

パラフレイジング

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本稿では、英文の読解力をつけながら書く能力を向上させることを目的としたパラフレイジングの使用を提案し、その基本的考えと3つのレベル（単語・文章・パラグラフ）におけるパラフレイジングの方法を検討してみた。

I. INTRODUCTION

Translation has been widely used in both reading and writing classes, where lessons are designed to provide the students with a knowledge of English grammar and a large vocabulary. Therefore, a common practice in reading classes of this type is to give the students sentences of various lengths to be translated into Japanese, mainly word for word, with the help of an English-to-Japanese dictionary.

In writing classes, as in reading classes, exercises are centered around translation, this time from Japanese to English. The main concern in such a translation-oriented class is for the students, a Japanese-to-English dictionary at hand, to put Japanese into English, whether it is a word, phrase or sentence. This kind of practice, as Rivers points out (16), is heavy on the writing of paradigms and the acquisition of grammatical rules, thus leading the students to construct English sentences as a result of direct translation from Japanese.

The constant use of translation may give the students the mistaken idea that learning English is simply a matter of learning the English equivalents of Japanese words. Such an attitude is likely to lead the students into the linguistic pitfall of interference from Japanese, because too much emphasis on translation will hamper them from developing the habit of thinking in English, which is indispensable for acquiring a good command of English, both oral and written (Rivers 242). Furthermore, as a result of translating word for word they may produce awkward-sounding English in terms of both word choice and sentence structure. This habit of making English sentences through translation, once formed, is hard to change or eradicate at a later stage.

Despite the common use of translation in reading and writing practice, these two areas of language use seem to be considered separate from each other, one for translating Japanese

into English, the other for the reverse. Instead of keeping them apart, effort should be made to integrate reading and writing, since all areas of language use, reading, writing, speaking and hearing, are related to each other. The integration of these two areas, especially reading as a basis for writing, will help the students learn words and expressions while developing their reading comprehension skills. This is of great importance if they are to become familiar with the way English is used. Concerning this point, Rivers and Temperley wrote :

To be able to write well, students need to read widely, thus familiarizing themselves with the way recognized writers write in English. They must, through much experience with written texts, develop their ability to assimilate information directly in English and to think in English so that their writing acquires the rhythm and associations of the English-language writer. (312)

II. PARAPHRASING

Paraphrasing, instead of translation, is suggested here as a way to integrate reading and writing and furthermore to develop the ability to write English.

Paraphrasing, according to Webster's Dictionary, is "a rewording of the thought or meaning expressed in something that has been said or written before." In other words, you use your own words and sentence structure to express what another person has said or written. In order to restate another's idea, you must have a good understanding of what you have read in the first place. As Michael mentioned, paraphrasing is useful for checking your interpretation of reading material (282). At the same time, it can provide practice for writing English by making the students think of alternative expressions and sentence structure and not clothe Japanese words with English equivalents. It is necessary to learn to express an idea in a variety of ways. For this reason paraphrasing can be taken to mean the application of reading (interpretation) and writing (expression), thus linking together the two areas.

This approach to writing through reading English as a foundation will make the students become aware that the notion of one-to-one equivalence between Japanese and English does not hold when they do not have a Japanese sentence to translate, or to rely on. Their main concern is, instead, to vary words and sentence structure while retaining the original meaning. This will enable the students to develop flexibility in the use of language, a quality needed for improving one's language proficiency. With this flexibility comes the realization that there is more than one way to express an idea and that a fixed way of constructing an

English sentence, which is often the case with translation, is limited in scope. Such an attitude should be encouraged, so that the students will become used to making English sentences in various ways, without being translation-conscious.

A. Copying

Before going into the details and techniques of paraphrasing as a writing exercise, it should be pointed out that copying the original sentence is an essential part of paraphrasing practice. By writing down exactly what they have read, the students will observe details of the sentence and familiarize themselves with the words and expressions (Rivers 246). The more familiar they become with the sentence, the easier for them to comprehend and thus to rewrite it. On the other hand, if the students try to paraphrase a sentence without understanding it fully, it is likely that the paraphrased sentence will fail to convey the meaning of the original.

