

THE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON SUMMARY WRITING AS A WAY TO LEARN GRAMMAR

Rany Maltha Aida*
rany.maltha@gmail.com

*Graduated in August 2013 from English Education Study Program of Indonesia
University of Education

Abstract: The study is entitled the students' perception on summary writing as a way to learn grammar. It is aimed to investigate the students' opinion on summary writing as a way to learn grammar and their obstacles in the implementation. The data for this study were gained through qualitative method that used questionnaire and interview, and the respondents were first semester students who used summary writing as their learning activity. The study reveals that the students have positive perception on the use of summary writing, they were interested in the subject and give positive perceptions because the students agreed that the subject and summary writing gave so much knowledge and information that will be beneficial for them in the future. Meanwhile, it is also shown that students face some difficulties in writing the summary, such as difficult in understanding resource text, having lack of vocabulary, lack of grammar mastery also lack of idea to produce the summary. The result of the study is expected to give contribution in improving EFL teaching and learning activity, especially in learning grammar.

Keywords: *Students' Perception, Summary Writing, Learning Grammar*

Introduction

In the era of globalization, people become obviously aware that learning other language, especially English, is important. In accordance with that, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) mentioned that as the world developing, the demand for an international language is emerging. Therefore, many Indonesian people

from various ages try to master English with many purposes.

In terms of learning English as Foreign Language, learners are required to master certain knowledge, especially grammar, in order to be able to use the language properly.

As mentioned by Smedley:

“Language study is a valuable activity in its own right as an important part of our culture since it distinguishes us as a species. Linguistic study, therefore, should be a central part of education, and an insight into how grammar functions should be a central part of that study” (Smedley, 1983: 13)

In line with above explanations, summary writing can be used as an alternative activity, in learning process, for learners to practice the target language since it requires the writer to take large quantities of information, understand what that information means and summarize it into a shorter version of

Literature Review

- **The Notion of Perception**

Perception refers to an idea, a belief or an image you have as a result of how you understand and notice things by using your senses (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2010: 1087). In line with these, Sperling (1982) also affirmed that perception represents peoples' understanding of a present situation in terms of their past experience.

the original (Wehmeyer, 1999). As stated by Brown (2001: 129) that activity implies some sort of active performance on the part of learners. Summary writing carries this need since it requires the students to develop their idea in understanding the target language while writing it in a form of summary.

Based on the issues above, this study is going to portray the students' perceptions on summary writing used in English as Foreign Language (EFL) learning. It is also going to reveal any students' obstacles during the process of writing summary.

“What we perceive at any given time, therefore, will depend not only on the nature of the actual stimulus, but also on the background or setting in which it exists - our own previous sensory experiences, our feelings of the moment, our general prejudices, desire, needs, attitudes and goals” (Sperling, 1982: 39)

In this context, perception affirms as students' image of seeing summary writing as an EFL learning technique that is used to help them in learning grammar.

- **Summary Writing as a Way to Learn Grammar**

Summarizing is an essential skill for learning (Pappas, 2009). It is a powerful way to build content knowledge and critical thinking since it requires students to apply higher-level thinking skills. Students must analyze the information and synthesize it before they can condense it. While, Able (2010) affirmed that it is essential to write and study from your reading in order to gain higher grammar mastery. He also stated that improvement appears when someone is simply doing. Practicing and training will make someone gets better in his or her learning since it puts him or her in a process of doing. From all above explanations, it can be highlighted that improvement comes as students are exposed to written material through their own reading, and as they undertake more demanding and varied activities. In this context, improvement in learning grammar will happen when students can keep their attention focused on what they could get from their reading, what need to write about and how best

they can express themselves in their summary writing of grammatical rules.

In accordance with those explanations, Lorcher (2012) mentioned that summarizing, in teaching and learning grammar, will help teachers and students since it carries several benefits, those are: (1) Students are able to construct personal meaning. (2) Students make connections between long term and short term memory, allowing them to remember information, grammatical rules, better and longer. (3) Students and teachers find out what they know and what they still need to know about grammatical rules. (4) Teachers discover what students understand and remember about grammatical rules, and (5) Teachers discover student held misconceptions and misunderstandings about grammatical rules.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach, embracing characteristics of a case study to gain an in-depth understanding and reveal the phenomenon of students'

perception on summary writing used as a way to learn grammar.

This study was conducted to describe, explore, and explain the students' perception on summary writing that is used in learning grammar, and students' obstacles in writing the summary of grammatical rules.

The study was undertaken at Guidance and Counseling Department in one of State Universities in Bandung. The population is one class of the first semester students. The selection of participant was merely because of two reasons. First, the students of this department are non-English subject student, who are not accustomed to use English in neither natural nor educational settings. Second, the lecturer in this class implemented summary writing as one of the learning activities.

