

**THE QUALITY OF STUDENTS' PARAPHRASES OF
AN EXPOSITORY TEXT**
**A Study of a Group of English Department Students of
State University of Padang**

THESIS



By

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ABSTRACT

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The research aimed at obtaining the information related to students' quality in paraphrasing an expository text seen from the four dimensions of a paraphrase evaluation. The design of the research was descriptive research. The subjects of the research were 15 students who had passed all reading and writing courses. The instrument used in the research was paraphrasing test. The components which were used as the base to evaluate students' work were semantic completeness, lexical similarity, syntactic similarity and paraphrase quality. The students' works were graded by scoring rubric which was divided into 4 categories; 4 meant *excellent*, 3 meant *satisfactory*, 2 meant *below average* and 1 meant *ineffective*. The research findings showed that students' paraphrase quality was on *ineffective* category since almost all of the students obtained 1 on all dimensions. On semantic completeness dimension, almost all students obtained 1 which meant they were on *ineffective* category. On lexical completeness dimension, almost all students obtained 1 which also meant they were on *ineffective* category. Also, on the rest dimensions; syntactical and paraphrase quality dimensions, almost all of them obtained 1, which indicated that they were on *ineffective* category. It was expected that more concerns related students' paraphrase should be given.

ABSTRAK

Kher, Dinovia Fannil. 2015. Kualitas Paraphrase Teks Ekspository Mahasiswa Bahasa Inggris: Sebuah Studi terhadap Sekelompok Mahasiswa Bahasa Inggris Universitas Negeri Padang. Thesis. Pascasarjana. Universitas Negeri Padang.

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk melihat kualitas mahasiswa dalam memparafrase teks ekspositori. Jenis Penelitian dalam thesis ini adalah deskriptif. Partisipan yang digunakan sebagai subjek 15 orang mahasiswa dipilih secara acak tetapi telah dipastikan lulus seluruh mata kuliah *reading* dan *writing*. Instrumen yang dipakai untuk memperoleh data terkait kualitas *paraphrase* mahasiswa test *paraphrase* sebuah teks ekspository. Komponen *paraphrase* yang digunakan untuk meneliti kualitas *paraphrase* mahasiswa *semantic completeness*, *lexical similarity*, *syntactic similarity* dan *paraphrase quality*. Penilaian komponen-komponen tersebut didasarkan kepada rubrik penilaian yang terbagi atas 4 kategori penilaian; skor 4 berarti *excellent* (sempurna) skor 3 berarti *satisfactory*, (memuaskan) skor 2 berarti *below average* (dibawah rata-rata) dan skor 1 berarti *ineffective* (tidak efektif) Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kualitas mahasiswa dalam menulis *paraphrase* berada pada kategori *ineffectivel*, karena hampir semua mahasiswa memperoleh skor 1 pada keempat komponen *paraphrase*. Pada komponen *semantic completeness*, merujuk kepada rubrik yang dipergunakan, hampir seluruh mahasiswa berada pada kategori *ineffective*. Hal yang sama juga terjadi pada komponen *lexical similarity*, karena hampir semua mahasiswa berada pada kategori *ineffective*. Begitu juga dengan dua komponen terakhir lainnya, *syntactic similarity* dan *paraphrase quality*, hampir semua mahasiswa tetap berada pada kategori *ineffective*. Hal ini menunjukkan fenomena mahasiswa memiliki permasalahan terkait mata pelajaran *reading* dan *writing* karena *paraphrase* merupakan perpaduan kedua mata pelajaran ini. Dosen sebagai tenaga pengajar diharapkan dapat mengevaluasi pokok-pokok bahasan terkait kedua subjek ini.

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Padang, 5 Februari 2016

Saya yang Menyatakan

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Finally, it is hoped that this research would useful for all readers, especially for the improvements of reading and writing courses at English Department of State University of Padang.

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The Writer

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Problem

The continuous changes on technology have completely created large-scale transformation in both society and academics. Consequently, academic institutions are highly forced to keep innovating and trying various applicable methods of teaching, implementing new ways to build critical thinking. In particular, students and teachers are faced with numerous researches, papers and essays. Students are required to keep themselves updated with the trends both in learning and teaching. They are required to deal with more writing papers, essays, researches and the submission necessarily meets the high-standard criteria provided by the instructors. They necessarily have various references. The references spread unlimitedly since internet makes searching everything is possible. However, this *everything is possible*, apparently, creates many academic misconducts, such as the tendency to *download* a script of someone else's writing and then to admit it as own writing.

