The Effect of Proficiency and Task Type on the Use of Paraphrase Type in Writing among Iranian EFL University Students

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Abstract—Academic writers use paraphrasing as an important borrowing strategy when integrating source text into their writing. To have a better understanding of L2 university students' paraphrasing strategies, the present study examines how language proficiency and the type of writing task (summary tasks vs. opinion tasks) affect students' use of paraphrase type: near copy, minimal revision, moderate revision, and substantial revision. The participants of the study were 127 EFL learners at 3 different levels of proficiency (44 advanced, 42 high intermediate, and 41 low intermediate). They were given a text based on which they were asked to do a writing task. In each proficiency group, half of the participants were asked to summarize the source text (ie., to do a summary task) and the other half were required to write their opinions about the text (i.e., to do an opinion task). The assignment of the tasks to individuals was done randomly. The participants' use of attempted paraphrases within the summary and opinion tasks was compared. It was found that the advanced group used more attempted paraphrases in their writing. In addition, the participants who did the summary task used more attempted paraphrases than those who did the opinion task. Furthermore, low and high intermediate groups used more near copies than the advanced group. Conversely, the advanced participants used more minimal, moderate, and substantial revisions than the other two groups. However, task type appeared to have no effect on the use of paraphrase type.

Index Terms—paraphrase type, minimal revision, moderate revision, substantial revision

I. INTRODUCTION

Academic writers in any field of study have to synthesize written ideas from background sources including journal articles, books, and interviews (mentioned in Keck, 2006). The locus of research in these areas has been investigating how academic writers integrate source texts into their writing (Currie, 1998; Scollon, 1995; Spack, 1997; Yamada, 2003; John & Mayes, 1990; Pecorari, 2003; Sherard, 1986; Shi, 2004; Tardy, 2010; Tomas, 2010; to name a few). The results have shown that many academic writers copy source texts exactly and put them into their writing without paraphrasing them. That is why many researchers including Tylor (1984), Campbell (1990), Currie (1998), Howard (1996), Hyland (2001), Shi (2004 and 2012), and Roig (2001) have emphasized incorporating the instruction of paraphrasing into pedagogical programs. The issue gains more significance considering the plethora of internet-based writing resources available to university students (Keck, 2006).

Research shows that while writing a summary, L2 learners usually tend to copy the material from the source text rather than paraphrase it. This tendency to copy is partly due to the nature of the task of writing which requires high level of linguistic knowledge and the ability to paraphrase on the part of the writer (Shi, 2004, Shi, 2012, and Leki & Carson, 1997). Pennycook (1996) examined the relationship between text, memory, and learning in a Chinese context. He asked his first-year undergraduate English majors to write a brief biography of a famous person. He found that the students copied biographies from original sources.

Brown and Day (1983) investigated the summary writing of 18 fifth grade, 16 seventh grade, 13 tenth grade native English speaking students, and 20 freshman college students. They used two expository texts in the three experiments as source texts. The results of their study indicated that all participants employed deletion rules in their writing; that is, they deleted trivial or redundant material. The only common rule that freshman college students used repeatedly was to combine the chunks of words across different paragraphs. However, younger subjects (fifth and seventh grade native English speaking students) rarely employed the rule due to their low level of linguistic knowledge. Accordingly, the researchers concluded that the copy-delete strategy is easy to use because it requires no more information and manipulation of the source text on the part of the learner.

Pecorari (2003) examined the writing task of 17 postgraduate students who used a source text in their doctoral theses. She compared the students' writings to the original source in order to see to what extent they copied the source text to their writings. She found that almost all the writers (16) had at least one passage in their writing in which they had copied more than 5% of the words used in the source text without introducing them as direct quotations. The majority of the writers (13) copied over 70% of the source text and a few (3) copied exactly (100%) one or more passages from the source text.

Research has also shown that there is a relationship between language proficiency and textual borrowing strategies. For example, Johns (1985) compared the summaries of 128 native students at three different proficiency levels. The results of the study showed that the students at the low level used copying as a major strategy in their summaries. However, high level students used paraphrasing as a strategy in their summaries; that is, they used synonyms and changed the structure of the sentences in their writing.

