

## Comparing Summaries of a Narrative Story Produced under Different Conditions\*

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The purpose of the present study was to investigate whether Japanese university EFL students produce summaries of a narrative story differently under two different conditions: When they refer to the original text and when they do not do so. Specifically, the study examined the students' use of selection and deletion rules as well as paraphrasing strategies. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted. The results of the analysis revealed that, when they referred to the original text, the students produced summaries that included more idea units with details, longer and syntactically more complex sentences, and a variety of transitions. On the other hand, without the original passage, the students wrote summaries that were concise, with the focus on main idea units, and that used syntactically less complex sentences, but extensive paraphrases. These results suggest that EFL teachers need to carefully examine the use of the original text in a summarizing task. Producing a summary without an original text is seldom practiced in regular EFL classrooms in Japan. However, EFL teachers need to consider the potential pedagogical effectiveness of producing summaries without an original text if they want to develop their students' spontaneous paraphrasing skills.

**Keywords:** summary, original narrative text, with and without the original text

### 1 Introduction

In Japan, teaching EFL writing has traditionally followed the Grammar Translation Method, where students are expected to translate a predetermined Japanese expression into English at the sentence level. The purpose of this

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method is to study specifically targeted grammatical and vocabulary items. This way of teaching writing is still used in a number of recent EFL writing textbooks published in Japan. At the same time, however, summary writing exercises have also begun to appear in these textbooks.

In order to produce effective summaries, writers need to acquire two basic strategies: a strategy of selecting important information and deleting peripheral information in an original passage, and also a strategy of paraphrasing the selected information (Brown & Day, 1983). A majority of current writing textbooks in Japan, however, seem to fail to help EFL students develop the effective use of these two strategies. For instance, we can find an exercise where instructions simply tell students to read an original passage, make an outline, and then write a summary. Here, little scaffolding for the information to be selected and deleted is provided. Another example is an exercise where little scaffolding for rephrasing is included. In this example, instructions as to how to find and extract a topic, supporting, and concluding sentences in an original material are given, but no explanation of how to restate those sentences can be found. Considering these situations, we need to pay more attention to designing appropriate instruction and practice to foster Japanese EFL students' summarizing skills.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Importance of summary writing**

Summary writing is an important skill required in academic contexts, especially in higher education. For instance, Blanchard and Root (1997) argued that "summaries are used in academic writing for every field" (p. 116). They then offered several examples. In a business class, students are told to summarize an article from a newspaper. In a literature class, they are required to produce summaries of novels or short stories. In these examples, the target passages for summarizing are basically narrative in nature, written in chronological order. Furthermore, in writing research papers, students need to summarize past academic studies, presenting the major findings succinctly as a review of literature. They also need to support their ideas by using information from outside source materials (Oshima & Hogue, 2006). In these situations, it is necessary for them to write effective summaries so that they can avoid committing plagiarism, which is a serious offense in academic settings.

It is important for EFL university students to develop summarizing skills, because summary writing can function as a guided type of writing that leads to autonomous essay writing (Kanazawa & Tominaga, 2013). It is also important to teach summarizing skills, because summarizing is a type of skills-integrated instruction where both reading and writing skills are expected to be fostered. Several studies have shown that better readers can

produce better summaries (Winograd, 1984; Hare, 1992). Thus, summary writing is one of the indispensable literacy skills that EFL students need to develop.

## 2.2 Studies on summary writing

A pioneering study on summary writing in an L1 context was conducted by Brown and Day (1983). They identified four rules of summarization. The first rule was “deletion” of unimportant and redundant information. Related to this one was a rule of “selection” of important information. The third rule was “superordination,” which means substitution of a category name for instances of a category. For example, “lilies,” “roses,” “sunflowers” can be generalized as “flowers.” The fourth rule was “invention,” that is, creating a topic sentence when it was not shown in the text. Brown and Day further gave a summarizing task to 5th, 7th, and 10th graders, and college students. They found that, as the grades advanced, the students used a wider range of rules of summarization. They also found that the students used the different rules in the following order: “deletion,” “superordination,” “selection,” and “invention.” Therefore, there seems to be the acquisition pattern of utilizing different summarizing rules.

