



Author: Asma Ibrahim Alshabanah

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Abstract:

The area of academic writing skill is a broad field for investigation. It has been extensively explored from many different points of view: writing composition, outlining, paraphrasing and summary writing...etc. There are different types of summaries used in the academic field: the assignment summary, the comparative summary, writing a response to a reading passage, the abstract, the traditional précis type, and the one sentence summary or mini-summaries (like annotated bibliographies). The existence of so many different types of summary makes summarization strategies a fruitful area of research. This study is concerned with the assignment summary in which the subjects were asked by the researcher to summarize two expository texts (the first passage is entitled Energy sense makes future sense having a general subject, while the second passage is entitled Playwriting and English language teaching relating to courses taken in the Department). The aim of this study is to focus on the summarization strategies used by the senior level female students of the Department of English at King Saud University, trying to diagnose the problems facing them when they summarize. Some of the noteworthy findings are: First, it has been found that the students in general did not know how to reproduce the ideas in the original text accurately. That is because the strategies used in Accurate Reproduction of Ideas were remarkably low in their percentages while the percentages of the strategies used in the Distorted Reproduction of Ideas were obviously high. Second, the most frequently used strategy was “copying without any change”, since 92% of the students involved in this study exploited this inaccurate strategy in summarizing the first passage, and 96% of the subjects did so in their summaries of the second passage. Third, the strategy “deletion of important ideas” was also used by a large number of the students but still less than ‘copying without change’. There were 72% of the subjects deleting important ideas from the first passage, and 66% of the subjects deleted important ideas from the second passage. Finally, regarding the notion of attribution, 74% of the students’ summaries were explicitly attributed while only 12% of the students’ summaries were implicitly attributed. In addition, 20% of the subjects used non-attributed ideas in their summaries, while 18% of them deleted the propositions including attribution.

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