Kennedy (1985) investigated how six college writers used the assigned reading source texts. The participants were asked to write an objective essay based on three articles about communication in their own words. Having analyzed the essays, Kennedy found that the writers directly copied strings of words from the source texts into their essays. In addition, she noticed that the students with a high proficiency level employed more strategies including indirect copying strategy (that is, they changed the grammatical structure or wording of the sentences) when incorporating the source texts into their writing. However, less proficient students copied directly some parts of the source text.

Johns and Mayes (1990) examined summary protocols of ESL students (40 low proficient and 40 advanced or high proficient) to see how they summarized the texts at the sentence level. The analysis of the summaries revealed that low proficiency students produced more direct replications of the source text than the high proficiency group. The researchers claimed that low proficiency students directly copied more strings of words from the source text because they had not acquired deletion rules adequately and, due to their low level of proficiency, they were not able to paraphrase the source text while integrating it into their summaries.

Sherrard (1986) investigated summaries of expository texts that were obtained from 10 undergraduate Social Science students to explore the strategies they used while summarizing the source texts in their writing. She used the orthographic sentence as the basic unit of analysis and concentrated on the sentence by sentence construction of the summary in order to see how the text was edited and compressed into a reduced form. The strategies commonly employed by all the writers were omission, one-to-one mapping, combination of text-sentence pairs, triples, and quadruples (that is, combining two, three and four text sentences, respectively) into a single summary sentence. In addition, she found that there was a great tendency among the writers to omit text sentences or single sentences in the original text rendered into summary sentences. The researcher also noticed that although there was little exact word-for-word retention, the students' paraphrases did not extend to rearranging by topic or to much combining across paragraphs.

Campbell (1990) examined textual borrowing strategies in the expository writing of 30 L1 and L2 students (20 ESL and 10 native English speakers) to see how they synthesized the source text. The students were required to complete an in-class writing task in which they were free to use source information. Although the students used quotations, exact copies, paraphrases, and summaries in their writing, a major strategy used by all the students was copying.

In addition to proficiency level, a few studies have shown the effect of task type on the extent to which student writers borrow chunks of language from the source text while writing summaries. Shi (2004) compared the type and the amount of textual borrowing in the summary and opinion writing tasks of 87 students (48 Chinese ESL and 39 native English speakers). She analyzed the students' written tasks to identify how they integrated the source texts into their writing. She identified combinations of words which contained two content words as a unit of textual borrowing; in contrast, combinations of one content word and a functional word were not considered as a unit of textual borrowing. The students' writing were also examined to see whether the strings of borrowed words were exact copies, they were modified slightly by adding or deleting words or using synonyms, or they were closely paraphrased. The results revealed a little difference between the two groups in the opinion task. In addition, the Chinese participants who did the summary task wrote longer essays than the other group of Chinese who wrote the opinion task and the native English speaking students who did the summary task employed much fewer words than their English peers who did the opinion task.

Keck (2006) compared L1 and L2 writers' use of paraphrase in summary writing. The participants in her study were 165 undergraduate university students (79 native English speakers, 12 bilinguals, and 74 ESOL). They were asked to read a source text and write a one-paragraph summary. The results of the study revealed that all the participants used paraphrasing as a major strategy. In fact, they used more paraphrases than exact copies in their summary writing. L2 writers also showed a great tendency to copy the material from the source text whereas L1 and bilingual writers moderately or substantially paraphrased the source text while incorporating it into their writing. Moreover, L2 writers used exact copies more than the other two groups. Finally, it was found that paraphrase was used more frequently than exact copy by both L1 and bilingual writers. Furthermore, Keck (2014) compared L1 and L2 writers' summarization practices to see their use of copying and paraphrase strategies and found that L2 writers used copying at "a higher rate". In addition, less experienced writers tend to depend on the source text more than experienced writers.

