English Paraphrasing

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ABSTRACT

Changing the structure without changing the meaning or using two or more different structures but having the same meaning is paraphrasing. These 920 sentence patterns cover all the paraphrasing structures in English and guide how to handle other patterns when learners encounter them. It is important that students know the deep sentence patterns, which they can convert into surface sentence structures flexibly. Our research is a summary of what we already know from books and exams, but they haven't been fully collected yet. Collecting data for research, we compile assignments in the form of essays. This is great for developing students' writing and speaking skills.

Keywords: deep structure, pattern, paraphrasing, surface structure

1. INTRODUCTION

In writing and speaking, students often have difficulty expressing an idea using multiple structures, especially when expressing or repeating ideas without reusing the original structure. IELTS has some sentence transformation structures introduced, but too few, students self-study and search for paraphrasing from other books. The TOEIC, TOFEL and CEFR books also introduce some sentence transformation structures. However, with these sentence patterns, learners are always obsessed when they have to do the exercises on sentence transformation because the questioners always compile new and unfamiliar sentence patterns that the examiners cannot fully anticipate. We have observed the sentence structures in IELTS books from bands 3.0 to 9.0. As early as bands 3.0 and 3.5, sentence transformation structures are observed. Then students learn simple sentence transformation structures. As the bands increase, sentence transformation structures are also built to increase in difficulty. From our observation, the IELTS books do not have a separate section on paraphrasing to introduce sentence transformation patterns. Teachers, as well as learners, need to have a relatively complete English paraphrasing book, especially according to the bands of the IELTS exams.

Paraphrasing has been around for a long time when the grammar points of languages were systematically constructed, but it has not yet been recognized as a separate category. The most basic and oldest sentence transformation structures are the sentence transformations such as active and passive, indirect and direct sentences, types of comparative sentences about adjectives and adverbs, types of sentences expressing wishes and conditional sentences. In 1957, the American scholar Noam Chomsky officially put forward the generative transformation theory as the initial basis for generative grammar. Since then, the term deep structure, which is finite, can create many surface structures that are infinite, leading to the birth of a new type of exercise in different examinations: Sentence transformation. It was not until the 1990s that sentence transformation became popular in the world. In Vietnam, in 2000, the new sentence transformation officially appeared with a variety of samples in examinations, first of all, the national examination for gifted students. The first authors to compile a book on sentence transformation in Vietnam must include Bach Thanh Minh (in 2000, with about 50 sentence patterns) [1], Le Van Su (in 2000, with about 60 sentence patterns) [12]and Nguyen Hoang Tuan et al. (in 2004 [15], with about 60 sample sentence patterns). However, all of these works only partially or periodically meet the needs of the test on sentence transformation.

Faced with the above situation, with the desire to contribute to language science to meet the learning situation of candidates and students, first of all, the students of Saigon University, we have collected domestic and foreign corpus from examinations, from TOEIC, TOEFL, CEFR books, main structures in IELTS books, to compile a useful reference book for students.

Combining quantitative and qualitative research methods, we have collected data from multiple sources, surveyed student learning, and compiled structures using concise, easy-to-understand formulas. Initial studies show that students learn more effectively, and when polled, all students are satisfied with the knowledge gained from the rough parts of the reference book.

Our research work includes an introduction and a review of the theory and application of the theories of previous scholars as a basis for compiling research. The most important part of the work is the main body of the reference book, including sentence transformation structures. The exercise section helps students practice the structures after they have mastered them. After completing the reference book, we recommend continuing to research the work to expand to the learning and research needs of learners, contributing to the success of the IELTS examinations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Paraphrasing creates new sentence structures that are similar in meaning to deep structures. Paraphrasing sentences or new sentence structures are referred to as surface structures.

Formerly, sentence structure in transformed languages focused on the voice category: active and passive. The passive sentence in transformed-generative grammar associated with verb transformation is a formal concept of languages.

Direct sentences are likened to original sentences originally spoken or written by someone. The meaning of the original speech is later quoted, but the original sentence structure can be transformed to fit the coherence or context. Compared with the direct structure, the indirect one is very diverse, especially when translated into other languages. People often quote the sayings of famous people according to their own language. Although there is a difference in sentence structure, the ideas are always kept almost exactly with the original meaning.
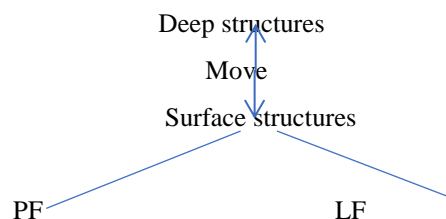
Nowadays, paraphrasing comes into being and becomes more and more popular. In communicative language, so many patterns of sentences appear in pairs or groups, being extended, elaborated, enhanced, etc. and are in use for many social functions.

