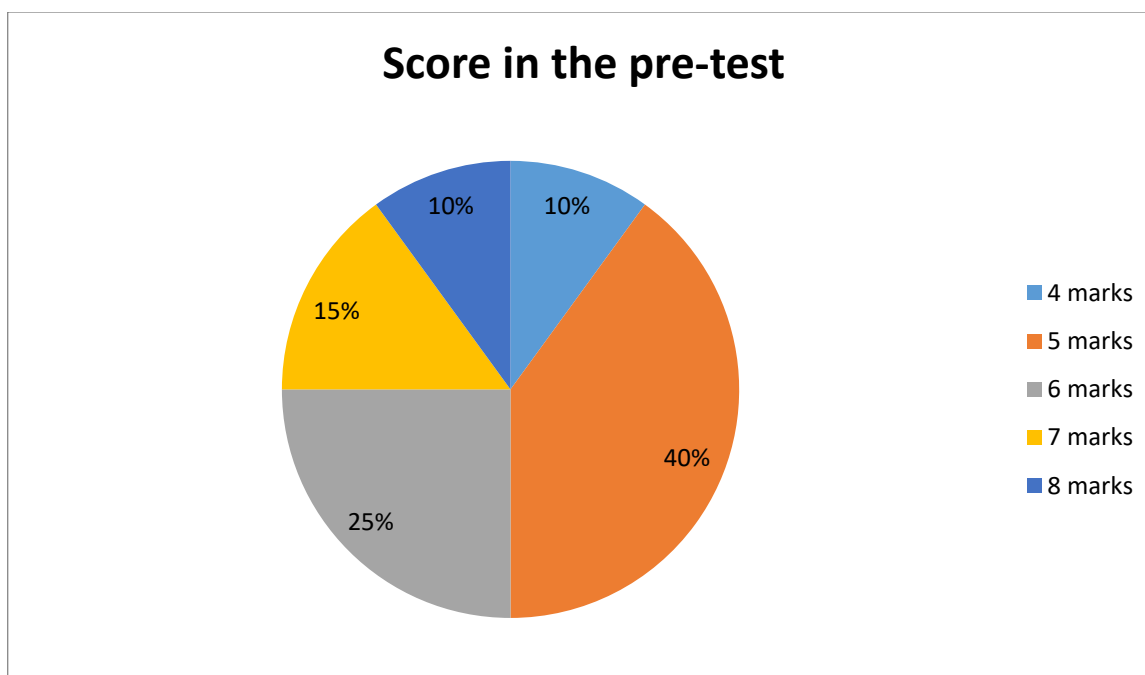
Data Collection

The pre-test was conducted with both groups in the first week of the semester. The time used in testing was 120 minutes with the following steps. The researcher gave the first 50 minutes for the subjects to read and summarize the first passage. When the time was up, their first answer sheets and the passages were returned to the researcher. Then the second passage was assigned after the 10 minutes break, and students had to complete it and handed it over before the class finished. The post-test was administered in the last week of the semester after the treatment.

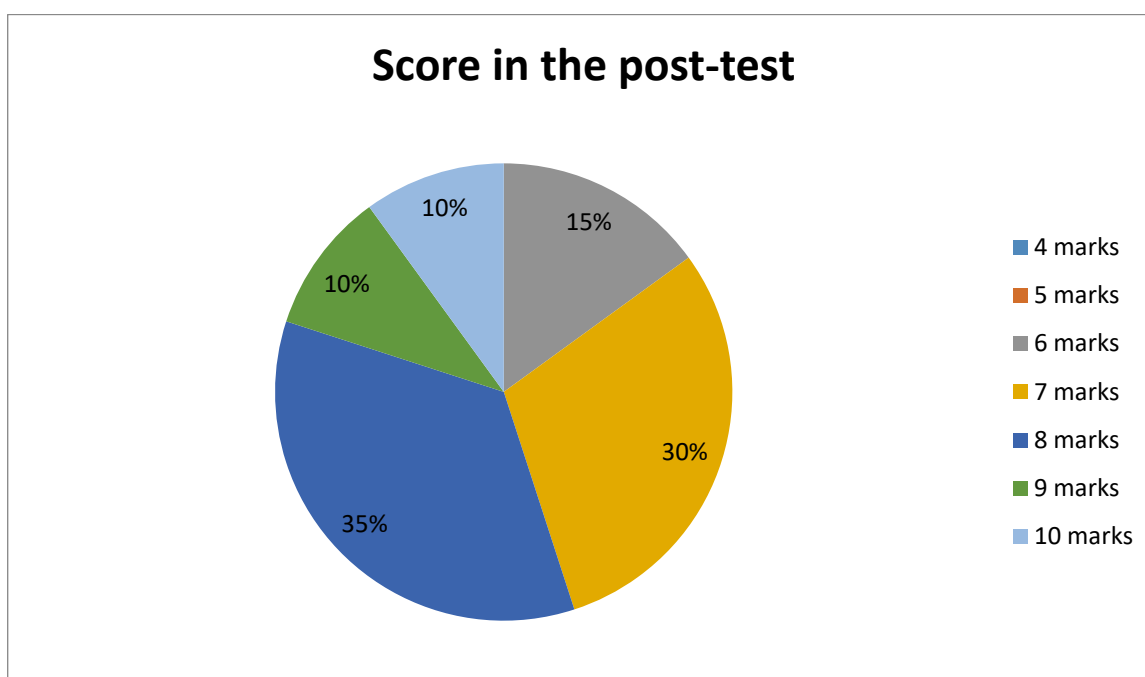
IV. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Analysis