The above review of literature shows that research on summary writing and paraphrasing in L2 suffers from a few shortcomings. Primarily, very few studies have investigated the impact of the student writers' language proficiency on the extent to which they paraphrase source texts or exactly copy the material from the text to their writing. Furthermore, the majority of these studies have merely investigated paraphrasing in summary writing but not in other writing tasks. By the same token, very few studies have investigated the effect of task type on paraphrasing. Although research findings indicate that language proficiency and task type are influential factors in paraphrasing, no study has investigated the effect of the interaction of the two factors on paraphrasing. Finally, most the studies in this area have examined the writings of a limited number of participants which may be said to have adversely affected the

generalizability of the results of the studies. The present study is an attempt to fill the aforementioned gaps and to avoid the pitfalls in the research done in this area. In effect, the present study mainly aims at investigating the effect of language proficiency level and task type on the use of paraphrase type by Iranian EFL students. In accordance with the above objective, the study aims at answering the following research questions:

1. Do proficiency level and task type influence Iranian EFL learners' use of paraphrasing vs. copying when they incorporate a source text into their writing?

2. Do level of proficiency and task type influence Iranian EFL learners' use of different paraphrase types when they incorporate a source text into their writing?

II. Method

Participants

One hundred twenty seven EFL Iranian university students (47 males and 80 females) from three different universities participated in the study. They were members of intact classes. All the participants had already passed a course in advanced writing and were participating a course in essay writing at the time of the experiment. They ranged from 22 to 26 years of age.

Instruments

The first instrument used in the study was Oxford Placement Test employed to determine the students' levels of proficiency. In addition, two expository texts titled *Physician Can or Cannot Ethically Assist in Suicide* taken from Biskup and Wekesser (1992) (see Appendix A for the texts) were used as the source text in the study. Shi (2004) also used the same text as the source material in her study. The appropriateness of the texts for the purpose of the study was confirmed by two experienced university professors. The reason for the use of pre-selected source texts was the easy identification of different types of paraphrases by juxtaposing students' writings with the original texts.

Finally, a semi-structured interview was used to collect answers to the following questions from a sample of the participants (30 students):

1. To what extent did you copy strings of words from/paraphrase the original text?

2. Why did you do so?

3. If you copied strings of word from the original text, did you know you were plagiarizing?

Data collection procedure

The participants first took the Oxford Placement Test, which took them about 35 minutes to complete. Then all the participants were given two expository texts. However, in each class, half of the students were asked to read the texts and to do a summary task based on them and the other half were similarly asked to read the texts but subsequently write an opinion task in which they were supposed to write their opinions about the text.

In order to identify what counts as a paraphrase and a paraphrase type, Keck's (2006) paraphrase scheme was utilized. Table 1 illustrates the paraphrase type classification.

TABLE 1
ATTEMPTED PARAPHRASE CLASSIFICATION

Near copy	50% or more words in the paraphrase contained unique links
Minimal Revision	20%- 49% words in the paraphrase contained unique links
Moderate Revision	1- 19% words in the paraphrase contained unique links
Substantial revision	no unique links observed in the paraphrase

In the above table, the term attempted paraphrase refers to the strings of words within a student summary or opinion task which (a) are based upon source text and (b) contain at least one word level change. Word level change has been defined as changes in word choice (e.g., synonym, substitution, replacement of word function with another), or word class (e.g., changing the noun form to its adjective form). This scheme, nonetheless, does not include changes in punctuation, grammatical number, and subject verb agreement as an attempted paraphrase.

In addition, the term unique links refer to individual lexical words (e.g., nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs), or exactly copied string of words that appear in a paraphrase and that do not frequently occur in the original text; general links refer to lexical words that appear in a paraphrase and we can find them frequently in the original text.

To identify instances of attempted paraphrases, the two researchers analyzed a random sample of twelve written summaries and opinion tasks; this initial method of analysis was also used by Sherrard (1986), Shi (2004), and Keck (2006). They followed each orthographic sentence in students' summary and opinion tasks and mapped them to the original source text to find the instances of attempted paraphrases. They also decided on starting and ending points of a paraphrase, i.e., where a paraphrase started and ended in the summary and opinion tasks. Moreover, they decided on whether the identified instances were attempted paraphrase or not. The inter-rater reliability for the tow coders was 0.93.