According to the *On Wh-Movement* developed by Chomski (1957; 1977) [3,4, 5, 6], many languages present a left-right asymmetry in the handling of syntax. So, for example, most displacement theories in English shift elements to the left; Similar examples are questioning, foreclosure, thematic manipulation, and related clause transformation. Nguyen Duc Dan (2012) [13, 14] argued that displacement represents the relationship of elements between two levels, in which an element is moved from one position to another to form a new structure. Accordingly, the principle of "Move-α" means to move a certain category α to a certain place.

We can state some types of displacement such as -NP: Move an NP from position A to a non $-$ θ $-$ marked position A, then the NP will leave at-trace at the position A, called an NP-trace or a move- Wh: The displacement of the "segment-Wh" from position A to the non-A position of a characteristic C will leave a trace- wh (wh-trace) at the position A or shift-V: Displacing a V to INFL (inflection) and a V_I to the center of a segment C. Move is performed in different contexts, but The basic thing is that the original meaning does not change.

Paraphrasing is also explained by Chomsky based on the theory of Government and Binding Theory (1980). [7, 8] GB describes language understanding as a set of interconnected partial theories, including universal principles and parameters applicable to specific languages. In English, GB theory is expressed through the domination of syntactic rules in combining sentences. Deep structures are, in fact, flexibly manipulated to create surface structures according to this theory.

Chomsky's GB theoretical model is expressed as follows:

Deep structures

Move

Surface structures

PF   LF

Notes: PF: Pronunciation form

LF: Logic form

Paraphrasing ideas from one structure to another use the appropriate Tertium Comparationis. Sentence structures must be based on equivalence to paraphrase. Bui Manh Hung (2008) [2] proposed Tertium Comparationis as the foundation for paraphrasing one sentence to another. According to Bui Manh Hung, debates about TC types often revolve around equivalence types. To date, the equivalence types as determined by Bui Manh Hung (2008) [2] seem to be the most diverse. He used the concept of "2-text", defined as any two texts, written or spoken, that express the same idea, despite having different structures are called equivalent.

Up to now, Vietnamese authors have compiled a number of books on English paraphrasing, also known as sentence transformation. Leading in this field is Le Van Su [12] with the book "Exercise on transforming English sentences" (1999). In his book, he offers about 50 samples of paraphrased sentences in the form of essays. The book is presented in a dynamic and easy-to-understand manner, but in an impromptu fashion, not in a morphologically or syntactically appropriate sequence. In 2000, Bach Thanh Minh [1] compiled "Exercise on changing English sentences". Basically, this book has

things in common with Le Van Su's book, but more in terms of structure (about 60). In 2004, the National University of Ho Chi Minh City Publishing House released a book of guidelines for studying English for master's and graduate students' examinations, including about 60 sentence transformation structures by Nguyen Hoang Tuan. Several other authors who have compiled preparatory books have also devoted a portion of their books to sentence transformation structures. These books all offer practical sentence structures and are not based on linguistic theories. These structural samples are only used for internal examinations, so the number is too small to meet the test needs of candidates in national and international examinations such as IELTS ones.

Once we have collected the relatively sufficient corpus, we proceed to teach, and it is through the teaching process with a new method that we have adjusted the presentation of this corpus. In teaching, we have paid special attention to students' second language acquisition.

Acquiring a second language is a major research work on foreign language teaching published by Stephen Krashen at the end of the last century. According to Stephen Krashen [11], most foreign language classes today, as in the past, with little concern for the findings of modern research in applied linguistics and experimental field theories of second language acquisition. Teachers have done damage to students when they use outdated or untested ideas as the basis of their pedagogy. To date, there has been no empirical research on paraphrasing sentences associated with second language acquisition theory as well as a teaching method consistent with this theory.

The rationale for now widely accepted foreign language teaching program and practice stems from cognitive psychology, which can be helpful in explaining some learning processes, but " has not yet been correlated with linguistic and social theories of language and acquisition and discovery through the study of second language acquisition". Stephen Krashen's [11] theory of second language acquisition, which consists of five hypotheses about how we learn and use a second language, has been tested and supported by numerous studies in many different contexts.

