**Larbi Ben M’hidi University**

**English Department**

**Research Methodology/ 2nd Year**

**S. AROUF**

**Summarising and Paraphrasing**

Summarising and paraphrasing are normally used together in essay writing. Summarising aims to reduce information to a suitable length, allowing the writer to condense lengthy sources into a concise form, while paraphrasing means changing the wording of a text so that it is significantly different from the original source, without changing the meaning. Both are needed to avoid the risk of plagiarism, and this lecture practises them separately and jointly.

**1 What makes a good summary?**

Summarising is a common activity in everyday life. It is used to describe the main features of the subject.

* Write a short description of one of the topics below in no more than 20 words.

(a) A book you have enjoyed

(b) A town or city you know well

(c) A film you have recently watched

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* Compare your summary with others in your class. What is needed for a good summary?
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**2 Stages of summarising**

Summarising is a flexible tool. You can use it to give a one-sentence outline of an article, or to provide much more detail, depending on your needs. Generally, a summary focuses on the main ideas and excludes examples or supporting information.

* Study the stages of summary writing below, which have been mixed up. Put them in the correct order (1–5).

(a) Write the summary from your notes, reorganising the structure if needed.

(b) Make notes of the key points, paraphrasing where possible.

(c) Read the original text carefully and check any new or difficult vocabulary.

(d) Mark the key points by underlining or highlighting.

(e) Check the summary to ensure it is accurate and nothing important has been

 changed or lost.

**Practice A:** Read the following text and the summaries that follow. Which is

 best? Give reasons.

**MECHANICAL PICKERS**

Bailey (2015) notes that although harvesting cereal crops such as wheat and barley has been done for many years by large machines known as combine harvesters, mechanising the picking of fruit crops such as tomatoes or apples has proved more difficult. Farmers have generally relied on human labour to harvest these, but in wealthy countries it has become increasingly difficult to find people willing to work for the wages farmers are able to pay. This is partly because the demand for labour is seasonal, usually in the autumn, and also because the work is hard. As a result, in areas such as California part of the fruit harvest is often unpicked and left to rot.

There are several obvious reasons why developing mechanical pickers is challenging. Fruit such as grapes or strawberries comes in a variety of shapes and does not always ripen at the same time. Outdoors, the ground conditions can vary from dry to muddy, and wind may move branches around. Clearly each crop requires its own solution: machines may be towed through orchards by tractors or move around by themselves, using sensors to detect the ripest fruit.

This new generation of fruit harvesters is possible due to advances in computing

power and sensing ability. Such devices will inevitably be expensive, but will save

farmers from the difficulty of managing a labour force. In addition, the more intelligent pickers should be able to develop a database of information on the health of each individual plant, enabling the grower to provide it with fertiliser and water to maintain its maximum productivity.

**The summaries of the text**

(a) Fruit crops have usually been picked by hand, as it is difficult to mechanise the process. But in rich countries it has become hard to find affordable pickers at the right time, so fruit is often wasted. Therefore, intelligent machines have

been developed that can overcome the technical problems involved, and also provide farmers with useful data about the plants (Bailey, 2015).

(b) Developing machines that can pick fruit such as tomatoes or apples is a challenging task, due to the complexity of locating ripe fruit in an unpredictable outdoor environment, where difficult conditions can be produced by wind or water. But recent developments in computing ability mean that growers can now automate this process, which should save them money and increase their profits (Bailey, 2015).

(c) Strawberries and grapes are the kind of crops that have always been handpicked. But many farmers, for example in California, now find it increasingly

difficult to attract enough pickers when the fruit is ripe. However, computing advances have produced a solution to this problem that will save farmers from worrying about the pickers, and also collect vital data (Bailey, 2015).

**Practice B:** Summarise the following text in about 80 words.

**Task-Based Approach to Language Teaching**

According to Alkhateeb (n.d.), task-based approach is recognized as an effective means of developing students' language output and interaction. More student-centered learning environment helps learners exercise greater flexibility in using language, develop linguistic fluency, and allows for meaningful communication. Authentic tasks carefully drawn from real-world situations will keep learners engaged and motivated more easily, which will result in better learning. As Harrington, Oliver and Reeves (2003) have pointed out, more contextualized exercises, as contrasted with academic and decontextualized vacuum, will create a learning environment which will have learners immersed in problem solving within realistic situations. The approach ultimately help teachers bridge the gap between language practically used in real world and unnatural language used within the world of school.