After the accomplishment of the experiment, in order to triangulate the results obtained from the statistical analysis of the data, the students were interviewed. As mentioned above, a sample of 30 students who had done either of the two tasks (15 from each) volunteered to participate in the interview. In this sample, 15 belonged to those who had accomplished the opinion task and 15 belonged to those who had accomplished the summary task. In the opinion group, 8 were advanced and 7 low intermediate; similarly, in summary group, 8 were advanced and 7 low intermediate. The

reason why the high intermediate group was not taken into account was that, as the results of the study mentioned in the following parts of this paper show, the results for the high intermediate group were not consistent. That is, their performance was sometimes similar to that of advanced group and sometimes to the low intermediate group. Hence, the two groups who were at the two extremes were interviewed.

The first researcher interviewed each student individually for about 5 minutes and asked them the three questions mentioned above. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed for further analysis.

Data analysis

To calculate the mean number of unique and general links, the total number of words in unique and general links was divided by the number of words in attempted paraphrases. Then, these two percentages were added for each attempted paraphrase and the total percentage was put into the taxonomy of the paraphrase type. A two-way ANOVA was run to identify the effect of students' level of proficiency and task types on the mean number of attempted paraphrases in the students' writing tasks; it was also run to show if the interaction between proficiency level and task type would affect the mean number of attempted paraphrases. Moreover, a test of MANOVA was used to show the effect of proficiency level and task type on different paraphrase types.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question One

Do level of proficiency and task type influence how frequently the Persian EFL learners use paraphrases while incorporating a source text into their writing?

In order to answer research question one, a two-way analysis of variance was run. Table 2 illustrates the results of the test.

As the results show, proficiency level (F= 70.90, $p<0.01$), task type (F= 15.31, $p<0.01$), and their interaction (F= 12.10, $p<0.01$) have influenced the mean number of attempted paraphrases used by the participants. Hence, the answer to research question one is yes. Further analysis of the mean number of paraphrases used by different proficiency levels and in different task types delineates the effect of these two factors.

TABLE 2
TWO-WAY ANOVA FOR THE EFFECT OF PROFICIENCY AND TASK ON PARAPHRASING

Independent variable	F	P
Proficiency	70.90	0.00
Task	15.31	0.00
Proficiency*Task	12.10	0.00

Table 3 represents the mean number of attempted paraphrases for the three proficiency levels.

TABLE 3
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR THE ATTEMPTED PARAPHRASE USED BY DIFFERENT PROFICIENCY LEVELS

Prof. level	N	Mean	SD
Advanced	44	7.22	3.42
High interm.	42	3.45	1.92
Low interm.	41	1.97	1.38

According to Table 3, the mean for the attempted paraphrase used by the advanced level students is higher than that of the high intermediate ones (7.22 and 3.45, respectively); the mean of the attempted paraphrased used by the high intermediate students, in turn, is higher than that of the low intermediate students (1.97). The results of the scheffe post hoc test showed that all these differences were significant ($p<0.01$).

The results are in line with those of Keck (2006) who found that the level of language proficiency of the learners affected their use of attempted paraphrase.

Table 4 shows the mean and standard deviations of the mean of attempted paraphrase for the two task types.

TABLE 4
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR THE ATTEMPTED PARAPHRASE USED IN THE TWO TASK TYPES

Task	Mean	S D	N
opinion	3.45	2.05	64
summary	5.12	3.92	63

As the data in the table reveal, the mean for the summary task is higher than that of the opinion task. In other words, the participants used more attempted paraphrases in writing the summaries than the opinion tasks. A likely explanation for this phenomenon can be the fact that in doing the summary task the students had to incorporate ideas from the source text, so they paraphrased the sentences. On the other hand, while doing the opinion task, they had to use their own ideas, so their reliance on the source text was lower and, as a result, fewer attempted paraphrases were observed in this task.

