

Evaluating the performance of Iraqi EFL undergraduates in Writing Reading Comprehension Précis

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Abstract

The study aims at evaluating the performance of the grammatical and lexical abilities of Iraqi EFL undergraduates in writing précis for reading comprehension passages . (64) male and female second- year students from English Dep. College of Education-of Babylon University were chosen as the sample of the study during the academic year (2012-2013). A written test form was constructed to be the tool for the research study. The test form consisted of an unseen passage followed by a question to write a précis for the presented passage. The testees were provided with instructions to determine the starting and the end points of the précis. The testees were required to mention the steps to be followed to write their précis including the key words of the ideas to be included in their précis, their grammatical devices used in formulating their précis and their own vocabulary used the précis. The respondents showed low frequency use of the grammatical devices for reduction which indicates that the testees were not adequately trained to utilize their grammatical knowledge in such a productive piece of writing whereby grammar is utilized to compress sentences for reduction. The respondents also showed low succeeded scores in using cohesive devices to join the sentences of the required precis due to The inability of the testees to utilize their grammatical knowledge to choose the correct conjunction to join sentences and misunderstanding the ideas in the presented passage which causes the inability to discover the shared meaning among them when joining is done accordingly. Above all, the respondents showed very low succeeded results in utilizing their vocabulary store to achieve word economy which clearly indicates that the testees have poor vocabulary store that makes them less felixable to express the ideas of the presented passage in their own words.

Chapter One

1.1Statement of the problem:

Précis writing is a productive skill in which learners are tested to perform many abilities. According to Tucker, an American teacher who began using précis writing in his high school classes in 1924 , he says that this method “stimulates primarily not the creative but the analytical powers ”. (1926 : 7) . Précis-writing is not merely an educational exercise ,however , it is essential to be able to seize quickly and accurately upon essentials and give a clear ,concise account of them(Charlton ,1963: 1) . In school there are many situations that call for the writing of a brief ,accurate précis of reading, students are frequently asked to prepare a précis of what they have read in their textbook or in the library. Answers of examination often require a brief summary.

It follows that précis writing is important for learners as:

- 1-It will give them practice in close, attentive reading ,and train us to do justice to what they read (rather than reading into a work only what is familiar to them).
- 2-It will strengthen their sense of structure in writing :how a writer organizes material , develops his or her points and moves from one point to another.
- 3-It will develop their sense of what is important in written work , enabling them to distinguish between key points ,the material backing them up, specific examples and illustrations, and mere asides.

4-It provides a valuable corrective to muddled thinking and loose, vague and verbose expression. (Jepson ,1968 :2).

For, more specifically EFL learners , précis writing is the practical field through which they can practice their grammatical and lexical abilities in the foreign language for reduction , cohesion and language economy. They can ; therefore , manipulate their grammatical devices such as: passive voice, gerund, conjunctions, and dangling structures to sum up the given ideas concisely and cohesively throughout the use of their own vocabulary store and their own wording to produce a unified and brief piece of writing.

Thus, the study tries to check the performance of the grammatical and lexical abilities of Iraqi EFL undergraduates in writing précis for reading comprehension passages .

1.2 The aim of the study

The study aims at evaluating the performance of the grammatical and lexical abilities of Iraqi EFL undergraduates in writing précis for reading comprehension passages .

1.3 Hypothesis: It is hypothesized that EFL undergraduates are not adequately competent to utilize their grammatical and lexical abilities in writing précis for reading comprehension passages .

1.4 The limitation of the study: The study is limited to Iraqi EFL students ,in College of education-of Babylon University during the academic year (2012-2013).

Chapter Two

2.1 Review of related literature

The history and the nature of a précis is indicated by the name itself ,which is derived from the French précis meaning “precise”. The word précis (pronounced /preisi:/) is a French term meaning “a pruned or cut-down statement” ,an abstract ,or a summary.(Collins and Pink, 1932: 1) .It is not a paraphrase ; rather it ,it is the essence-the pith-of a paragraph ,or of several paragraphs or even of a whole essay .