Results of data analyses (T-test) in the pre-test there was the students get the bad marks more than students who get the good marks.



In the pre-test, there are 10% of students get 4 marks, 40% of students get 5 marks, 25% of students get 6 marks, 15% of students get 7 marks and 10% of students get 8 marks.



In the post-test, there are 0% of students get 4 marks; 0% of students get 5 marks; 15% of students get 6 marks; 30% of students get 7 marks; 35% of students get 8 marks; 0% of students get 4 marks Results of data analyses (T-test) in the post-test indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between students in reading comprehension performance before treatment (pretest) and after the instruction (posttest). The students get the good mark more than students who get the bad mark. After using summarizing techniques, the students can develop their reading and writing skill and then they can improve their reading and writing skill.

Findings

Effectiveness of summarizing techniques

In order to answer the first research question whether the summarizing techniques have any effects on students' writing skill, the result shows that summarizing techniques obviously have effects on students' writing skill especially in cases of finding the main ideas, developing students' writing abilities.

There are two groups include controlled group and experimental group, each group with 45 students. At the beginning of the pre-test, both two groups have the same level of writing skill. In the pre-test, both two groups have a same multiple choice test (Reading comprehension) including 20 questions (20 points) and summary writing was 20 points.

The effectiveness of the techniques in the writing and reading comprehension course

Table 1: The frequency of using summarizing techniques in teaching and learning reading and writing

Using summarizing techniques in reading and writing	Often		Sometimes		Never	
	Students' choice(%)	Teachers' choice(%)	Students' choice(%)	Teachers' choice(%)	Students' choice(%)	Teachers' choice(%)
Finding the topic sentence and making an outline	85	85	11	15	4	0
Paraphrase	72	80	25	20	3	0
Oral-summary	82	85	18	15	0	0
Written / Journal Summary	7	15	30	20	61	65
About/point	9	10	45	45	36	45

Table 1 shows the level of the students and teacher on using summarizing techniques students on writing and reading comprehension. Each column represents the level of participants who used the techniques as often, sometimes, or never. When the interviewees never use a technique as never, it did not mean that the activity was ineffective.

From Table 1, it can be seen that "Finding the topic sentence and making an outline" was judged as the most effective group of techniques by most of the participants. The interviewees gave reasons for the "Finding the topic sentence and making an outline" to be effective the most because it raised the learners' awareness of their writing, provided opportunities to approach their friends' different perspectives about their papers, and gave them more chances to write. By using qualitative analysis of the interview data, the participants described their in-depth evaluation towards the most effective activity or the least effective one. Consequently, 'Finding the topic sentence and making an outline' was assessed as the most effective activity and the opposite one was 'Written / Journal Summary.'

The first reason for the most effective techniques was that the learners have become more aware of the subject to be discussed and how the paragraph will discuss it. Readers generally look to the first few sentences in a paragraph to determine the subject and perspective of the paragraph. That's why it's often best to put the topic sentence at the very beginning of the paragraph.

V. CONCLUSION

The results of the study showed that training the students with the using of summarizing techniques to high school students had positive effects – this made students have awareness of using summarizing to improve reading skill. Most students were able to find the main ideas, and they tried to paraphrase sentences from the original texts. The subjects in experimental group used much less plagiarism in their summaries. This confirmed that summarizing techniques are beneficial. In regard to writing, it seems that students were highly occupied with using their own words. They sometimes used inappropriate words to substitute the original words in their post-test. This means they misunderstood some contents of the original texts. However, they had a greater struggle to change the original sentences.

Based on the finding of this study, the researcher found that they had problems on grammar and writing. Sometimes, although they understood what the texts said about, they did not know how to write, so grammar knowledge is also important in summarizing. This agrees with Kirkland and Suanders (1991) that the students need to have vocabulary, reading and writing skills. That is the important skills in summarizing are to have adequate reading and writing skills. If the practice of summarizing is prolonged, certainly, the students will gradually improve their reading and writing skills.

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