B. Three suggestions for the coherence of paraphrasing exercises.

1. Dictionaries

The use of an English-to-English dictionary should be encouraged. In a translation-oriented class a bilingual dictionary is a standard tool for the students. They resort to an English-to-Japanese dictionary when they encounter unfamiliar words and expressions, or to a Japanese-to-English dictionary when faced with difficulty translating Japanese words for which they do not know English equivalents.

In a paraphrasing class, however, translation is not what the students' effort should produce. They have to rewrite the original sentence in their own language. It is, therefore, recommended that they should look up an unfamiliar word in an English-to-English dictionary and grasp its meaning through other English words they already know. The aim is to accustom the students to thinking in English by using English.

2. Principle

No matter what kind of paraphrasing the students are engaged in, whether the paraphrasing of a simple sentence or of a complicated paragraph, the exercise should be based on a foundation, a principle that the students need to acquire and use when they are on their own in the use of the language. The principle is clarity. This principle comes from the idea that "all writing is communication" (Strunk and White 67), meaning that you write in order to get your idea across to others. Therefore you have to be concerned about the clarity with which you convey your idea. A similar view is expressed by Gowers, who wrote:

Writing is an instrument for conveying ideas from one mind to ano-

ther ; the writer's job is to make the readers apprehend the meaning readily and precisely. (1)

Clarity should always be kept in mind when we provide the students with paraphrasing exercises. No matter how difficult a word or how complicated a sentence is, it can be put into an easier word or sentence. Through paraphrasing — a process of simplifying a difficult language, the students will learn to express ideas clearly using plain language.

To paraphrase with clarity in mind, the students need:

- a) to use easily understood words.
- b) to make sentences short and compact.

a) Easily understood words

Although words that can be readily understood are preferable to those which cause difficulty to the reader, it is not a simple task to make a clear distinction between easy and difficult words because that depends largely on each individual's language ability. A word which is considered difficult by some may not necessarily be thought so by others. However, it is possible to roughly categorize words as follows : familiar words, unfamiliar words, concrete words, abstract words, etc.

Familiar rather than obscure words, precise rather than vague words should be used in paraphrasing because they are clearer in meaning than their counterparts and therefore can be more easily understood. A similar view was expressed by Strunk and White, who wrote:

If those who have studied the art of writing are in accord on any one point, it is on this: the surest way to arouse and hold the attention of the reader is by being specific, definite and concrete. (21)

b) Short and compact sentences

Clarity in a sentence can be achieved when the sentence is made short rather than long and compact rather than complicated. Long sentences tend to be complicated with many phrases and clauses. This means more strain on the reader's memory (Flesch 22). If a lengthy sentence is shortened, its meaning will be made clear, thus enabling it to be understood with less difficulty. It is, therefore, recommended that the students strive to simplify long sentences in paraphrasing practice. Yet, the shortening of a long sentence alone is not enough to clarify the meaning. The sentence needs to be compact. In other words, if you simplify a sentence, but at the cost of its core meaning, it does not serve the purpose of conveying the idea. Simplification, combined with compactness, is essential for achieving clarity in a sentence.

3. Level

There should be different levels of paraphrasing: from the short to the long, from the simple to the complicated, or word-level, sentence-level and paragraph-level. This will make it possible for students to progress from one level to another, each serving not only as a basis for the following but also as a consolidation of the preceding.

Word-level

This level places its focus on alternative words and expressions while familiarizing the students with their usages.

Sentence-level

This level deals mainly with looking for the core meaning of the sentence and then with varying its structure as well as individual words.

Paragraph-level

This level is concerned primarily with discovering the theme of the paragraph and with rewriting its structure.

The following section will discuss paraphrasing techniques at each of these three levels.

III . PARAPHRASING TECHNIQUES

A. Word-level paraphrasing

The aim at this level is to substitute words without changing the basic meaning of the sentence. Although the focus is placed on words, they should be presented in context, not in isolation, because the meaning of a word may vary depending on the context in which it appears. Take vehicle for instance, it has at least two meanings: one is “any means in or by which someone travels or something is carried or conveyed,” the other is “a medium of communication, expression or display.” If you have a sentence like “language is the vehicle by which thoughts are transmitted,” it is clear from the context that the latter definition better fits the meaning. It is, thus, the context that helps determine the meaning of a word, especially words with multiple meanings. With this in mind, the students should strive to learn words and their usages in context.

