

IMPROVING SRIWIJAYA STATE POLYTECHNIC STUDENTS' READING AND WRITING ACHIEVEMENTS THROUGH SUMMARIZING ACTIVITIES

ELI YENY

English Department, Sriwijaya State Polytechnic of Sriwijaya

Email: eliveny@yahoo.com

Abstract : This study aimed at finding out whether or not summarizing activity is effective in increasing students' Reading Comprehension Achievement and whether or not summarizing activity is effective in increasing students' writing achievement. The quasi-experimental design: non equivalent pretest and posttest design was used in this study. Forty eight out of 135 second semester students of Business Administration Major in State Polytechnic of Sriwijaya Palembang, were purposively taken as the sample. There are two groups, each of which consisted of 24 students. The data were collected through tests which were analyzed by using t-test. To see how much contribution of Summarizing activity influence the students' Reading and Writing Achievement, the Stepwise Regression Analyses was used. The result showed that the students who got summarizing activities for the reading comprehension and writing achieved the best mean of score than the students who did not get treatment. It could be interpreted that summarizing activity was mostly effective to be used in teaching Reading Comprehension and Writing to students. It means that Experimental group and Control group differed in terms of Reading Comprehension score. Therefore, the Research hypothesis that stated "Summarizing activity is effective in increasing students' Reading Comprehension and Writing Achievement" was accepted and the null hypothesis was rejected".

Keywords: *Improving, Reading Achievement, Writing Achievement, Summarizing Strategy*

INTRODUCTION

"Reading is an important skill for English language learners in today's world; it supports the development of overall proficiency and provides access to crucial information at work and in school" (Komiya, 2009:32). Writing is also essential, but a difficult skill for EFL students to accomplish (Yan, 2005:22).

Polytechnic, especially Business Administration Study Program (BASP) focuses on Competency-Based Curriculum. It provides students with certain competencies which are required by user or job market in the future. Therefore, students of business department must be able to read certain information and write something dealing with their school and future occupation.

Reading and Writing Skills, however, are not easy. There are still problems faced by Polytechnic students in both skills. The students got difficulties in Reading skill especially for Business Administration students can also be seen from their result of TOEFL score in 2010. Based on the calculation, the mean score for reading section is 38.93. The mean score for listening section is 39.50, and the mean score for the structure and written section is 41.24. In somehow, the students' average score on reading section is the lowest among the sections. The reading score is 34.8. It can be stated that the students' reading skill is not really good. Then, the students' listening score is 37.3. It can also be claimed that the students' listening skill needs to be improved. Furthermore, the students' structure is 37.9. This is also lower than the mean score. It means that the students should get an improvement through the treatment.

In line with Reading Skill, BASP students (ADM) also got difficulties in Writing Skill. According to Risnawati (2008:71) It was found that there were 62.50% of 192 students who got difficulties in finding a topic, 38.02% in using common words, 79.17% in using technical words, 87.50% in forming grammatical sentences, 17.71% in using punctuation, and 79.17% in organizing sentences into unified and coherent paragraph. In keeping with the calculation done, the mean score is 60.68. This could be interpreted that the students got some difficulties in finding a topic, and in forming grammatical sentences.

Based on the reasons above, the writer proposed a study dealing with summarizing activity to improve students' reading and writing achievement, because summarizing is one of the possible learning techniques to evaluate students' comprehension (Idris, et al., 2007: 550). Summary writing requires the students to express in writing their ideas and a conclusion in a specified number of words or paragraphs (Bray, 2002: 9). It means summarizing is considered an appropriate way to enhance students' reading and writing skill.

The problems of the study are stated as follows: (1) Is summarizing activity effective in increasing students' reading comprehension achievement ? and (2) Is summarizing activity effective in increasing students' writing achievement ?

There are two hypotheses in this study

HO: Summarizing activity is not effective in increasing students' reading Comprehension Achievement

H1: Summarizing activity is effective in increasing students' reading Comprehension Achievement

HO: Summarizing activity is not effective in increasing students' writing Achievement

H1 : Summarizing activity is effective in increasing students' writing Achievement.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There are some experts' ideas about why reading and writing should be integrated in teaching process. Camacho (2005: 28-35) states that

An important point in the theory about reading and writing is that both share similar linguistic and cognitive elements. As readers read and writers compose, both plan, draft, align, revise, and monitor. When readers plan, they anticipate content; they draft when they have a first picture of content; and they align, revise, and monitor when they verify their comprehension, guess, or reread.

