

How Information Transfers in an L2 Integrated Speaking Task

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**Abstract**

Not provided by author.

## **Background**

Summarizing is one of the important academic skills that L2 learners need to master in order to study in higher education settings, where English is used as a medium of the academic communications. In a real world, it would sound inappropriate, if learners try to summarize a lecture or other listening materials by just repeating the same words or sentences that they heard. Rather, they are expected to restructure or reformulate the original contents, using their own words and following a certain discourse structure. The purpose of the present study is to investigate how L2 students reformulate contents of a short academic video clip into their oral summary. Specifically, three different texts will be analyzed to trace how information is transferred from the original video script, to students' notes, and ultimately to their oral summary.

## **Research Questions**

1. What kind of content related information do students' notes and oral summary have from the input listening sources? (comparing the video script with the students' outline notes/ oral summary)
2. How do students elaborate their brief outline into a full-fledged narration? What kind of language features are added or changed in their speech? (comparing students' notes and their speech)

## **Methods**

### **Participants**

Ten level 6 PIE students participated in this study. The population is diverse in terms of nationality: six Brazilians, one Saudi, two Chinese, and one Korean. Their average length of stay in the U.S. is about three months to 15 months and their age ranges from 21 to 28.

## Procedure

As a pre-listening activity, the participants previewed some vocabulary words that they may not know for five minutes. Use of dictionary and the class discussion to figure out the meanings of the words were encouraged. As the participants already knew most of the words on the list, most of them did not use the full five minutes. Then, the participants watched a 4~5minute-long *ted-ed* video clip on Pros and Cons of Public Opinion Polls, an academic animation video, while taking notes on a blank paper. The video was carefully chosen for this research for three reasons: first, the video was simple and brief enough for the students to fully concentrate on; second, the content was fairly academic and information-driven with some content specific noun phrases, such as “interviewer bias,” “push poll,” and “socially desirable answers.”; third, as we can see from the title (Pros and Cons of Public Opinion Polls), the video had a quite clear compare and contrast discourse structure.

## Analysis

**RQ1.** To answer the RQ1 (*What kind of content related information do students’ notes and oral summary have?*), the content related information was operationalized into three different measurements: **1.** discourse level of the information (main topics, sub-topics, major details); **2.** directness of the information (whether the wordings produced by the participants were verbatim or alternative paraphrases); and **3.** linguistic form of the information (words, phrases, or sentences). In the RQ1, the linguistic form of the content information only involves the note taking text, because an oral summary would almost always consist of sentences, if not complete sometimes. In fact, no one would produce only discrete words or phrases in the oral summary speech in academic settings. Further linguistic analysis on note taking and the L2 speech would be addressed more specifically in the RQ2.

As a unit of the analysis, Key Ideas, which refer to main topics, sub-topics, and major details of the input listening text, were counted. First, the list of the Key Ideas was proposed by the researcher according to the discourse level (main topics, sub-topics, and major details). As the focus of this study is to trace what kinds of correct information is reproduced, and how the original listening input is transferred/ recorded to note taking and ultimately to the L2 oral summary, minor details and inaccurate information were excluded. Second, the Key Ideas list was examined by another qualified ESL teacher, and discussed until a consensus was reached on a final list of the 14 Key Ideas in total (see Appendix A). Third, all the key ideas were identified, tallied, and coded manually from the students' notes and speech transcripts according to the discourse level, directness of the information, and the language form. Example 1 is an example of the analysis of a participant's note and speech transcript by Key Idea.

Example 1.