Three methods, with examples, are suggested here to facilitate the students' paraphrasing at this level.

1. Unfamiliar words and expressions

It is obvious that students of a foreign language will come across unfamiliar words. If this happens, they should consult an English-to-English dictionary to determine the meaning of

a word through other words that they already know. For example, if the students do not understand anticipate they should consult a dictionary to find an easy word with the same meaning, such as expect.

Sentence: We did not anticipate much trouble.

Paraphrased: We did not expect much trouble.

2. Difficult words and expressions

Even if the students understand a word that is considered difficult, they are recommended to substitute it with a more familiar one. This will make the sentence easier to understand. For example, in the following sentence, purchase is considered difficult and needs to be substituted.

Sentence: He will purchase a house in the suburbs.

Paraphrased: He will buy a house in the suburbs.

3. Phrasal verbs

As there are many idiomatic expressions composed of such common verbs as *put*, *take* or *get* and a particle, such as a preposition or an adverb, the use of different particles with the same verb gives the expression different meanings. These kinds of phrase are confusing for the students. It becomes simpler if these phrasal verbs are replaced by one-word verbs. For example, in the sentences below, pass away and pass out are substituted with specific verbs. The misuse of away or out would cause a big difference in meaning.

1: Her father passed away yesterday.

Her father died yesterday.

2: Her father passed out yesterday.

Her father fainted yesterday.

B. Sentence-level paraphrasing

Word-level paraphrasing has its focus on the substitution of a word or expression. When it comes to a sentence-level paraphrasing, however, special attention should be paid not only to replacing words but also to simplifying the sentence with no loss of original meaning. This requires the students to determine those words that are necessary to the main idea and those that are not. By so doing, they will be able to notice words that are superfluous in a sentence. If redundancy or wordiness exists, it should be eliminated for the clarity of the sentence.

For clear paraphrasing without verbosity, the following points should be born in mind:

1. Avoiding wordiness

a) Adverbial phrase

Wordy adverbial phrases can be substituted with simple equivalents.

Sentence: He finished the work in a hasty manner.

Paraphrased: He finished the work hastily.

Some other examples:

On a temporary basis — temporarily

In all probability — probably

b) Compound prepositions

Wordy compound prepositions can be substituted with simple equivalents.

Sentence: Jim could not attend the meeting because of the fact that he had a cold.

Paraphrased: He could not attend the meeting because he had a cold.

Some other examples:

despite the fact — although, though

for the purpose — for, to

in the event of — if

c) Replace noun-oriented construction

The reliance on a noun at the expense of a verb, adjective or adverb is often noticed in English, as shown in the sentences below.

He took a look at the book.

She solved the problem with ease.

This issue is of importance to us.

These underlined phrases can be substituted with simple equivalents.

He looked at the book.

She solved the problem easily.

This issue is important to us.

Some other examples:

Verb: give a call — call

make a discovery — discover

Adverb: with care — carefully

with rapidity — rapidly

Adjective: of interest — interesting

of help — helpful

d) Unnecessary adjectives and adverbs

For further elimination of wordiness, be careful with adjectives and adverbs. Nouns and verbs can be generally considered words of substance (Johnson Faust 178), whereas adjective and adverbs are used to modify nouns and verbs, respectively. This explains why some adjectives and adverbs can be removed with no loss of the basic meaning.

For example:

1. The researchers tried to join the projects together.
2. It was the president's own personal decision to promote the manager.

The underlined words can be removed without changing the basic meaning.

2. Sentence structure

Sentence structure should be taken into consideration when we discuss paraphrasing exercises at this level. As sentences are generally classified according to structure as simple, compound and complex, sentence-level paraphrasing can be dealt with in terms of these three types.

a) Simple sentence

A simple sentence is a sentence that has one subject and one predicate. When paraphrasing a simple sentence, you must first understand its meaning. Your understanding of the sentence will depend to a great extent on whether you can identify its key word, the word that carries the core meaning of the sentence. If the sentence contains unfamiliar words and expressions, you should find other words with the same or similar meaning in an English-to-English dictionary. The same goes for an abstract language. If simplified by word-level paraphrasing, the sentence will become clearer in meaning, making its key word more easily recognized. Then, it is ready for sentence-level paraphrasing.