"Summarization is an important skill which involves multiple cognitive activities that occur during abridging a text such as identifying relevant content, understanding the text and generating a short version of it or collectively" (Idris, et al 2007: 550).

In summarizing, students understand and comprehend the reading text through a process of deep thinking in order that they can really identify the main points of the reading text that will be written shortly. In other words, in a summary

students only convey a general sense and include only the main points or ideas, key words or phrases, and important details.

Summarizing strategy is effective in reading comprehension. It has transfer effects to a variety of measures such as standardized measures of reading comprehension. (Karbalaee & Rajyashree, 2010:43).

The ability to summarize a text is important part of good writing skills. In education summarizing is invaluable: learners have to sum up reading assignments, lecture notes, articles, etc. on a daily basis. The ability to write an effective summary might be the most important writing skill. Students need to be able to summarize before they can be successful at the other kinds of writing. The goal of summarizing is an accurate and concise presentation of the original's key points and ability to generalize. (Kavaliauskienė, and Anusienė. 2010: 100).

Summarizing is the first step of a successful writer. In summarizing process, the learners must be able to summarize the key points of such kind of writing before they do real writing well. Sometimes learners assume that summarizing a text is a relatively easy task, because it seems shorter than the original one and it only consists of main points of reading text but essentially it is not, summarizing basically involves some complex abilities and it should be written well.


METHODOLOGY

In this research, the writer used quasi- experimental design: non equivalent pretest and posttest design (Creswell, 2005). The design involved experimental and control groups in that both groups were given a pre-test and post- test. In this design, the experimental group was given pretest, treatment and post test, while the control group was given pretest and post test without treatment.

Creswell (2005:297) states that the design of the study is as follows :

Pre- and Posttest design

Time



Experimental group	Pretest	Experimental treatment	Posttest
Control group	Pretest	No treatment	Posttest

The population of in this study are 135 students of Polytechnic students and become 48 as students samples. It consists of 24 students for experimental group and 24 students for Control group.

The purposive sampling technique was used. The writer chose two groups of students from the six classes to be experimental and control groups. Then, the writer chose 48 students as the sample based on the similar criteria as follows:

1. The average score of the previous semester students is (70 - 80).
2. The average age of students is 18-19 years old, and
3. Students are taught by the same lecturer.

In this study, the writer used a test which covered two skills : Reading and Writing. The test was administered twice pretest and posttest. Reading test consisted of

26 multiple choice questions, Before the reading test was carried out, it was tried out with students who were not included in the experimental and the control groups. For writing test, the students were assigned to write an essay on one of the two topics given.

The stages of making summary were taken from Bell and Gower in Correia (2000:18-19) and Oshima & Hogue (1991:137) with some functions
The stages were as follows:

(1)Pre activities

The teacher motivated students by asking some questions related to topic.

(2) Whilst activities

- a. The students were asked to overview general topic of the text
- b. The students were asked to decide what the aim of each paragraph is.
- c. The students were asked to decide which parts of the text that can be ignored (e.g., details, personal opinions, quotes)
- d. The students were asked to underline the main points which are included in a summary.
- e. The students were asked to make notes of the important points in their own words and put them in logical order.
- f. The students were asked to write the first draft.
- g. The students were asked to check for mistakes in spelling, punctuation, and vocabulary.
- h. The students were asked to check if the length is appropriate and if they include all important information.
- i. The students were asked to make outline
- j. The students were asked to write a summary

(3)Post activities

Teacher summarized the important points of the reading text.

In analyzing the data, there were three steps followed it. They are as follows:

1. Scoring the Test,

In scoring the test, the reading test was scored by using ordinal number 0-1. 0 is wrong and 1 is true, while the writing test was scored by using an analytical writing rubric suggested by Weigle, S. C. (2002). It consisted of 5 points, that is content, organization, vocabulary, language use, mechanics.

2. Finding the Mean Difference of Pretest and Posttest Scores

Students' test scores were put in the table after scoring the tests, then, they were found out the mean difference of each group.

3. Comparing the Means of the Test score

To find out significant difference of the means of the scoring of the two groups, the writer used t- test. That is, paired- sample t-test, which was used to compare the mean

score for the same group and independent sample t-test, which was used to compare the mean scores of the two different group.