What Brown and Day (1983) call “deletion” and “selection” are interrelated, because in extracting main ideas, redundant information is deleted and important information is extracted; “superordination” and “invention” both require the writer’s use of his/her words and thus can be combined as a strategy of paraphrasing the main ideas selected. Tajino, Stewart, and Dalsky (2010) also emphasize the importance of paraphrasing, deletion, and selection strategies in summarization by saying as follows:

Summarizing is similar to paraphrasing, but you summarize longer pieces of text, even entire articles. Of course, you must also *paraphrase* (i.e., use your own words) whenever you write a summary.... Summaries *do not include all of the information in the original text*. When you prepare a summary of source material, you must first decide what the main points are. Summaries are much shorter than the original text. (p. 109, italics are used by Kamimura)

As for a paraphrasing strategy, Keck (2006) analyzed paraphrases used in summaries written by L1 and ESL university students and classified these paraphrases into four categories—near copy, minimal revision, moderate revision, and substantial revision—depending on how close the paraphrases were to the expressions in the original text. Keck found that the L1 students used significantly more moderate and substantial revisions and fewer near copies than their ESL counterparts. In another study, Keck (2014) examined ESL students’ development of summarizing strategies, showing that the novice ESL writers tended to rely more on exact and near copies than more

experienced writers and that in the former group Asian students, such as Japanese students, were included.

In EFL contexts, Kim (2001) conducted a study where Korean EFL students were given a task of summarization of an English expository text. It was found that the students used the deletion rule most frequently and the transformation (i.e., paraphrasing) rule least frequently. Ushiro, Nakagawa, Kai, Watanabe, and Shimizu (2008) also found that Japanese EFL students had difficulty with the invention strategy, as was defined by Brown and Day (1983). In particular, the students failed to create a topic sentence that covered the content of multiple paragraphs in the original text. Kumazawa (2017) examined the effects of a three-month instruction in summary writing on Japanese university EFL students' production of summaries of an expository essay. The analysis revealed that, after receiving the instruction, the students used the deletion and selection strategies significantly more frequently. The frequency of the paraphrasing strategy also significantly increased; however, the resultant paraphrases included a substantial number of errors. Though this finding seemed to indicate a negative effect of the instruction, Kumazawa rather maintained that they were developmental errors that resulted from the students' active trials of rephrasing the original text in their own words, and he argued that longer instruction was needed for the students to internalize the paraphrasing strategies they learned in classes.

Considering these past studies on summarization both in L1 and L2 contexts, it becomes clear that we do not yet have a clear picture of how Japanese EFL students summarize narrative stories, as opposed to expository essays. In addition, little attention has been paid to different conditions under which a summarizing task is given, that is, whether or not students refer to an original text close at hand while summarizing it.

### **3 Purpose of the Present Study**

The purpose of the present study was to examine whether Japanese university EFL students summarized a narrative story differently under two different conditions: while referring to the original story and without referring to the original.

Specifically, two research questions were posed: Do the two different conditions affect (1) what information in the original writing the students would include and delete (i.e., content of the summary), and (2) how they would express the information they had selected (i.e., style of the summary). The first research question was posited to examine how the students used the selection and deletion strategies, while the second question asked about how they utilized the paraphrasing strategy.

## 4 Method

### 4.1 Participants

Twenty-one Japanese EFL students participated in the present study. They were first-year students that majored at a four-year Japanese university. None of them had experiences studying English abroad. Their English proficiency was considered to be at the low-intermediate level, with the average TOEIC<sup>®</sup> score of 436 points.<sup>1</sup>

### 4.2 Procedure

#### 4.2.1 Summary writing task

The students were told to read a narrative story and write a summary of the story. The narrative story was chosen because summarizing a short story is often required in a university-level class (Blanchard & Root, 1997), as was pointed out in the literature review section. Furthermore, narration is considered the least cognitively demanding mode of discourse, being less syntactically complex than the other modes such as exposition and argumentation (e.g., San Jose, 1973; Watson, 1980). Therefore, a task of summarizing a narrative story was regarded as appropriate for the students' English proficiency level in the present study.