<b>Key Idea #3 Level 2</b>	<b>Text 1 Listening Source</b>	<b>Text 2 Note Taking</b>	<b>Text 3 Speech</b>
There are three sample related problems; too small, too narrow, or too difficult	First, let's start with an important term: sample. A sample is the group of people that respond to questions during a public opinion poll. A poll's quality rests largely on its sample, and <b>a sample can be bad in a few key ways.</b> It can be too small, too narrow, or the poll itself can be too difficult.	Why: 1. sample: small, narrow, difficult	In my opinion, there are three parts. First one is sample. It means they are small, narrow, difficult. <b>Those problems can lead un- really unfair ques.. unfair answers.</b>

**RQ2.** To address the RQ 2 (*How do students elaborate their brief outline into a full-fledged narration? What kind of language features are added or changed from their notes to their speech?*), two different kinds of analyses were used. First, the participants' use of the cohesion devices was explored. The cohesion devices were operationalized into use of

introduction and use of conjunctions, the same way as Kang (2013) did. Inclusion of introduction was further operationalized as whether or not there was an introduction in a response (a dichotomous variable), and use of conjunctions was operationalized by mean occurrences of addition, apposition, result, contrast, and summation (see Table 2). However, the conjunction markers used as fillers were excluded based on the context. Second, the participants' notes and speech transcripts were qualitatively explored to find frequently occurring patterns to develop notes into a fully fledged speech.

### **Results**

#### **RQ1: What kind of content related information do students' notes and oral summary have?**

The content related information in NT and the summary speech was analyzed based on Key Idea as a measurement unit with regards to three different aspects: discourse level of the information (level 1; level 2; level 3); directness of the information (original/paraphrased); linguistic form of the information (word; phrase; sentence). Table 1 shows the mean number of Key ideas covered in NT and summary speech according to the discourse level. In the NT, the average number of Key Ideas included was 5.7 out of the total 14 (41%), while in the summary speech, the mean number of Key Ideas covered was 4 out of the total 14 (28.57%). This shows that the participants did not address all the Key Ideas written on their notes; instead they seemed to have decided to drop off some of the Key Ideas, especially the Level 3 ones, as the number of Level 3 Key Ideas went down from 2.7 out of the total 5 (54%) in the NT to only 1.5 out of the total 5 (37.5 %). This may have been caused by the lack of time as the given time for the summary speech was 1 to 2 minutes.

Table 1

*Mean Number of Key Ideas in NT and Summary Speech by Discourse Level*

Key Idea Level (#)	NT Number of Key Ideas		Summary Speech Number of Key Ideas	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>%</i>
Level 1 (4)	1.4	35%	1.3	32.5 %
Level 2 (5)	1.6	32%	1.2	30 %
Level 3 (5)	2.7	54%	1.5	37.5 %
Total (14)	5.7	41%	4	28.57 %

Regarding the directness of the information, about 60% (3.4/5.7) of the mean number of the total Key Ideas in the participants' notes was the verbatim of the input listening text, and the rest 40% (2.3/5.7) was somewhat paraphrased, if not perfectly accurate. This tendency was similar in the oral summary speech, in that 62.5% (2.5/4) of the mean number of the total Key Ideas mentioned in speech was verbatim, with the rest 37.5% (1.5/4) being alternatively rephrased.

As to the linguistic form of the Key Ideas in NT, only 5% (.3/5.7) of the mean number of the total Key Ideas was written in the form of single words, whereas 58% (3.3/5.7) was written in phrases and the rest 37% (2.1/5.7) was written in sentences. To sum up, it is noted that most of the Key Ideas on the notes were written either in phrases (58%) or sentences (37%), and the singles words (5%) were minimally used. Although phrases were the most popularly used linguistic form in the NT, still many students seemed to use full sentences for NT purposes.

**RQ2: How do students elaborate their brief outline into a full-fledged narration? What kinds of language features are added or changed from their notes to their speech?**

To answer the RQ2, two different kinds of analysis were implemented. First cohesion devices that the participants used were calculated. These cohesive devices were further operationalized as inclusion of introduction and use of conjunctions (i.e. addition, apposition, result, contrast, and summation). Second, the participants' notes and speech transcripts were qualitatively examined, and six frequently occurring patterns were found, which were used as devices to develop Key Ideas in the NT into a speech.