When a simple sentence is paraphrased, the substitution of words and expressions alone will be sufficient, only if the sentence is short and compact. A long and complicated sentence, however, can not necessarily be paraphrased effectively with the same sentence structure. It may become concise when rewritten using a different sentence structure (Johnson Faust 179). For example, the following sentence can be more easily understood when restructured.

Sentence: Tom was hit by Jim.

Paraphrased: Jim hit Tom.

Because the paraphrased version is less complicated with *was* and *by* no longer needed.

The following three structures should be kept in mind for reconstructing a simple sentence.

1) Passive voice

As is shown by the above example, a sentence in a passive voice is wordy because of its construction. A passive verb is made up of the verb *be* followed by a past participle. Although the passive voice is often used, the active voice is recommended in paraphrasing because its construction is simpler and makes a sentence strong, thus catching the attention of the reader (Flesch Lass 152). For example, the following sentence is rewritten in the active voice:

Sentence: A nice gift was given to Jane by Jim.

Paraphrased: Jim gave a nice gift to Jane.

or

Jim gave Jane a nice gift.

or

Jane received a nice gift from Jim.

2) Inanimate subject

As the use of an inanimate subject is very uncommon in Japanese and therefore unfamiliar to the students, a sentence containing an inanimate subject will be better understood if rewritten in a different structure. For example,

Sentence: The rain kept me from going out.

Paraphrased: Because of the rain, I could not go out.

As is shown in the paraphrased version, the sentence becomes easier to understand if the inanimate subject is changed to the adverbial phrase because of the rain. The phrase can also be paraphrased with the clause because it rained.

3) Word order

The word order of a sentence is changed for emphasis. This will make the sentence more complicated. It is, therefore, suggested that the sentence be put back into its ordinary word order for simplicity. For example,

Sentence: On the bed lay his old mother.

Paraphrased: His old mother lay on the bed.

b) Compound sentence

A compound sentence is a sentence made up of two or more independent clauses properly combined. This means that a compound sentence is constructed by linking together simple sentences with a coordinating conjunction. Therefore, the following two points should be kept in mind for compound sentence paraphrasing.

1) Simple sentences are basic elements of the sentence and are treated as equal in their

importance.

2) A coordinating conjunction is used to connect simple sentences.

To understand a compound sentence, you need first identify the key word of each of the simple sentences concerned, and then refer to the conjunction because it shows the relationship of the ideas expressed in the simple sentences, and finally, using the key words and the conjunction, you put all the ideas together.

Just as understanding a compound sentence is a matter of dealing with simple sentences connected by a conjunction, paraphrasing it is a process of rewording the simple sentence and the conjunction. Therefore, the points covered concerning simple sentence paraphrasing can apply to the paraphrasing of sentences. In addition, some mention must be made of coordinating conjunctions because they play a major part in creating the meaning of a compound sentence. Although there are not very many coordinating conjunctions compared with subordinating conjunctions, their implication should be firmly understood. The commonly used coordinating conjunctions are *and*, *but*, *or*, *for*, *so*, and *yet*.

Sometimes, a semicolon is used instead of a coordinating conjunction. This makes it important for the students to understand the use of semicolons and to replace them with suitable conjunctions when paraphrasing. For example,

Sentence: Some students learn a lot in the mornings; others do better in the evenings.

Paraphrased: Some students learn a lot in the mornings and others do better in the evenings.

c) Complex sentence

A complex sentence is a sentence that has one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses. Compared with a compound sentence, in which ideas are all regarded as of equal importance, a complex sentence contains several ideas, one of which receives a grammatical focus as principle and the others are considered subordinate.

Because of the above characteristics, it is important to locate the main clause in order to understand a complex sentence. As a main clause can stand alone as a complete sentence, it can be identified by looking for the part of a compound sentence which consists of a subject and a predicate. Another way is to delete the subordinate clause from the sentence, thus leaving the main clause.