The students were told to produce a summary of the story under two different conditions. Under Condition A, they read the story and summarized it in 20 minutes while being allowed to look at the story. They were not allowed to use a dictionary. This condition is usually used in a testing situation, such as a university entrance examination (e.g., an English entrance examination for Senshu University, 2018). Three months later, under Condition B, the students wrote another summary of the same narrative passage in 20 minutes, but this time they were not allowed to look at the original passage. They were given two minutes to read, and reread if they wished, the passage, and then the passage was collected. The three-month interval was expected to be long enough for the participants to become oblivious of the previous summary writing task given under Condition A.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> TOEIC<sup>®</sup> consists of listening and reading sections and therefore does not necessarily reflect the students' writing abilities. However, reading and writing are interrelated skills, as Chall and Jacobs (1983) clarified; therefore, the students' reading abilities would, though partially, reflect their writing abilities, and this test was used as a measurement of the participants' English proficiency. Also, because the production of summaries requires reading skills, the test that included the reading section was considered appropriate for gauging the students' proficiency level in this study. Another practical reason for the use of TOEIC<sup>®</sup> was that this was the only English proficiency test available in the institution where the students studied.

<sup>2</sup> Ideally different passages should have been used in the pre- and post-tests to avoid a

#### 4.2.2 Original narrative story

The original passage was chosen from *Introductory Stories for Reproduction 2* (Hill, 1982). As this title indicates, the story was written for reproduction; therefore, it was considered appropriate as a test material for this study. Furthermore, the story was syntactically and lexically simple enough for the students at the low-intermediate level of English proficiency to understand without using a dictionary. The actual story is shown as follows:

It was a very hot day in the middle of summer, and there were no trees along the street. Mr. Brown closed his shop at half past five, went out into the street and began walking to his bus. He was very fat. The sun shone straight down the street, and in a few minutes Mr. Brown was very hot.

A small boy came out of another shop in the street and followed Mr. Brown. He stayed very near him all the time, and he kicked the heels of Mr. Brown's shoes several times. Mr. Brown looked at him angrily each time.

After the third time, Mr. Brown stopped, turned around and said to the small boy, 'What are you doing? Stop following me like that! You're going to hurt my heels.'

'Please don't stop me!' the small boy said. 'It's very hot today, and there isn't any shade anywhere else in the street!'

(Hill, 1982, p. 40)

### 5 Analysis

The students' summaries produced under the two different conditions were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

#### 5.1 Quantitative analysis 1

The first research question was related to the content of the summaries. That is, the question asked about what information in the original passage they selected and deleted. To answer this question, two analytical measures were employed: (1) the mean number of idea units, and (2) the mean ratio of main idea units.

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memory effect on the results. However, it was not possible to prepare two passages with the identical level of vocabulary and number of idea units. Also, due to the departmental curriculum, it was not feasible to set two different classes, each of which could be assigned a different condition for producing summaries. Furthermore, some of the past studies that adopted the pre- and post-test design used the identical task/test to ensure the task comparability (e.g., Fotos, 1993). Finally, Hirai (2017) mentioned that preparing and making equivalent forms as a pre- and post-test are hardly feasible.

## Comparing Summaries of a Narrative Story Produced under Different Conditions

First, the original narrative text was segmented into 36 idea units. Out of a total of 36 idea units, 13 were chosen as main idea units, which correspond to the different components of the story grammar proposed by Carrell (1984). According to Carrell, any story is created on the basis of the story grammar, which consists of six components: setting, beginning, problem, reaction, solution, and ending. The first component is the “setting,” where the time and place of a story is specified. The second one is the “beginning,” in which a protagonist begins to do something. The “problem” is the third component, where the protagonist faces a certain problem. The “reaction” means how the protagonist finds or feels about the problem. The “solution” is his/her active attempt to solve the problem. Lastly, the “ending” is the final state, where the problem or conflict is resolved. Table 1 displays the contents of the respective components when the story grammar is applied to the original narrative used in the summarizing task. Table 2 lists the 36 idea units, and the units indicated in bold are those that correspond to the six components of the story grammar and are thus determined as the main idea units in the text.