According to Hossack (1972 :5) précis is something we are saying what it all adds up to .It is rather like adding up in Arithmetic i.e. if we say for example $4\ aunts + 3\ aunts + 2\ aunts = 9\ aunts$ so, there is no problem in adding up aunts , but in the case of $4\ aunts + 3\ uncles + 2\ cousins =$ we have a problem .We can not add up aunts and uncles together because they are different while we can only add up things of the same kind .In Arithmetic we couldn't get round this difficult. Nevertheless, in language, we can turn all the different things into the same thing by finding a common expression for all the things we want to add up. The words in example (2) all have in common sense ,they are all relatives or relations .It is obviously shorter to say relatives than it is to say aunts ; uncles and cousins . That is why we make précis –to express things in a shorter way . Campbell (1961 :159) confirms that a précis-writing is often useful to enable the learner to put the main facts of a paragraph or a chapter in a few sentences . the précis must itself be written in good literary form ;the effort to be concise must not result in abrupt transitions of thought , inadequately connected sentences ,or a telegraphic omission of links. Thus, when one comes to tackle a long passage ,one cannot proceed satisfactorily without a grasp of certain general principles (Collins and Pink, 1932 :12) The general principles to be borne in mind in all précis-work may be summed up under seven lamps of headings :selection, perspective ,order ,conciseness ,clearness, smoothness and unity; they must receive very careful attention(Ibid:13 ,Charlton,1963 :1, Jepson,1968 :27,Warriner's English Grammar and Composition, 1959 :429-437).

1-Selection :The process of selection is that which has already been indicated in the advice to sum up the contents of the given passage under comprehensive headings i.e. the matter should have been mastered first ,then it can be determined which part is essential and which part is not . In order to achieve this ,the whole passage should be read attentively several times. This kind of reading makes the reader understand the material perfectly and it is no waste of time ,but plain commonsense, further, during each reading, the mind will unconsciously be selecting the salient features. Thus ,after selecting ideas from a passage ,we have to ask ourselves the following question: if these ideas were omitted ,would the basic meaning of the passage be changed .

2-Perspective :What comes next in importance to selection ,and indeed inseparable from it ,is the process of securing the true perspective . All the important points are not equally important. Bad précis loses the perspective because it can be written in the case of omitting nothing that is important and rejecting all that is not, it does not make the central idea stand out , but puts it on a level with other ideas which should be subordinated to it .The reader of such a précis is like a traveler whose map has no contours to show him which is a mountain and which are only hills.

3-Order :This means that a précis must present a clear , unbroken sequence of ideas, a kind of logical ladder ,rung after rung ,it looks like “the thoughts follow in the right succession” .(Ibid:16).

4-Conciseness :is a quality which hardly needs emphasizing ,since it is an essential characteristic of a précis , which gives it its name. The quality not the quantity that matters in précis-writing. What is required is compression of the thought expressed rather than expanding it , condensing rather than paraphrasing it, expressing the maximum of meaning in minimum number of words.(Al-Bettar, 1984 :112) .Therefore, a précis should contain only pithy substance of the passage ,which should conclude the information relevant to the main thought and exclude the insignificant details. In other words ,it should in no way add extra information to that already included in the passage dealt with nor should it overlook facts that are essential to the thought .There are two types of compression; word compression and thought compression (compression of ideas) . The first type requires economy in phrasing which may take one of three forms : (a)compression of vocabulary, (b)compression by ellipsis and (c)compression by shorter construction . The first form is achieved through the substitution of a single word for a whole phrase or the replacement of an idiomatic expression by a single word. The second form is a technique implemented to avoid monotonous repetition. The most common form of ellipsis is the omission of the subject and verb ,or part of verb, usually the anomalous finite one. Examples are:

(a)-1-An effort that ended in failure

An effort ending in failure

An unsuccessful effort.

2- He is working with the man who makes things and furniture out of wood .

He is working with the carpenter.

3-Electric wires should be separated from surrounding objects.

Electric wires should be insulated

b)-1-Although she was thinking,.....