This new-tendency trend lately is known as plagiarism. Plagiarism is an act of taking or quoting someone else's ideas without providing appropriate credit or acknowledgment in the process of academic writing. Since it is possible to have *soft-copies* for numerous scientific articles, copying is such a light task. It is very easy to search and then to download scientific papers, and then to take them as the main sources, but, then, they are put as if they are original ideas, no longer treated as sources or references. The tendency seems fine due to the fact that more and

more users conduct it. While, in fact, this act is considered as ‘stealing’ which leads to a serious academic crime.

Many higher education institutions abroad take the issue on plagiarism seriously. They carefully set the code of practice on plagiarism. The code includes, policy, fines, and penalties given to those who conducted plagiarism. The consequences can be a reprimand given to the student, reduce the mark for the assessment task by up to 50%, even, resulted in expulsion of the students from the university. For instance, University of Ulster has set regulation for plagiarism policy (2012), the penalties given for plagiarism offences are reduction in marks based on exclusion of plagiarized work, marking zero for assignment, even, if the plagiarism is detected after graduation, the awarded may be revoked. The University of the West Indies, Policy on Graduate Student Plagiarism (2010) states that the penalties that may be given to the act of academic dishonest are the deduction of mark or even failure submission. In short, from the two different universities that have regulated policy on student plagiarism, it is concluded that this kind of academic dishonest is carefully concerned, that plagiarism cannot be ignored.

Instead of blaming and being resistance to the growth of technology, there are alternatives can be done in order to avoid plagiarism. The references are not restricted to *hard-copies* only that no *soft-copies* are allowed. Both can be used by applying proper ways. Bailey (2006) writes the possible ways to have lengthy quotations and to avoid plagiarism is by paraphrasing or summarizing the original source. Paraphrasing can be defined as restating one’s idea into own words. This is

possibly applied to avoid plagiarism, since, rather than to copy one source and then to paste it to own work, the words are written same in delivering the ideas yet different in wording.

In paraphrasing, though the definition can be quite simple, ways to do it is not that simple. It ties two skills. First, the students need to have good reading since the main point in paraphrasing is to retain the original meaning. They cannot restate an idea, unless they are sure about that idea, Thus, it is necessary for them to grasp the meaning brought by the text. Second, the students need to know what they have to write, what words that they can chose, what vocabulary that may be used as the replacement or what sentences that can be transformed or changed. Thus, they have to understand writing.

The fact that doing paraphrasing is a sort of complex activity, for the students of English Department of State University of Padang, paraphrasing is included both in *reading* and *writing* courses. Since paraphrasing means to rewrite what has been read, the students, first, are taught many topics related to reading, ways to read, strategies to read, and then, they are assigned the related topics in their writing courses. The students have been familiar with topics related to paraphrasing, such as possible and applicable steps in paraphrasing, ways to paraphrase and how a good paraphrase should be. They have been assigned with tasks that require them to paraphrase various texts, such as papers, journals, essays and articles, or those kinds of expository text.

However, though, these students have been introduced and taught what and how to paraphrase, there are some problems need to be concerned when the

students are assigned academic writing that have them dealt with numerous expository texts. It is necessarily since the issue on plagiarism have not yet been considered that important for some of the local universities. It is found that only several local higher institutions have set the codes of practice on plagiarism, while some others have not yet.

One of the possible things to be careful concerned is the quality of the students' paraphrases. It is necessarily researched since, first, how well they can paraphrase determine the how well they read and write, and their tendency to plagiarize. Second, there are some components that the students need to cover so that it can be ensured that their paraphrases meet the standard. According to McCarthy et.al (2009), the dimensions of paraphrase are semantic completeness; where the ideas are written exactly the same with the original source; lexical similarity; where the dictions are possibly changed; syntactic similarity; where the sentence structure are different; paraphrase quality; where other considerations may be concerned. These four dimensions determine paraphrase evaluation.