The relationship between a main and dependent clause is expressed by a subordinator, a word or phrase that introduces a dependent clause. For this reason, notice should be taken of the subordinator to determine whether a clause is independent or dependent. There are

two kinds of subordinators: relative pronouns (that, which, what, whom, etc) and subordinate conjunctions (after, as, because, if, since, unless, where, etc).

With the components and subordinators of a complex sentence in mind, the students should break the sentence into smaller units in paraphrasing. In other words, a subordinate clause needs to be turned into a sentence. This will make it easier to understand its meaning.

Here are some examples.

1. Sentence: The girl who is wearing a red hat is my sister.

Paraphrased: The girl is wearing a red hat and she is my sister.

2. Sentence: Although she tried hard, she failed in the end.

Paraphrased: She tried hard, but she failed in the end.

In relation to complex sentences, mention should be made of the participle construction because it can be changed to a complex sentence.

For example,

Sentence: Feeling very tired, I decided not to go for a walk.

Paraphrased: As I felt very tired, I decided not to go for a walk.

Paraphrased: I felt very tired, so I decided not to go for a walk.

C. Paragraph-level paraphrasing

In the previous part, words were discussed first, then what words compose: a sentence. Now the focus should be shifted to what sentences constitute: a paragraph. A word is a basic element of a sentence, as is a sentence of a paragraph. This illustrates the importance of dealing with a paragraph as the third level of paraphrasing after word and sentence levels.

A paragraph is a unit of composition in which sentences are organized in a logical order around a main idea, thereby producing a certain flow of thought. A main idea is presented in a sentence called a topic sentence, which often, but not necessarily always, comes at the beginning of a paragraph. This idea is supported and further explained by other ideas in the remaining sentences.

Just as understanding a core meaning is important in paraphrasing a sentence, so understanding a topic is essential in paraphrasing a paragraph. The students, therefore, should strive to discover the topic and its supporting ideas when paraphrasing a paragraph. As this level can serve as a consolidation of the two previous levels, words and sentences, the students are recommended to paraphrase some words and sentences to make the paragraph more comprehensible. They will, then, find it less difficult to recognize the topic and the development of the paragraph. Their next task is to write down in plain language the topic

sentence and those sentences that contain ideas supporting the topic. In order to achieve more clarity, they should eliminate words and sentences irrelevant to the main idea, if any.

Let us look at the following paragraph :

To be successful in a job interview, you should demonstrate certain personal and professional qualities. You need to create a good image in the limited time available, usually from 30 to 45 minutes. Furthermore, you must make a positive impression which the interviewer will remember while he interviews other applicants. At all times, you should present your most attractive qualities during an interview.

The paragraph is composed of four sentences. The first sentence is a simple sentence including an adverbial phrase. The second one is also a simple sentence. The third sentence has a complex structure with two subordinate clauses. The last is like the first and the second, a simple sentence.

The topic is introduced at the beginning of the first sentence: "To be successful in a job interview." The supporting ideas, i. e. things to do to be successful in a job interview, are presented in the remaining sentences: "personal and professional qualities", "a good image", "a positive impression" and "attractive qualities". To better understand the relationship of these ideas, the students should take notice of "Furthermore" because it indicates that another point will follow. Connectives like "Furthermore", thus, play an important role in producing a logical development of the paragraph.

This paragraph can be paraphrased in a variety of ways. However, care should be taken to retain its topic and supporting ideas.

Here is one example.

What should you do to be successful in a job interview? You should show personal and professional qualities. You should make a good image in a short time. You must give a lasting impression to your interviewer. You should always show nice things about yourself during an interview.

IV. CONCLUSION

Paraphrasing has been suggested here as an alternative to the usual translation. To enhance the effectiveness of paraphrasing practice, three suggestions have been made: the use of an English-to-English dictionary, the clarity of language and three levels of paraphrasing. In terms of these three levels (word-level, sentence-level and paragraph-level), paraphrasing techniques have been discussed, with suggestions made concerning how to achieve clarity

in the use of language.

Although the purpose is to accustom students to thinking in English by using English, care should be taken not to overburden them with too difficult a task for their language ability. A careful evaluation should always be made of students' language proficiency, according to which, appropriate paraphrasing exercises must be considered.

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