Although thinking ,..... (Ibid :113)

In a complex sentence the more important part will naturally be the main clause ,and the less important , the various subordinate clauses .But among the subordinate clauses some will be more important than others , and these clauses will usually be those that qualify or limit some words in the main clause .

Thus ,care must be taken when the subject of the main and subordinate clauses in the complex sentences have different reference. Ellipsis becomes impossible in this

case unless voice is reversed from active to passive or vice versa.(Ibid,1984 :112-14, Oliphant,1962 :355)).

The third form is compression by shorter construction .It involves a sort of reduction :

1-An adverbial clause to a phrase.

As I ran down the street ,I saw several shops just opening .

Running down the street , I saw several shops just opening .

2-An adjective clause to an appositional phrase or an appositive.

Henry. Who is a clever writer will get reward this week .

Henry ,a clever writer, will get reward this week

3-A noun clause to a phrase.

We realize what you intend to do.

We realize your intention.

4-An adverbial clause of time or reason or an adjectival clause

containing a participle to that participle alone .

She went to bed because she was frightened .

She went to bed frightened .

The second type of compression is compression of ideas. According to Hossack (1979 :14) , the essence of précis can be expressed under two headings :1) Selection and Rejection,

2) Generalization i.e. ,word compression alone will not enable one to reduce the normal précis passage down to one third of its original length, and this is what is usually demanded. One must select and retain important facts ,rejecting the unimportant ones .The matter to be rejected usually consists of relatively unimportant facts and illustrative or elaborative detail while generalization requires looking for the common factor.

5-Clearity: is another indispensable feature of writing précis, without which no writing is deemed good ,but in a passage which is intended to give the reader as effectively and quickly as possible the gist of the matter the writer must aim at it even more than usual. Failure to be clear is often a confession of failure to understand the original.

6-Smoothness : The reader of a précis must not be required to supply the links himself . Too often , in the desire to save words, the writer of a précis produces a jerky succession of sentences, in the right order ,perhaps ,and containing the gist of the matter ,but jerky and leaving little gap where connections should be .Such précis

pants brokenly like a man out of breath because the parts do no fit neatly together and thus the effect of the whole is spoilt .All that it wants to make it good is a few links ,sometimes only “but” or “and”. But the effect of inserting these small words is to replace jerkiness by smoothness ,and every précis must aim at smoothness- in fact at having the literary quality of a miniature essay.

7-Unity : Finally ,a précis must possess unity. The six previous principles are not enough ,but there is needed unity and it is beyond all of them .This quality cannot be easily defined ,but its nature can be understood if we think of the human body. It is considered as a vital quality of a précis ,and without it ,the précis remains incomplete, a mass of words not yet fused into living thought.(Warriner’s English Grammar and Composition,1959 :430-432, Collins and Pink ,1932:17)

The method of précis-writing follows naturally from a consideration of the principles cited above. There is no royal road in making précis : it is too much an intellectual process. Thus ,the principles can be only a rough guide. Collins and Pink (1932 :18) , Nichoslon and Bright (1958 :5), Oliphant (1962 :369) , Quinn (1965 72) , Jepson (1968 :28-30) ,and Abbott (file //A:\ Précis writing. htm:2) confirm that there are six necessary stages which a beginner should always follow and by which even practiced précis-writers will proceed at least subconsciously .They are

1-Reading the passage .First reading is for getting familiar with the passage, to understand the general meaning.

2-Keeping the title in mind ,reading through the passage again with the idea of discovering how it is constructed, and deciding what are the main ideas or essential points.

3-Referring to notes, putting them down in a skeleton form and paying special attention to the main clauses of complex sentences, and to the topic sentences of paragraphs . Therefore , it is better to read the original a third time .

4-Summing up the matter in a short , comprehensive title .Such a title is often asked for in examinations ,and in any case ,the thought required to determine it helps towards writing the précis .Then we have to answer these questions :-

a-Does the précis say what the original passage says?

b-Does it read like normal English?

c-Has the writer kept the connections of thought of the original ?

d-Is it perfectly clear?

e-Are there any words or phrases that might be changed for the better? (In many ways this is the most important and difficult stage of all).