In collecting the data, the writer used questionnaire and interview. Questionnaire is used to reveal students' perception and opinion about summary writing of grammatical rules while interview is

used to find students' difficulties in the implementation of summary writing and information that is not described clearly in the questionnaire. The collected data of the research will be concluded in percentage, then it will be analyzed and discussed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The analysis will be presented in detail in a form of descriptive explanation.

Data Presentation and Discussion

- **Students' Perception on Summary Writing Used as a Way to Learn Grammar**

Based on the findings derived from the questionnaire and the interview, it was found that the students had positive perception on the implementation of summary writing as a way to improve grammar mastery. All of the students (100%) had positive perception. We can see the computation of the result, as follow:

Table 1**Students' Perception on the Use of Summary Writing as a Way to Learn Grammar**

No.	Score	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	30 - 53.9	Extremely Negative	0	0
2.	54 - 77.9	Negative	0	0
3.	78 - 101.9	Fair	0	0
4.	102 - 125.9	Positive	15	100%
5.	126 - 150	Extremely Positive	0	0
Total			15	100%

Dealing with students' personal feeling, the best part of the students' showed agreement that General English subject was interesting and meaningful for them. Related to the implementation of summary writing, the students' agreed that making and writing a summary is helpful for them in learning grammar. By writing summary of grammatical rules, students had a chance to gain more knowledge from their reading and practice their writing in summarizing and interpreting what they could understand from the resource text. As Harmer (2007) stated that to master well in language learning people have to get great exposure

from their surroundings and often practice the language. This theory emphasizes that people learn mostly when they are actively involved in learning process. In conclusion, by making students get more opportunities to drill and practice their language, the process of learning English grammar will occur since they become accustomed with the language.

By looking up to the response related with students' learning goals, the students' stated that writing summary of grammatical rules had helped them to understand the learning objectives, revise their work and evaluate themselves in learning process by concerning their strengths and weaknesses. The students agreed

that summary writing could contribute in achieving better grades.

As for learning process, best part of the students agreed that they found a little difficulty in writing summary of grammatical rules. The clear guidance and brief format were found useful for them to ease the process of writing the summary. Best part of the students (53.33%) also stated that sharing and discussion with friends could give some insights in conducting and writing better summary of grammatical rules.

Related to teacher's role, nearly all of the students (86.67%) agreed that teacher acted as motivator and facilitator. The students said that teacher gave them enough freedom in expressing their thoughts and understandings. Teacher's correction and feedback on their summary writing were also beneficial in developing their grammar mastery since it was highlighted in their strengths and weaknesses.

In response to the advantage of summary writing, best part of the students (71.72%) believed that summary writing had helped them to

be autonomous and creative learner. It also helped them to think critically. Besides, it made them more responsive and confident since it trained them to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses in learning grammar.

Meanwhile, from the students' open-questionnaire and interview, it was found that students encountered some problems in making and compiling the summary writing.

As Harmer (1987) stated, people who learn languages encounter a number of major problems, especially with the grammar of the language. Grammar can be complicated and seems to appear confusing for language user and learners. In this case, having lack of vocabulary and grammar mastery could cause them to have difficulty in getting idea when writing the summary of grammatical rules. Besides that, difficulty in understanding resource text also could be the main barrier in producing good summary of grammatical rules.

Table 2**Students' Obstacles dealing with the Implementation of Summary Writing**

No	Problems	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Understanding resource text.	2	13.33
2.	Lack of vocabulary mastery	3	20
3.	Lack of idea for making summary writing.	3	20
4.	Lack of grammar mastery.	3	20
5.	None.	4	26.67
TOTAL		15	100

Conclusions

In conclusion, the study showed that most of students had positive responses to the implementation of summary writing in learning grammar. It means that students experienced and gained many positive effects from the implementation of summary writing as a way to learn grammar. It was useful because students were forced to read and compile their own writing based on their understandings. The students agreed the subject gave so much knowledge and information that will be beneficial for them in the future.

The students still encountered some obstacles when they were

writing and compiling the summary writing like difficulty in understanding the resource book, lack of vocabulary and grammar mastery and lack of idea in making the summary.

The result of the study can be useful for improving English teachers' teaching - learning activity. The teacher can provide an activity to activate students' critical thinking. As Pappas (2009) says that summarizing is an essential skill for learning. It is a powerful way to build content knowledge and critical thinking since it requires students to apply higher-level thinking skills.

The teacher could pay more attention to students' progress and

their difficulties. Having some time for discussion and sharing with students' to gain some insight from their point of view also could be beneficial in planning the teaching session.

For the next research, it could consider to investigate not only

students' perception but also teacher's perception of the implementation of summary writing. The next research also could investigate the implementation of summary in different area, such as the young learners or different topic besides grammar.

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