Therefore, what is possibly considered here, for instance, when the students are assigned to work on academic writing, for sure, there are parts that they need to write accordingly based on theoretical reviews. In writing this part, the students, as the writers necessarily refer to scientific articles, essays, or journals. The students are required to restate the references that they need or to paraphrase. In paraphrasing the references, the students have to be sure that they maintain their original ideas. It is necessary for them to understand what they read so that the original idea stays the same. Moreover, they are not allowed to include any of their own ideas since it

disturbs the original source. Then, the students have to be able to produce the same version but different in wording. It indicates that the students have to have various vocabulary so that they can include appropriate synonyms. In addition, they also need to have different sentence structures, whether they can change one active sentence into passive or vice versa. These all are needed since they cover the standard of a good paraphrase. If they do not cover these all requirements, there would be an assumption such academic dishonest like plagiarism has been conducted.

Thus, in order to see whether or not the English department students can produce a representative version of a paraphrase, whether or not their paraphrases have met the criteria or standard of a good paraphrase, a research aimed at seeing the quality of students' paraphrases would be better conducted.

B. The Focus of the Problem

There were many things influencing a paraphrase, such as students' reading, grammar, and vocabulary. However, in the research the problem was focused on the students' paraphrasing quality of an expository text which was seen from the dimensions stated by the expert.

C. Research Questions

Based on the formulation of the research, the research questions were divided into the following:

1. How is the quality of the students' paraphrase seen from its semantic completeness dimension?
2. How is the quality of the students' paraphrase seen from its lexical similarity dimension?
3. How is the quality of the students' paraphrase seen from its syntactic similarity dimension?
4. How is the quality of the students' paraphrase seen from its paraphrase quality dimension?

D. The Purpose of the Research

The research was conducted in order to find out:

1. The quality of the students' paraphrase seen from its semantic completeness dimension.
2. The quality of the students' paraphrase seen from its lexical similarity dimension.
3. The quality of the students' paraphrase seen from its syntactical similarity dimension.
4. The quality of the students' paraphrase seen from its paraphrase quality dimension.

E. The Significance of the Research

The research was expected to provide information related to the quality of students' paraphrase of an expository text. This information then would reveal

whether the problems found were due to lecturers and the department. Moreover it would reflect how far the institution had been successfully in setting topics of related courses; reading and writing. In addition, the information would show the fact that there had been such practical done against the academic codes. Then, it would provide alternatives which could be useful in avoiding the serious academic misconduct.

F. Definition of Key Terms

1. Paraphrasing is an act to restate or reiterate someone's ideas into your own words
2. Expository text is a kind of text which gives reasons for a point of view and tries to convince reader about that point.
3. Quality is the extent to which a student meets the standard criteria in the given task.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusion

Based on the research findings and discussion, it could be concluded:

1. The quality of students' paraphrase seen from semantic completeness dimension was failing. Almost all of the students as the participants were on the category of *ineffective paraphrase*.
2. The quality of students' paraphrase seen from lexical similarity dimension was failing. Almost all of the students as the participants were the category of *ineffective paraphrase*.
3. The quality of students' paraphrase seen from syntactical dimension was failing. Almost all of the students as the participants were on the category of *ineffective paraphrase*.
4. The quality of students' paraphrase seen from paraphrase quality dimension was failing. Almost all of the students as the participants were on the category of *ineffective paraphrase*.

B. Implication

Since the research findings indicated that there were probably many plagiarisms had been conducted, an immediate action is needed in order to cure the problems. First, lecturers, as the closest persons to the students need to pay more attention to the work given, especially those related to scientific papers or journals.

This is meant to detect the possibility of being plagiarized or doing copy-pasted. Second, the students should be seriously warned that such academic dishonest may result hard punishment, such as being expelled from the institution.

C. Suggestions

The fact that the students' paraphrases quality was low, based on the data and research finding obtained, was not supposed to be less concerned. Those who are actively involved in education should consider this finding. Thus, there were some suggestions to be possibly applied:

1. The English department should re-discuss what to be included in the teaching syllabuses, related to paraphrase as the topic to be discussed. The students were lack of the activities provided that they seemed lack of knowledge about how and what to paraphrase. Moreover, the materials should also be emphasized on the reasons why it was important to be fully mastered. It was due to the fact that the students seemed to underestimate whether or not they need to paraphrase that they preferred to *copy-paste* all the time, that this activity seemed to be acceptable, while in fact it possibly resulted academic award revoked.
2. The English department should require students to have more reading so that they are used to reading and having lot of references. It was due to the fact that reading is fundamentally important for success. The students will not be able to understand other courses unless they solve their difficulty in reading.