Alkhateeb (n.d.) further noted that in spite of growing evidence of success, task-based instruction shows some limitations as well. One of the most significant and frequently voiced criticisms is that the method is not as effective or appropriate to level language learners with limited prior linguistic knowledge as it is to higher level students. Due to the significant amount of cognitive burden it poses on learners, beginning language learners who are asked to complete a challenging task in the target language often find the situation frustrating and, as a result, develop resistance to the learning method. When asked to use all the language they can muster to express themselves, beginning language learners who are unfamiliar with the learning context may not feel comfortable or productive as if they are thrown to a deep sea when they cannot swim (Willis, 1996). In task based learning classrooms, frustration is not only with learners but with teachers as well. In his survey conducted among English as Second Language (ESL) teachers in East Asian countries, Littlewood (2007) found out that key obstacles to adopting task-based instructional approach in their classrooms were; 1) difficulties getting unmotivated students participate in tasks that usually require a higher level of motivation and enthusiasm from learners, and 2) inability to manage classroom as students get easily distracted and become noisy as they engage in group interaction to complete tasks collaboratively.

**Paraphrasing**

Paraphrasing and summarising are normally used together in essay writing, but while summarising aims to reduce information to a suitable length, paraphrasing attempts to restate the relevant information.

Note that an effective paraphrase usually:

• has a different structure to the original

• has mainly different vocabulary

• retains the same meaning

• keeps some phrases from the original that are in common use

**Techniques for paraphrasing**

**(a) Changing vocabulary by using synonyms:**

*argues > claims/eighteenth century > 1700s/wages > labour costs/economise > saving*

**(b) Changing word class:**

*explanation (n.) > explain (v.)/mechanical (adj.) > mechanise (v.)/profitable (adj.) >*

profitability (n.)

**(c) Changing word order:**

*. . . the best explanation for the British location of the Industrial Revolution is found by studying demand factors.*

*> A focus on demand may help explain the UK origin of the Industrial Revolution.*

**Practice C:**

**Read the text below and then decide which is the better paraphrase, (a) or (b); justify your answer.**

Annie Oakley's life spanned years of tremendous change for American women. By the time of her death in 1926, Americans were celebrating the liberated, urban focused, modern times of the Jazz Age. Women had won the right to vote, wore less restrictive clothes, and followed a changing ideal that was loosening some of the restrictions on women's roles and behaviour that had reigned through the nineteenth century (Bailey, 2011).

(a) The sharpshooter Annie Oakley lived through a period of many liberating changes for women, from the Victorian era through the first quarter of the 20th century. Examples include voting rights for women as well as the freedom to wear comfortable and practical clothing (Bailey, 2011).

(b) Annie Oakley’s life spanned years of significant changes for American women. By the time she died in 1926, women had the vote, wore looser clothing, and embraced the freedom from restrictive 19th century roles and behavior (Bailey, 2011).

**Practice D** Paraphrase the following text as fully as possible.

**THE PAST BELOW THE WAVES**

More than three million shipwrecks are believed to lie on the sea bed, the result of storms and accidents during thousands of years of sea-borne trading. These wrecks offer marine archaeologists valuable information about the culture, technology and trade patterns of ancient civilizations, but the vast majority have been too deep to research. Scuba divers can only operate down to 50 metres, which limits operations to wrecks near the coast, which have often been damaged by storms or plant growth. A few deep sea sites (such as the Titanic) have been explored by manned submarines, but this kind of equipment has been too expensive for less famous subjects. However, this situation has been changed by the introduction of a new kind of mini submarine: the automatic underwater vehicle (AUV). This cheap, small craft is free moving and does not need an expensive mother-ship to control it. Now a team of American archaeologists are planning to use an AUV to explore an area of sea north of Egypt, which was the approach to a major trading port 4,000 years ago (Bailey, 2015).