Table 1. Six Components of the Story Grammar in the Narrative Story

Components	Contents
1 Setting	It was a very hot day.
2 Beginning	A fat man, Mr. Brown, was walking on the street.
3 Problem	A small boy walked right behind him and kicked his heels several times.
4 Reaction	Mr. Brown got angry.
5 Solution	He told the boy not to kick his heels.
6 Ending	The boy wanted to hide in Mr. Brown’s shadow.

Two researchers carefully read the student’s summaries produced in the pre- and post-test, and according to the content of the summary, they segmented 10% of the summaries into different idea units individually. One researcher had a Ph.D and the other had an MA in applied linguistics. Both researchers had experiences in teaching EFL at Japanese schools at the college level. They reached 94% agreement, and they discussed their segmentation with each other until they reached full agreement. One of the researchers then analyzed the rest of the summaries. Finally, the total number of idea units and the number of main idea units included in each summary were counted.

### 5.2 Quantitative analysis 2

To answer the second question, which asked about how the students expressed the information they selected by utilizing the rephrasing strategy (i.e., the style used in the summaries), four measures were used: (1) the mean number of words per sentence, (2) the mean number of words per T-unit, (3)

the types of transition words (connectors), and (4) the mean ratio of paraphrased idea units. Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki, and Kim (1998) included the first three as measures for syntactic qualities of second-language student writing. The sentence length was used as a fluency measure (Kameen, 1979; Homburg, 1984), while the T-unit length, as a complexity measure (Larsen-eeman, 1983; Casanave, 1994). Transition words (connectors) are often taught to create quality of coherence (Oshima & Hogue, 2006). In several past studies on second-language writing, the number and types of transition words were used to assess the quality of coherence in student compositions (e.g., Nishigaki & Leishman, 2001). The mean ratio of paraphrased idea units was employed to examine how much the students attempted to use their own words in summarization.

Table 2. Idea Units and Corresponding Components of the Story Grammar

No	Idea Units	Components
<b>1</b>	<b>It was a very hot day</b>	Setting
2	in the middle of summer	
3	there were no trees along the street	
4	Mr. Brown closed his shop	
5	at half past five	
6	He went out	
<b>7</b>	<b>into the street</b>	Setting
<b>8</b>	<b>and began walking</b>	Beginning
9	to his bus	
<b>10</b>	<b>He was very fat</b>	Beginning
11	The sun shone	
12	straight down the street	
13	and in a few minutes	
14	Mr. Brown was very hot	
15	A small boy came out of	
16	another shop in the street	
<b>17</b>	<b>and followed Mr. Brown.</b>	Problem
18	He stayed very near him	
19	all the time	
<b>20</b>	<b>and he kicked the heels of Mr. Brown's shoes</b>	Problem
<b>21</b>	<b>several times</b>	Problem
22	Mr. Brown looked at him	
<b>23</b>	<b>angrily each time</b>	Reaction
24	After the third time	
25	Mr. Brown stopped	
26	turned around	

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27	<b>and said to the small boy</b>	Solution
28	What are you doing	
29	<b>Stop</b>	Solution
30	<b>following me like that</b>	Solution
31	You're going to hurt my heels	
32	Please don't stop me	
33	<b>the small boy said</b>	Ending
34	It's very hot today	
35	<b>there isn't any shade</b>	Ending
36	anywhere else in the street	

### 5.3 Qualitative analysis

A pair of each student's summaries produced under Condition A and B were carefully examined to observe the students' actual use of the selection, deletion, and paraphrasing strategies. The two groups of summaries were closely compared to see how and where the numerical findings derived from the quantitative analysis were manifested in the two groups of summaries.

## 6 Results and Discussion

### 6.1 Results of quantitative analysis for Research Question 1

#### 6.1.1 Mean number of idea units

Table 3 displays the mean number of idea units in the summaries written under Condition A and B (15.19 in the former and 10.14 in the latter). A significant difference was observed between the mean number of idea units in the summaries written with and without the original story ( $t=6.81$ ,  $df=20$ ,  $p=.000$ ). The effect size was large ( $r=.84$ ). This result means that when the students did not refer to the original text, they produced more concise summaries, and this suggests that they used more selection and deletion strategies.