FINDINGS

The result of the paired samples t-test in the experimental group got a higher mean score after they got the treatment. In the pretest, they could get 17.3750 as their mean score with the standard deviation 0, 42907 while in the posttest, they could get 23.3333 as their mean score with standard deviation 1.43456. It could be concluded that the means of the students in the pretest and the posttest are significantly different.

Furthermore, Table 1' explained about paired samples t-test

Table 1
Pair sample of Reading Achievement in Experimental group

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Pretest - Posttest	-5.95833	1.54580	.31553	-6.61107	-5.30560	-18.883	23	.000

From the above table, It could be seen that the sig. (2-tailed) value was 0.000. This was less than 0.05. The mean difference of reading achievement between pretest and post test in the experimental group was 5, 95833, with standard deviation 1, 54580. Furthermore, the score of t-obtained was 18.883 and t table was 2.068658. The Null Hypothesis would be rejected if the score of t-obtained was higher than t-table. It was clear that t-obtained was higher than t-table. Therefore, null hypothesis was rejected. It means that the implementation of Summarizing techniques was considered effective in teaching reading comprehension.

In line with the above condition, in this study, the result of the paired samples t-test of the control group i.e the students who were not taught by using summarizing strategy got a lower mean score. In the pretest, they could get 16.1250 as their mean score, while in the posttest, they could get 15.2917 as their mean score. Therefore, it shown us that there was not an improvement for the students' reading achievement from the pretest until the posttest.

Furthermore, Table 2 explained about paired samples t-test

Table 2
Pair Sample of Reading Achievement of Control Group

		Paired Differences				T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair 1	Pretest – Posttest	.83333	1.12932	.23052	.35646	1.31020	3.615	23	.001

From the above table, it could be seen that the sig. (2-tailed) value was 0.001. This was less than 0.05. Furthermore, the score of t-obtained was 3.615. The Null Hypothesis would be rejected if the score of t-obtained was higher than t-table. In contrast, the score of 24 sample in t-table was 2.068658. It was clear that t-obtained was higher than t-table. Therefore, null hypothesis was rejected. It means that although the control group did not have any treatment, this group could also have an improvement even it was not really as significant as in the experimental group.

The result of the paired samples t-test of the experimental group got a higher mean score after they got the treatment. In the pretest, they could get 57.0208 as their mean score and 7.32548 as their standard of deviation. In contrast, in the posttest, they could get 66.7083 their mean score and 1.60132 as their standard of deviation score. It could be concluded that the means of the students in the pretest and the posttest are significantly different.

Furthermore, Table 3 explained about paired samples t-test

Table 3
Pair sample of Writing Achievement in Experimental Group

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest – Posttest	-9.68750	3.28307	.67015	-11.07382	-8.30118	-14.456	23	.000

From the above table, it could be seen that the sig. (2-tailed) value was 0.000. This was less than 0.05. Furthermore, the score of t-obtained was 14.456. The Null Hypothesis would be rejected if the score of t-obtained was higher than t-table. However, with 24 samples, t table was 2.068658. It was clear that t-obtained was higher than t-table. Therefore, null hypothesis was rejected. It means that the alternative hypothesis (H1) was accepted. In other words, the implementation of Summarizing activity was considered significantly effective in teaching writing skill.

However, in this study, the result of paired sample t-test of writing in the control group who were not taught by using summarizing got a higher mean score. In the pretest, they could get 53.6875 as their mean score and 1.54692 as their standard of deviation. Then, in the posttest, they could get 55.3958 as their mean score and 1.51382 as their standard of deviation score. It could be concluded that there was an improvement for the students' writing skill even this was not as significant as in the experimental group.

Furthermore, Table 4 explained about paired samples t-test

Table 4
Pair Sample of Writing Achievement in Control Group

		Paired Differences					t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest – Posttest	-1.70833	3.29992	.67359	3.10177	-.31490	-2.536	23	.018

From the above table, it could be seen that the sig. (2-tailed) value was 0.18. This was higher than 0.05. Furthermore, the score of *t*-obtained was 2.536. The Null Hypothesis would be rejected if the score of *t*-obtained was higher than *t*-table. Here, with 24 samples, *t* table was 2.068658. It was clear that *t*-obtained was higher than *t*-table. Therefore, null hypothesis was rejected. It means that the alternative hypothesis (*H*₁) was accepted. In other words, the control group could also get an improvement even it was not really significant in teaching writing skill.