The grammar-translation method is outdated. If this method is applied, students will passively absorb, and the efficiency will be low. Students need to be active and creative in learning. Communicative language teaching is a modern method suitable for the current integration trend. However, following this method, the effectiveness of teaching and learning has not been promoted at the highest level.

Based on the second language acquisition theory, we have conducted the procedures of 3 steps: Presentation-Practice-Production. In sequence, we give two paraphrased sentences for students to identify

(know); they are asked to analyze to understand two sentence structures that have the same meaning; they discuss to come up with the formulas of the two structures and finally give their own examples of this paraphrased pair of sentences (application). The teacher only gives each sample sentence during the teaching process, then guides, monitors, and motivates the students to take the steps. Students work in groups and have a competition between groups to find the paraphrased formula for each pair of sentences and apply this knowledge to create other pairs of sentences. This is a creative application. Our focus is on the dynamic practice of teaching and learning this subject. In particular, due to its focus on examination preparation, former books are not concerned with educating students on the concepts from lower levels. As a result, in the beginning, students hardly have access to these concepts of sentence paraphrasing.

Applying linguistic theories on sentence paraphrasing of domestic and foreign scholars, and based on previously compiled documents on sentence paraphrasing by Vietnamese authors, and books TOEIC, TOEFL, CEFR, especially the books used in IELTS, we have the base and invaluable corpus to conduct this research.

Paraphrasing began to attract our attention some decades ago; however, nowadays, it is popular and is used to make our writing and speaking more and more diverse. Our research has tried to apply many materials to collect sentence patterns and explain and teach them.

3. METHOD

Combining quantitative and qualitative research methods, we have collected data from multiple sources, surveyed student learning, and compiled structures using concise, easy-to-understand formulas. Initial studies show that students learn more effectively, and when polled, all students are satisfied with the knowledge gained from the rough parts of the reference book.

A qualitative method is used to identify the equivalence between the pairs of sentence patterns. Linguistic theories are applied to analyzing and comparing the similarities of the semantic forms, syntactic clauses and sentences.

We conduct research by a quantitative method: based on the finite deep structures of sentence patterns to collect many surface structures of actual sentence patterns. During the data collection process, we also tested the methods of teaching these sentence patterns in the Writing skills development class 1 of second-year students at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Saigon University. During the actual teaching process, we have the opportunity to adjust the sentence patterns in a more concise way.

Some teachers emphasize the importance of checking understanding in the process of teaching new

structures and lexis, particularly through the use of concept questions. Then they have attempted to challenge the traditional model of lecturing with a prescriptive approach, viewing lecturing as a set of skills that can be mastered.

The approach of 3 steps: Presentation-Practice-Production is applied to our teaching, and the summary of lesson activities in a three-step procedure are as follows:

Presentation →Practice →Production

Teacher   Students Students

Notes: In this diagram, we see the role of the instructor in the first stage. In the other stages, students are the most active.

4. RESULTS

We first sample sentences from books by Vietnamese authors because these sentence patterns are simple, easy to understand and at the same time orient us to collect other samples from foreign books. We then collect sentence transformation samples from foreign examinations. These sentence patterns are more diverse and more difficult than those in Vietnamese books. The most corpus we have is extracted from foreign books such as TOEIC, TOEFL, CEFR and especially books on IELTS. It was the IELTS books that suggested to us how to arrange the sentences from easy to difficult in ascending bands: 3.0- 3.5 - 4.0 - 5.0 - 6.5 - 7.5 - 8.5 - 9.0. These sentence patterns have been practically taught and widely applied around the world, but no one has collected and compiled them into a condensed but relatively complete book.

Compared with previous books on English paraphrasing, our research will achieve certain achievements. In particular, these sentence patterns are arranged scientifically according to the syntactic order, on the basis of modern linguistic theories, and especially of IELTS bands. Along with these sentence transformation samples, we have proposed an approach to conduct teaching or self-study.

With 920 sentence transformation samples that we have collected mainly in IELTS books, it is certainly not possible to list all the sentence patterns in English. But these sentence patterns cover all the general sentence transformation structures in English and guide students on how to deal with other patterns once encountering them. Students must understand the deep sentence patterns, and from these structures, they can convert into surface sentence structures flexibly. With the proposed and tested process method, we believe that teaching and learning sentence transformation becomes easier, especially for students who can learn other sentence transformation patterns on their own outside of the classroom.