5- Counting the number of words. If there are too many , the writer will have to find ways of shortening the précis. If there are too few, she/he must ask , her/himself whether some important ideas have not been missed out. i.e. if it exceeds the limit prescribed ,then she/he must continue the pruning or condensing ,processes until she/he has achieved the necessary reduction.

6-Disregarding the writing of précis as a dull ,mechanical performance unworthy of the care and a piece of original composition. It may not demand the exercise of high creative or imaginative skill, but it demands insight ,judgment , a facility for concise expression and a sense of the true values of words-qualities which no serious writer can afford to neglect .

Furthermore, the précis should appear in the third person, and direct speech should be replaced by indirect speech . As a rule the précis should be about one third the length of the original passage. It should appear in the form of continuous prose-not as a series of notes (Marriott,1928 :192)

The desired result of a précis is to increase the students' ability to think and then to articulate thoughts clearly .That process precisely goes in line fits with Thurbers' own definition of writing as communication ,i.e, a writer sending a carefully created message via a carefully chosen medium to an indented reader in a way that eliminates or reduces to a minimum any form of interference with that message .(Thuber, 1926 :2) . Simply stated ,a précis assignment involves giving the student a short (perhaps beginning with a single paragraph and gradually building to two or three paragraphs) reading assignment presumably a selection by an exemplary writer-and then having that students write a short (one or two sentences) summary of the selection .

According to Pocock (1926:3-4) the potential value of the ability to write a précis is magnified today by the information glut that threatens to engulf us. Because of the vast amount of reading material available , we have become a nation of mere skimmers and scanners . We prefer digests to in-depth publications .We skip long, formidable blocks of text because we are pushed for time .We mumble through unfamiliar words rather than look them up in the dictionary. (Dennis and Sharp ,1974 :1-2) .

To conclude a précis is a type of test question, a way to demonstrate the students' understanding of a reading , and of getting to the point fast ,i.e ,it is a method to teach the students the method of selection of significant detail , and consequently the rejection of the less important material which surrounds it

2.2 Previous Studies

These studies are not adequate empirical studies on the same topic

but they refer generally to the topic of the study. They are arranged chronologically as follows:

2.2.1 Mullell, Peter Charles, Jr, 1987

This study which conducts an effect of inducing readers to use summary generation as a study strategy on their ability to identify and comprehend main ideas in explanatory prose. Students were first screened according to their ability to generate summaries of expository text. Subjects who demonstrated this ability then read and studied an expository prose passage under one of three conditions. One group of subject used generative summarizing as a study strategy.

A Second group received appropriate summaries and a third received no summaries. The groups were compared on their comprehension of the expository passage. Since deficits in prose comprehension (i.e. detection of inconsistent and discrepant information and retention could be due to lack of higher order structural processing the summarizing task was intended to induce the formation of more complex structural relations among the most important cognitive units within the passage.

The passage was constructed with segments containing discrepant or contradictory statements. All three group were tested for (1) ability to expect, generative summarizers detected more contradictions over all than either the read-only control group or the control group provided with summaries. However, the generative summarizers did not demonstrate a better understanding of the material as indicated by performance on the retention test. It was concluded that generative summarizers engage in deeper text processing during reading but use of the strategy does not automatically engage the memory operations necessary for permanent retention and learning.

2.2.2 Mast, Cynda Overton, 1988

This study investigated the relationship among three cognitive style and summarization abilities. Both summarization products and processes were examined. Summarizing products were scored and a canonical correlation analysis was performed to determine their relationship with three cognitive styles. Summarizing processes were examined by videotaping students as they provided thinking aloud protocols. Their processes were recorded on composing style sheets analyzed qualitatively.

Subjects were sixth- grade students in self-contained classes in a suburban school district. Summarizing products were collected over a two week period in the fall. Summarizing processes were collected over an eight week period in the spring of the same school year.