**Cohesive Devices.** The analysis of the introduction showed that 70% of the participants included introduction before they give a summary of the input listening. This means that most students gave a purposeful overarching statement to orient their summary in a more coherent fashion. Next, the conjunction devices analysis showed that the average number of conjunctions used per speech was 5. Table 2 shows that 54% (2.7/5) of the total use of the conjunction uses were on addition, followed by apposition (20%), and result (16%). Conjunctions on contrast and summation were only marginally used, with 6% (.3/5) and 4% (.2/5) respectively.

Table 2.

*Mean Number of Conjunctions Used in Summary Speech by Type*

Type	Examples	mean	%
Addition	<i>first(ly), second(ly), third(ly) (etc.), in the first/ second place, first of all, for one thing, for another thing (, to begin with, next, and, and also, or, nor, in addition, additionally, further, furthermore, moreover, add to that, finally, lastly, in the end</i>	2.7	54
Apposition	<i>for example, for instance, e.g., in other words, that is</i>	1	20
Result	<i>Therefore, consequently, as a result, thus, so</i>	.8	16
Contrast	<i>on the other hand, in contrast, alternatively, however, yet, but, though, although, even though, conversely, on the contrary, instead</i>	0.3	6
Summation	<i>in sum, to conclude, in conclusion</i>	0.2	4
Total		5	100



**Frequently added/ changed language features.** The closer examination of the note taking (NT) and the summary speech transcripts revealed the five frequently occurring lexicogrammatical patterns which were used to build the brief NT into a fully grown speech:

1. Copular *be* + \_\_\_\_\_
  - A. Ordinal number + *be* + \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. \_\_\_\_\_ + *copular be* + *the ordinal number (thing/one)* + (*relative clause*)
2. There is/ there are \_\_\_\_\_
3. S+V+ \_\_\_\_\_
4. Lexical form changes: noun → (modal)+ verb
5. Adding discourse markers/ adverbials

Example 2.

*Copular be: The ordinal number + copular be + \_\_\_\_\_*

*; \_\_\_\_\_ + copular be + the ordinal number (thing/one) + (relative clause)*

NT	Speech
3. push poll: make bad/good sense to people	So the last one is <u>push poll</u> , it means interviewers who always <u>make bad or good sense to people</u> , to give attend to people who want to enjoy, who want to engage in the polls. So, when answer the questions, we have to think about what...
2. Interviewer bias- interviewer can interfere	<u>Interview bias is the second uh, thing</u> , that can change the answers, the results.

Example 4.

*There are + number of points + (relative clauses)*

Note	Speech
Too sample 1. Too small 2. Too narrow 3. Too difficult	<u>There are three reasons here.</u> The first one is usually too small and the second one is usually too narrow and the third is too difficult
1. Sample too small, narrow, difficult	Uh, <u>there's uh, three reasons why it happens.</u> First, uh, sample was, there's a problem with the sample. Too small, or too narrow, or too difficult.

Example 5.

*S+V+\_\_\_\_\_ (objective slot)*

Note	Speech
society desirable response	Um People who are interviewed by interviewers may be have <u>society desirable response</u> so they may not answer what they want to ask, and answer what they want to answer.
Who is asking and why	uh, the speaker, finally saying that if you want to answer some research, you have to ask him <u>why you answer these and for what.</u>
Who? Why?	So, if you participate in a poll, you need to, to see <u>who is asking you, what they want to you to answer, and why they want it.</u> And you think you will before you answer the poll because it may be influenced by some results.

Example 6.

*Lexical form changes (noun → modal +verb)*

Note	Speech
Variety of public diff. ages, gender	So , it may vary at, vary at the, <u>the public</u> , of different ages, genders, and some things like that.

### **Relevance to PIE and Second Language Learning**

Apparently, the L2 learners seemed to be able to skillfully link ideas in the NT to give a more coherently restructured spoken text in their oral summary. However, it appears that the learners may need to work more on flexible language uses, as some of their paraphrased or alternative wordings were not exactly correct; sometimes, the participants did not appear to give enough background information when connecting different ideas. Teachers in the PIE may want to spend more time teaching how to when students summarize academic lectures, encouraging alternative wordings and paraphrases.

### Related Readings

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