The independent *t*-test is the most commonly used method to evaluate the differences in means between the two groups. In this study, the independent *t*-test was used to test the difference in test scores between students who were the experimental group and the control group. The result of the independent *t*-test showed that the students who were taught by using Summarizing activity got a higher mean score than those control group. The students who were categorized as experimental group could get 23.3333 as their mean score and 1.23945 as their standard of deviation. While control group students could only get 15.2917 as their mean score and 1.65448 as their standard of deviation. It could be concluded that the means of the two groups are significantly different.

Furthermore, Table 5 explained about the equality of variance.

Table 5
Independent Sample test of Reading Achievement

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Reading	Equal variances assumed	2.684	.108	19.057	46	.000	8.04167	.42198	7.19227	8.89106
	Equal variances not assumed			19.057	42.632	.000	8.04167	.42198	7.19046	8.89288

From the above table, the mean difference between reading achievement in the experimental and control group was 8,04167 and , *t*-obtained was 19,057 with equal variance assumed with sig. (2-tailed) was 0.000. Since 0.000 was smaller than 0.05, and *t*-obtained was 19,057 higher than *t*-table. It was 2.068658. It means that alternative hypothesis (*H*₁) was accepted. It means that the effectiveness of teaching of reading for the experimental and the control groups were significantly different. The experimental group could have significant improvement for the reading achievement. While the control group could not get this.

The independent *t*-test is the most commonly used method to evaluate the differences in means between the two groups. In this study, the independent *t*-test was used to test the difference in test scores between students who were the experimental group and the control group. The result of the independent *t*-test showed that the

experimental groups got a higher mean score than those control group. The experimental group students could get 66.7083 as their mean score with 7.84485 as their standard of deviation score. In contrast, the control group students could only get 55.3958 as their mean score with 7.41617 as their score for standard of deviation. It could be concluded that the means of the two groups are significantly different.

Furthermore, Table 6 explained about the equality of variances.

Table 6
Independent sample test of writing Achievement

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Writing	Equal variances assumed	.739	.395	5.134	46	.000	11.31250	2.20361	6.87687	15.74813
	Equal variances not assumed			5.134	45.855	.000	11.31250	2.20361	6.87649	15.74851

From the above table, the mean difference between writing achievement in experimental group was 11.31250 and *t-obtained* was 5.134 with equal variance assumed with sig. (2-tailed) was 0.000. since ($p < 0.000$) was lower than 0.05, it means that alternative hypothesis (H1), was accepted. It means that the effectiveness of teaching of writing for the experimental and the control groups were also significantly different.

The total contribution of summarizing activities toward reading achievement was 93.7 %. Moreover the contribution of each aspect of writing is as follows: Main idea was 60.7 %. Detail was 14.3%, reference was 5.6%, Exception was 5.3 %, and vocabulary was 3.2 %, implication was 4.6 and the rest, unexplained factors 6.3 %.

The total contribution of summarizing activities toward writing achievement was 97.1 %. Moreover the contribution of each aspect of writing is as follows: organization was 79.4 %. content was 14.6%, language use was 2%, mechanic was 0.9 %, and vocabulary was 0.7 % and the rest, unexplained factors 2.9.

The findings of the present study show that for reading comprehension achievement and writing achievement the alternative hypothesis (H1) for the experimental group was accepted since the students' mean scores of the posttest were significantly higher than those in the pretest. This could be due to (1) the use of appropriate strategy, and (2) the application of summarizing strategy forced students to be enthusiastic to study. The students understood the reading text and. They got their freedom to express their ideas on the materials they discussed. This seems to agree with the previous study conducted by Idris et al (2007) stating that the students are very weak at summary writing which also reflects their failures. In order to improve the situation, a summarizing strategy is proposed to detect the strategies used by students in summarizing and assess the important ideas presented in their summaries.