The result of the summarizing products analysis suggests that cognitive styles are related to summarization abilities. Two canonical correlations among the two variable sets were statistically significant at the .05 level of significance (.33 and .29). The results further suggest that students who are field independent, reflective, and flexible in their attentional style may be more adept at organizing their ideas and using written mechanics while summarizing. Students who are impulsive and constricted in attentional style may exhibit strength in expressing their ideas while summarizing.

The results of the summarizing processes analysis suggest that students of one cognitive style combination may exhibit different behaviors while summarizing than those of other cognitive style combinations. Students who are field independent, reflective, and flexible in their attentional style seem to display more mature, interactive behaviors while summarizing than their peer of other cognitive style combinations.

2.2.3 Gajria, Meenakshi Lai, 1988

This study had two purposes. The first purpose was to train learning –disabled (LD) students in a summarization strategy .The second purpose was to assess the effects of instruction in the summarization strategy of (LD) students’ comprehension and recall of expository material. The independent variable – instruction in the summarization strategy –was analyzed in terms of its effect on two groups of dependent variables .

The first group is related to summarization and consisted of those different measures reproduction of main ideas ,deletion of irrelevant ideas , and introduction of errors .

The second group is related to text comprehension and consisted of two different measures : Comprehension scores on a standardized reading test ,and comprehension scores on the criterion task .The criterion task consisted of two kinds of multiple –choice question per passage .

Factual questions assessed knowledge of specific facts, whereas condensation questions assessed main ideas ,cause and effect relationships , and inference .

Thirty (LD) students , from grades six through nine who were deficient in comprehension skills were stratified according to their reading level on the Gates .Mac Ginitie Reading Test and then randomly assigned to experimental and control groups . Students in the experimental condition were trained to criterion on five rules of summarization : reduce lists , select topic sentences , construct topic sentences , delete redundancies and delete unimportant information.

The control group received no special instruction . Fifteen average readers provided normative data on the summarization and comprehension measures .

The results indicated of the study that the instructional design was successful in training summarization skills to (LD) students. There was as significant qualitative improvement in (LD) students’ summaries. They reproduced more main ideas , deleted, more irrelevant ideas ,and introduced fewer errors in their summaries of expository passages .Further ,they maintained their performance on these summary measures .Use of summarization strategy also resulted in significantly higher performance on condensation and factual questions ,maintenance of comprehension performance over time , and significant improvement in standardized comprehension scores .

2.2.4Duncan Malone ,Linda Grace,1988

The purposes of this three group experimental investigation were (a) to determine whether the use of a summarization strategy would improve the recall and transfer skills of middle school (LD) students , and (b) to determine whether the use of summarization strategy with a self monitoring component would be more effective than the strategy alone .

Each treatment was compared with (9) traditional treatment conditions . Subjects in this research were (45)middle school (LD) students ,all referred by teacher as students having comprehension difficulties students were individually trained for two days using narrative passage . Following training , students were administered a post test of training and two transfer measures of recall . Additionally ,each student was interviewed prior to instruction concerning the use of strategies to remember salient information form text books .

Recall results were analyzed using ANOVA and demonstrated the strength of the strategy instructions for all measures further , although not statistically significant on all measures , the results indicated that the addition of the monitoring component further enhanced recall on these measures .

The (LD) students in this experiment reported limited knowledge of strategies to help them recall important information prior to intervention-strategy and performance

feedback provided during instruction resulted in a statistically significant improvement in strategy use reports of the two treatment conditions .

The results of this study indicated that (LD) middle school students may benefit from specific instruction in the important skill of summarization .They may also benefit from being instructed to monitor their comprehension activities . Providing (LD) middle school students with information and practice in recognizing and using appropriate strategies may further enhance recall of important textual material .

2.2.5 Hoyer, Marjorie , 1988

Often students' transition from high school to college is very difficult because they are not prepared for the great amount of reading and comprehending of expository texts that is expected of them. The overall purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a summarization task as a comprehension or learning strategy of content area material for university freshmen

In response to two major deficiencies of related research- insufficient attention to quality and quantity of task instruction and /or practice and the use of standardized tests as measurements . The author developed a summary instructional strategy according to pedagogical methods that research has shown to be effective in comprehension instruction ; and used a measurement that has proven to be more accurate than a standardized test in predicting text book prose reading proficiency for university freshmen .