Table 3. Mean Number of Idea Units in Summaries

Condition	Mean	SD
Condition A (with the original text)	15.19	4.06
Condition B (without the original text)	10.14	4.18

#### 6.1.2 Mean ratio of main idea units

As Table 4 shows, the mean ratio of the main idea units in the summaries produced under Condition A was 0.5617, while that under Condition B was 0.7085. A paired  $t$ -test revealed a significant difference in the ratio of the main idea units between the two conditions ( $t=2.491$ ,  $df=20$ ,  $p=.022$ ), with a medium effect size ( $r=.49$ ).

Table 4. Mean Ratio of Main Units in Summaries

Condition	Mean	SD
Condition A (with the original text)	0.5617 (56.17%)	0.1276
Condition B (without the original text)	0.7085 (70.85%)	0.1948

This result means that, when the students did not refer to the original story, they used more selection and deletion strategies, concentrating on the main ideas while ignoring the other peripheral ideas.

### 6.1.3 Summary of the results of analysis to answer Research Question 1

The analysis of the mean number of idea units, and the mean ratio of main idea units show that, without looking at the original text at hand, the students tended to produce more concise summaries by including a fewer number of idea units as well as focusing on the main idea units in the original passage. This suggests that they employed the selection and deletion strategies more frequently. This point, however, cannot be clarified by the quantitative analysis alone and, therefore, will be further discussed in the section on the qualitative sample analysis.

## 6.2 Results of quantitative analysis for Research Question 2

### 6.2.1 Mean number of words per sentence (fluency)

As is shown in Table 6, the mean number of words per sentence for the summaries produced under Condition A was 16.78, and the one for Condition B was 10.44. A statistically significant difference was found in the number of words per sentence between the two conditions ( $t=5.07$ ,  $df=20$ ,  $p=.000$ ). The effect size was also found to be large ( $r=.75$ ). It seems that the students tended to write much longer sentences when they looked at the original text.

Table 6. Mean Number of Word per Sentence in Summaries

Condition	Mean	SD
Condition A (with the original text)	16.78	3.32
Condition B (without the original text)	10.44	4.89

### 6.2.2 Mean number of words per T-unit (complexity)

Table 7 displays the mean number of words per T-unit in the summaries written in the two different conditions (12.68 words in Condition A and 9.61 in Condition B). A  $t$ -test revealed a meaningful difference in the number of words per T-units between the two conditions ( $t=3.20$ ,  $df=20$ ,  $p=.004$ ). The effect size was also found to be large ( $r=.58$ ).

Table 7. Mean Number of Word per T-Unit in Summaries

Condition	Mean	SD
Condition A (with the original text)	12.68	3.56
Condition B (without the original text)	9.61	3.31

The students wrote significantly longer T-units when they produced summaries while looking at the passage. This means that the students tended to write syntactically more complex summaries under Condition A.

### 6.2.3 Types of transition words (complexity)

Through a careful reading of the students' summaries, a variety of transition words were found, as is listed in Table 8: "and," "but," and "so" in the category as coordinators; "because," and "because of" as logical connectors; and "after that" and "then" as enumerators.

Table 8. Number of Different Types of Transition Words Used in Summaries

Types	Transition words	Condition A (With the passage)	Condition B (Without the passage)
Coordinators	and	46	22
	but	6	5
	so	15	9
Logical connectors	because	12	5
	because of	0	1
Enumerators	after that	6	5
	then	6	1

When referring to the original text under Condition A, the students used "and" more frequently to include more information. They also tended to use "so" more often as a coordinator and "because" as a logical connector in order to clarify the cause-and-effect logical connections; furthermore, they used "then" more often to clarify the chronological order of the story. The students might have attempted to change the expressions in the original text and by possibly using various transition words as one of the paraphrasing strategies.

### 6.2.4 Mean ratio of paraphrased idea units (paraphrasing)

Table 9 displays the mean ratio of paraphrased idea units in the summaries written under Conditions A and B.