In Experimental group, all aspects of Reading were influenced by Summarizing activities although some aspects were not really significant influenced. The most influencing significant aspect of reading was main idea. It might be caused by the frequency of finding main idea in summarizing activity, therefore the students were adjustable in this condition. While the second aspect is detail. It is also influenced by Summarizing activity, it might be caused the students could comprehend the reading text which was as one of the application of Summarizing activity during treatment. It might be caused by the explicit information in reading text. Furthermore, the contribution of other aspects such as reference, exception and vocabulary were also influenced by Summarizing activities although it was not as high as two previous aspects, however based on the number of test specification of reading texts, the average students can answer the items correctly. It might be caused by the students prior knowledge about business and technology, therefore it makes them familiar with vocabulary, and ability in comprehending the text.

In writing skill, the experimental group students got higher mean scores for all writing aspects particularly for content and organization aspects just after they got the treatment. The most influenced aspect was organization. It might be caused by practicing to make summarizing in a good organization. They made the way how to state ideas clearly and supported by logical sequencing. Such as the use of transition signal is one of ways to make their writing coherence. While the second influenced aspect was content, it might be caused by practicing the way how to develop idea with the relevant topic. They made outline before summarizing, although sometime they could limit development for their ideas. The other aspects such as language use, mechanic and vocabulary were also influenced by summarizing activity but it was not really significant, It might be caused, the researcher did not really focus on their grammar and punctuation it was because of the lack of time, especially in mechanic, actually the researcher asked the students to check the spelling, punctuation, capitalization etc, but they still got wrong in those aspect. While the vocabulary was not really good because their ability in mastering the vocabulary was not good enough, especially in mechanic, ask the students to check the spelling, punctuation, capitalization etc, they still got wrong in those aspect.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

Based on the findings and interpretation of the study, the writer concludes that: (a) Summarizing activity is effective in increasing students' reading comprehension achievement, (b) summarizing activity is effective in increasing students' writing achievement.

Based on the conclusions above, it is suggested that the English teachers of Polytechnic state Sriwijaya encourage their students to be more motivated in learning English. If the teacher wants his or her students better in reading and writing skills, he or she should realize that appropriate strategy plays an important role. The teacher should apply more strategies in teaching and learning English. Then, the writer also suggests that future researchers would consider about what has been obtained from this research. Hopefully, future researchers will conduct further reaserch which will give valuable information.

REFERENCES

- Bray, E. (2002). Using task journals with independent readers. *English Teaching Forum*, 40 (3), 6-11. (Online), available in **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.** Retrieved on January 12th 2011.
- Camacho, G. Z. (2005). Literacy memoirs involving students in meaningful writing. *English Teaching Forum*, 43(3), 28-35 (Online), available in <http://exchanges.state.gov/english/teaching/forum/archives/docs/05-43-3-e.pdf>. Retrieved on January 12th 2011.
- Creswell, J. W. (2005). *Educational research planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.
- Idris, N., Baba, S., & Abdullah, R. (2007). An analysis on students-written summaries: A step towards developing an automated summarization assessment. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Electrical Engineering and Informatics. Institut Teknologi Bandung, Indonesia*, 550-553. (Online), available in <http://research.mercubuana.ac.id/proceeding/B-34.pdf>. Retrieved on December 28th 2010.
- Komiyama, R. (2009). CAR: A means for motivating students to read. *English Teaching Forum*, 47(3), 32-37. (Online), available in **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.** Retrieved on February, 5th 2011.
- Karbalaei, A., & Rajyashree, K., S. (2010). The Impact of summarization strategy training on university ESL learners' reading comprehension. *The International Journal of Language Society and Culture*, 30, 41-53. (Online), available in <http://www.educ.utas.edu.au/users/tle/JOURNAL/issuues/2010/30-4.pdf>. Retrieved on January 3th 2011.
- Kavaliauskienė, G., Anusienė, L., (2010). Online Reading and Writing in English for Specific Purposes Classes. *Studies about languages*, 17, 99-104. (Online), available in (www.kalbos.lt/zurnalai/17_numeris/16a.pdf). Retrieved on January 3th 2011.
- Risnawati. (2008). Identifying and comparing students' needs in learning English at business department of Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya. Unpublished Graduate Thesis Bandung: UPI Graduated School.
- Yan, G. (2005). A process genre model for teaching writing. *English Teaching Forum*, 43(3), 18-26. (Online), available in <http://exchanges.state.gov/english/teaching/forum/archives/docs/05-43-3-d.pdf>. Retrieved on February, 5th 2011.
- Weigle, S. C. (2002). *Assessing Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press