920 sentence patterns are arranged in order of primary, pre-intermediate, intermediate, upper-intermediate and advanced levels.

Elementary structures:

1. **Have ➜ There Be**

   Does your class have twenty-five students?

   Are there twenty-five students in your class?

2. **There + Be + N + Place ➜ N + Be + Place**

   There are ten rooms in the house.

   Ten rooms are in the house.

30. No ➜ Not any

There are no books on the shelf.

There are not many books on the shelf.

42. S + V + … - S + V + … ➜ S + V + … - So + V + S

He learns English. I learn English.

He learns English. So do I.

89. Both … and ➜Not only … but also

He is both poor and lazy.

Not only is he poor but also lazy.

Pre-intermediate structures:

100. Thing + Need + V-ing ➜They + Should have + Thing + V-ED

The door needs painting.

They should have the door painted.

149. What is the number of ➜ How many

What is the number of pigs?

How many pigs are there?

158. So ➜ Because

     Because ➜ So

Because he is poor, he can't study English.

He is poor so he can't study English.

Intermediate structures:

188. **Because + clause ➜ For + phrase**

They went to the park because they wanted to walk.

They went to the park for a walk.

217. It + take + O + time + To V ➜S + spend + time + V-ING

It took her three hours to watch the film.

She spent three hours watching the film.

280. It + Be + time's N ➜It + take + O + time + To V

It's an hour's drive.

It takes her an hour to drive.

321. **Comparative ➔ Positive**

Jack is taller than Peter.

Peter is not as tall as Jack.

353. Conditional sentence ➔In case of

If there is an emergency, call the police.

In case of emergency call the police.

418. The first time ➔ Be not used to V-ING

This is the first time that I have eaten durian.

I am not used to eating durian.

442. **S + V + ... + Time ➔It + Take + O + Time + To Inf ...**

I watched the film in two hours.

It took me two hours to watch the film.

538. **Inversion with adverb clause of time: no sooner … than**

He had no sooner come back than he had to return to the front.

No sooner had he come back than he had to return to the front.

583. **Never ➔ Superlative degree**

He has never watched such a good film.

This is the best film that he has ever watched.

Upper-intermediate structures:

618. **Should +V ➔It's (high) time**

He should wash his clothes today.

It's high time he washed his clothes today.

650. **Main Clause. However… ➔ Although/Though clause, main clause**

Mike graduated with a good degree. However, he joined the ranks of the unemployed.

Although Mike graduated with a good degree, he joined the ranks of the unemployed.

733. The moment ➔ As soon as

The moment he went home, he rushed into the kitchen.

He rushed into the kitchen as soon as he went home.

750. Noun ➔ Noun clause (Subject)

The cause of the fire is still unknown.

What caused the fire is still unknown.

Advanced structures:

814. **Place phrase ➔Adj. Clause**

The New World is the place for tourists to stay comfortably.

The New World is the place where tourists can stay comfortably.

872. **Several Simple sentences ➔One Simple sentence with the mixed phrase**

The sunset. The fog became thicker. The leader ordered the guerrillas. They secretly crawled to the barracks.

At sunset, in the thick fog, the guerrillas obeying the leader's order secretly crawled to the barracks.

902. **Finite clause + reason ➔ Why + finite clause**

He met her for money.

Why he met her is for money.

The collection of 920 sentence patterns have been taught at Sai Gon University via the method of three Ps: Presentation – Practice – Production. The students can absorb these patterns easily, and they have not been obsessed by the transformation of sentences. How they will teach this new-born subject after they have graduated from university has not been their worry. Then they will surely make their contribution to teaching English paraphrasing in our country.

5. CONCLUSION

Our research is a summary of what we have already known from books and examinations, mainly IELTS ones, but it has not been fully collected yet. With limited time, we have not been able to collect all the sentence patterns in English. This is the long and hard work of many people. Moreover, according to the development trend of the times, sentence patterns will become less used, and new ones appear to meet the needs of modern people. Therefore, the continuation of future research on sentence transformation is inevitable.

When conducting data collection for research, we prepare assignments in the form of essays. This is great for developing students' writing skills. However, multiple-choice exercises are also essential to train students' quick reflexes during the exam. Objective tests will help teachers easily mark and test a wide range of students' knowledge and make examinations more diverse. We suggest that we continue to study the multiple-choice sentence transformation exercises in the future. This work will contribute to the completion of our current research.

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