Table 9. Mean Ratio of Paraphrased Idea Units

Condition	Mean	SD
Condition A (with the original text)	0.6398 (63.98%)	18.67
Condition B (without the original text)	0.7805 (78.05%)	12.51

More than half of the original expressions in the idea units were paraphrased under both conditions (0.6398 under Condition A and 0.7805 under Condition B). However, a *t*-test revealed that the two conditions differed significantly in terms of the ratio of paraphrased idea units in the students' summaries ( $t=2.842$ ,  $df=20$ ,  $p=.010$ ), with a large effect size ( $r=.75$ ).

Namely, when the students produced summaries under Condition A, they tended to be bound by the original text and adhere to the expressions in the text. On the other hand, under Condition B, they tended to paraphrase the expressions in the original more extensively. Without the original text at hand, they were forced to rely on their memory, but this made them express the content of the story more freely by using their own words.

### 6.2.5 Summary of the results of analysis to answer Research Question 2

While referring to the original text, the students paid attention to the form rather than the content of the text. Thus, they were more likely to be bound by the original sentences and phrases that included both the main as well as peripheral information. In rephrasing the original passage, they made an attempt to manipulate grammatical operations by increasing sentence and T-units length, and various transition words. In contrast, without looking at the original story, the students tended to focus on the content, and this enabled them to express the main ideas that they had chosen in their own words by using their current grammatical and lexical knowledge, which resulted in producing summaries that were more concise and less syntactically complex, but more extensively paraphrased.

### 6.3 Results of qualitative analysis (sample analysis)

An in-depth analysis of the summaries written under the two conditions was attempted. This section shows two sample summaries written by one student, Student X, which reveal characteristics clarified in the quantitative analysis. All the grammatical and lexical errors in the sample summaries are left intact.

Sample 1 is a summary written under Condition A, where Student X wrote while referring to the original text.

#### Sample summary 1 written under Condition A

<sup>(1)</sup>*When* it was a very hot day in the middle of summer, Mr. Brown *who* was very fat closed his shop at half past five, went out into the street *which* had no trees and began walking behind Mr. Brown. <sup>(2)</sup>A small boy left another shop in the street and began walking behind Mr. Brown. <sup>(3)</sup>Then the small boy sometimes kicked Mr. Brown's feet, so Mr. Brown was angry and said to the small boy, "Stop walking behind me because you hurted my feet." <sup>(4)</sup>The small boy said, "I am not stop walking behind you because there is not any shade in the street."

Notes: (1) means the first sentence.

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This sample summary is 104-words long. It includes four sentences and 24 idea units. The number of words per sentence is 26, and the number of words per T-unit is 20.8. The first sentence of the summary is excessively long and consists of 40 words. This first sentence is syntactically so complex that it is constructed by one adverbial clause introduced by “when,” and two adjectival clauses by two relative pronouns “who” and “which” (which are indicated by italics in the sample). A variety of transition words are used (as underlined in the sample). “And” is used in the first and second sentence; “then,” “so,” “and,” and “because” can be found in the third sentence; and “because” is again used in the fourth sentence. Thus, Sample 1 shows Student X’s attempt to pack much information in the original text into a sentence by manipulating multiple syntactic operations.

Sample 2 is a summary written under Condition B, where Student X wrote it without referring to the original text.

Sample summary 2 written under Condition A

<sup>(1)</sup>One very hot day, Mr. Brown walked on the street to go to bus stop. <sup>(2)</sup>A boy went out of the toy shop. <sup>(3)</sup>He followed Mr. Brown very near and he kicked Mr. Brown’s heels a few times. <sup>(4)</sup>Mr. Brown felt angry. <sup>(5)</sup>In fact, the boy just wanted to be under Mr. Brown’s shadow because the street had no shade.

Sample 2 is concise, comprising 60 words and five sentences. The number of words per sentence is 11.8, and the number of words per T-unit is 10. Compared with Sample 1, Sample 2 is syntactically far less complex and is made up of short sentences. The sample includes only 12 idea units, the majority of which correspond to the main ideas of the story. What is noteworthy is that the fifth sentence is a complete paraphrase in Student X’s own words. Such an extensive paraphrase was not found in the summary produced under Condition A, where she wrote while looking at the original text.