Representing two freshmen composition classes at the University of Texas at Austin , a total of thirty-eight students participated in this study .Twenty- four were Americans whom the author taught in the fall 1988 semester ,and fourteen were international students in spring 1988 (ESL) section . In both classes, half of the students received instruction in writing summaries while the other half wrote short reaction papers . Both statistical and descriptive analyses were applied to several sets of data in order to test four hypotheses .

The results indicated (1) appositve correlation between summary writing ability and reading comprehension ability (2) quantitative differences between the characteristics of good and poor summaries ;(3) students' responsiveness to summary instruction and practice ; and (4) better reading comprehension scores by those students who received instruction and practice in summary writing as compared to those who did not . It was concluded from this study that university freshman gain a powerful learning tool when they are taught how to writing a summary according to an explicit instructional strategy .

2.2.6 Porter ,Dwigh 1990

The study argues that summarizing ,paraphrasing ,and précis writing skill are important to the development of critical thinking and ability to learn from text . It describes the use of précis writing in the English as second-language (ESL) classroom .

The major descriptors are English (second language) ,and writing skills .The minor descriptors are class activities , critical thinking , second language instruction , secondary education , teaching methods and writing assignments .

2.2.6 Peterson ,Dennis L.1998

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries , some American writing teachers began to see the advantages of a writing exercise that for year had been used successfully in the school s of England , producing superior quality student compositions . Convinced of its benefits ,these American teachers studied it closely .Before long ,many schools began to use it in their writing and English curricula . Today

, however , that method is virtually unknown in American schools ,and students are the losers.

The précis is a form of writing instruction that has been missing from American schools for along time. Its benefits however, deserve re –examination . It careful consideration might result in its making a comeback in Christian schools .

American teachers of the last century concluded that the key difference between the British method of writing instruction and that used by American educators was that teachers in England made thinking and content basic to writing . American teachers ,on the other hand , tended to subordinate thinking and content to mere mechanics , thereby emphasizing rote memorization of the rules of language

The British taught these rules ,of course ,but their primary emphasis was on using the rules to aid communication rather than on learning rules solely for the sake of knowing rules . The purpose of this study was to use précis writing as an instructional tool in the students' educational career and used the method extensively all the way through the universities.

It is concluded from this study that the development of writing skill is a life-long process , not the miracle of a moment . Précis writing can be a valuable tool in developing the students' writing, thinking ,listening and organizing skills ,Thus ,the teachers should :

- 1-Discuss each précis with the students.
- 2-Highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the students' writing .
- 3-Note and encourage every degree or evidence of progress .
- 4-realize that writing well is hard work and their students will not develop overnight into modern-day Shakespeare .

Chapter Three

Procedures

3.1 The population: It consists of Iraqi EFL students ,in College of Education-of Babylon University during the academic year (2012-2013).

3.2 The sample: (64) male and female of second- year students from English Dep. were chosen as the sample of the study.

3.3 The research instrument: A written test form was constructed to be the tool for the research study

3.3.1 Constructing the Test form: The test from consisted of an unseen passage followed by a question to write a précis for the presented passage. The testees were provided with instructions to determine the starting and the end points of the précis. The testees were required to mention the steps to be followed to write their précis

Including the key words of the ideas to be included in their précis, their grammatical devices used in formulating their précis and their own vocabulary used the précis.

3.4 Statistical means: The percentage formula was adopted to obtain the test results

Chapter Four

The Analysis of Results

After implementing the test, the correction was made for the answer sheets of the sample of the study. The tested items were given definite marks to obtain the test results. The tested items were divided to the following:

- a- The grammatical devices used in precis to achieve reduction such as passive voice, gerund, dangling structures

- b- Cohesive devices used in precis.
- c- Word economy throughout the successful lexical use. The total mark was computed by the summation of the scores of the above items.

The following table shows the number of succeeded & failed responses with reference of the total mark of the test :

Succeeded	Percentage	Failed	Percentage
22	34%	42	66%

4.1 Results regarding the use of grammatical devices :

The respondents showed low frequency use of the grammatical devices for reduction. The tested grammatical devices were: passive voice, gerund, and dangling structures as they permit keeping the same meaning with less use of vocabulary due to the omission of unnecessary words. The following table shows the frequency with percentage

Grammatical devices	Frequency	Percentage
1-Passive voice	19	29%
2-Gerund	7	10%
3- Dangling structures	4	6%

This indicates that the testees were not adequately trained to utilize their grammatical knowledge in such a productive piece of writing whereby grammar is utilized to compress sentences for reduction.

4.2 Results regarding the use of cohesive devices:

The respondents showed low succeeded scores in using cohesive devices to join the sentences of the required precis as it is clearly shown in the following table:

Succeeded	Percentage	Failed	Percentage
20	31%	44	69%

This indicates the following:

- 1-The inability of the testees to utilize their grammatical knowledge to choose the correct conjunction to join sentences
- 2-Misunderstanding the ideas in the presented passage which causes the inability to discover the shared meaning among them when joining is done accordingly.

4.3 Results regarding word economy:

The respondents showed very low succeeded results in utilizing their vocabulary store to achieve word economy as shown in the following table

Succeeded	Percentage	Failed	Percentage
8	12%	56	88%

This clearly indicates that the testees have poor vocabulary store that makes them less flexible to express the ideas of the presented passage in their own words.

Chapter Five

Conclusions

The study has come up with the following conclusions:

- 1- Précis writing is an advanced skill which demands well-trained learners who are able to understand fully the ideas that are represented in the passage to be summarized. Thus, extensive training is required to develop such a skill on the part of EFL learners.
- 2- Grammatical knowledge should be utilized in a way that helps to construct sentences that are both concise and comprehensive of the ideas of the passage. Thus, EFL grammar courses should be directed to language use so that EFL learners can utilize grammatical devices to achieve reduction.

3-Maximizing the vocabulary store of EFL learners is paramount to make them more flexible to use the target language in performing any task of writing and more specifically précis writing. This can be manipulated when they are exposed to EFL texts as much as possible and to be encouraged for extensive reading.

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Appendix

The test formRead the following passage carefully and answer the question below:

Ever since a prisoner had escaped because a sentry had fallen asleep while on duty , special instructions had been issued by the prison-camp authorities. The sentry in the watch –tower had been ordered to give the alarm the moment anything even slightly suspicious occurred .

On the night following this escape , the sentry guided the powerful searchlight across the grounds of the prison-camp. He was quite sure that no second attempt would be made. He looked quite down from the watch –

tower wearily as the light lit up huge patches of deserted ground. The prisoners were all asleep and the windows of their sleeping quarters often reflected light as the lamp shone on the grey , gloomy walls. Suddenly, the sentry jerked the lamp round and directed it on a small clump of bushes. He was sure he had heard leaves rustling and there was no wind at all that night . The bushes were quite still and after a time the light of the lamp drifted across to the buildings.

The lamp continued its monotonous path up and down the camp. But when the sentry tried to focus the light on the bushes again, he found that were no longer there ! All he could see was dry , bare ground . He swung the violently from side to side and then held it still as soon as he saw more bushes . For fifteen minutes nothing happened; the sentry kept watching the whole time. Then a small tree seemed to fall sideways and he heard twigs snapping in the darkness . He immediately raised the alarm and saw four figures dart into the shadows .Lights went on all along the enclosure . The sentry just caught a glimpse of two figures crouched against the wire fence and two others running in opposite directions He then saw five guards rushing towards the prisoners . They were shouting loudly and from where he was , he heard the crack of a pistol shot.

Q: In not more than 80 words , describe the sentry's experiences from the moment he heard leaves rustling to when he heard the pistol shot indicating the steps you follow to formulate your précis.