The fifth sentence in Sample 2 corresponds to Idea Units 33, 34, 35, and 36 in the original story, which say, “The small boy said, ‘It’s very hot today. There isn’t any shade anywhere else in the street!’” This part is a punchline in the story, which has therefore much importance for the plot of the story, but which is difficult to interpret and even paraphrase. When Student X produced Sample 1 while looking at the original text, she wrote almost the same sentence as the one in the original: “The small boy said, ‘I’m not stop walking behind you because there is not any shade in the street.’”

Besides the sample by Student X, various examples of extensive paraphrases that correspond to Units 33, 34, 35, and 36 were found in the other summaries written under condition B, as is listed in the following:

- The boy wanted to get cool by Mr. Brown's shadow.
- The boy only wanted the shade.
- Mr. Brown was very fat. So he made shade. So the boy was following him.
- A small boy hid himself under his shadow for avoiding sunshine.
- The boy said, "You are good shade for me."
- A boy said, "Your shadow is just fit for me. It is very cool."
- The boy said, "Don't stop. I just want shade."
- He just wanted to stay in shade so he stayed behind him.
- A boy was looking for shade.

All of these examples demonstrate the students' attempt to express in their own words the ideas that they kept in memory. Free from the original text, they drastically and extensively rephrased the original sentences in the story.

## **7 Conclusion**

The present study aimed to examine whether Japanese university EFL students summarize a narrative story differently under two different conditions: when they refer to the original story and when they do not. The analysis showed that the students produced different types of summaries of the same narrative story when given different conditions. More specifically, the analysis revealed the following findings:

- 1) While referring to the original text, the students produced summaries that were longer and included more details, used syntactically more complex sentence structures, and also included a variety of transition words, such as "so," "because," and "then";
- 2) Without referring to the original text, the students wrote summaries that were concise and that focused on main ideas, contained syntactically less complex sentences, and used paraphrases more extensively for the section where rephrasing seemed difficult.

These findings offer several pedagogical implications. EFL teachers usually tell their students to write a summary while allowing them to look at the original text. Such a summarizing task is also used in a testing situation. Under this condition, the students tend to focus on the sentence structures in the original writing. Consequently, they select more and, therefore, delete less information in the original text and try to rephrase the original sentences in a longer and more complex way. On the other hand, when the students do

not look at the original passage, they are forced to recall the content of the passage. Under this condition, because they cannot rely on the original text, the students necessarily focus on the main ideas of the original story and express those ideas in their own words.

The teachers, therefore, need to consider the differences in conditions for summary writing, depending on the focus of their instruction. Allowing the students to refer to an original text would work better if the teachers want to develop the students' paraphrasing skills in constructing syntactically complex sentences. On the other hand, the teachers need to give their students a summarizing task without an original text if they want to foster the students' selection and deletion strategies and their paraphrasing skills. Traditionally, the latter type of summarization task has seldom been practiced in EFL classrooms and testing. To encourage the students to attempt spontaneous and extensive paraphrasing, the teachers need to consider the potential pedagogical effects of this type of summarization tasks.

Finally, the present study has several limitations. A study is needed to develop instruction on summarizing a narrative story and its effects on the production of summaries by students at the low-intermediate level. Those students could benefit if they analyzed a longer story by using the Story Grammar and by receiving practice in rephrasing original sentences in different ways.

A study is also needed to investigate how EFL students at higher proficiency levels would summarize an original text in more complex, logical types of writing, such as exposition, argumentation, or even research articles. Summary writing is an indispensable skill in producing book reports or research papers, which are often required in academic settings. The idea of genre-based writing instruction, which specifies a discourse structure and language elements for each particular genre (Hyland, 2014, 2016), could be applied to summary writing. If a typical structural sequence and language elements are clarified for each type of writing, it would be beneficial for the students in advanced academic settings.

Finally, in this study, the same passage was used in the pre- and post-test, and this might have affected the present results, because some students might have remembered the content of the passage. Future research is needed with two classes of students, between whom no significant difference in English proficiency is observed. Students in one class summarize a target while looking at it, whereas those in the other class produce a summary without referring to the original. If the two groups of summaries were compared, the memory effect on summarization could be avoided.

Future studies are called for to confirm the present results and design effective instruction to develop EFL students' summarizing skills. Summary writing is an important literacy skill that EFL students need to acquire in order to become successful academic writers.

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