In order to see if the above speculation is right or a lower mean for attempted paraphrases in the opinion task means that the students have used copying strategy more than paraphrasing, the sentences in which there were no attempted paraphrases were analyzed. Table 5 illustrates the mean number of sentences in the opinion task that have been either copied from the source text or represent the students' own ideas.

TABLE 5
T-TEST FOR THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEAN OF COPIED SENTENCES AND IDEA ONES IN THE OPINION TASK

Proficiency level	Mean of copied sentences	Mean of idea sentences
Advanced	0.00	3.80*
High interm.	0.33	1.96*
Low interm.	1.81	0.45*
Total	2.14	6.21*

As Table 5 illustrates, on the whole, in the opinion task, the mean number of sentences representing the students' own ideas is significantly higher than the sentences copied from the source text. The same is true with respect to the advanced and high intermediate group; in the low intermediate proficiency level, on the other hand, the mean number of copied sentences is more than the idea ones.

These results are in line with those of Shi (2004) who found that Chinese students borrowed more chunks of words when they were writing summaries.

As mentioned above, the interaction of proficiency and task type turned out to influence significantly the use of attempted paraphrases. A follow-up one-way Analysis of Variance was run to examine the effect of proficiency on the attempted paraphrases for each task type. The results are presented in Table 6.

TABLE 6
ANOVA FOR THE EFFECT OF PROFICIENCY ON ATTEMPTED PARAPHRASE IN OPINION TASK

Proficiency	Mean	SD	F	Sig
Advanced	5.19	1.72	30.39	0.00
High interm.	3.57	1.69		
Low interm.	1.68	0.89		

As Table 6 shows, proficiency level affects significantly the use of attempted paraphrase in the task type (F= 30.39, $p<0.01$). The results of post hoc analysis showed significant differences among all the three groups, indicating that the more advanced the students were, the more they used attempted paraphrases in the opinion task.

Similar results were observed with respect to summary task.

Table 7 illustrates the results of ANOVA for the summary task.

TABLE 7
ANOVA FOR THE EFFECT OF PROFICIENCY ON ATTEMPTED PARAPHRASE IN SUMMARY TASK

Proficiency	Mean	SD	F	Sig
Advanced	9.08	3.21	45.83	0.00
High interm.	3.33	2.17		
Low interm.	2.31	1.76		

As the results reveal, for the summary task, too, the higher the proficiency level, the more attempted paraphrases the participants have used (F=45.83, $p<0.00$). Nonetheless, the results of post hoc analysis showed significant difference between the advanced level students and the other two proficiency groups; nonetheless, no significant difference was observed between high intermediate and low intermediate groups. This indicates that for the summary task, unlike the opinion task, the participants rely more on the original text and that is why only the very highly proficient learners use a significant number of attempted paraphrases while this difference is not significant between the lower proficiency levels.

Research Question Two

Do level of proficiency and task type have an influence on using paraphrase types while incorporating a source text into their writing?

In order to answer the second research question, a test of MANOVA was run. The results are presented in Table 8.

TABLE 8
RESULTS OF MANOVA FOR THE EFFECT OF PROFICIENCY AND TASK TYPE ON PARAPHRASE TYPE

Independent variable	Dependent variable	F	Sig.
Proficiency	Near copy	19.90	0.00
	Minimal revision	42.61	0.00
	Moderate revision	44.86	0.00
	Substantial revision	31.09	0.00
Task type	Near copy	2.24	0.13
	Minima revision	0.78	0.37
	Moderate revision	2.63	0.10
	Substantial revision	3.20	0.07
Proficiency*task	Near copy	0.67	0.51
	Minimal revision	2.22	0.11
	Moderate revision	3.82	0.02
	Substantial revision	8.49	0.00

As the results show, proficiency level affects significantly the use of all the four paraphrase types. Nonetheless, task type does not affect any one of them. That is, no difference was found between different paraphrase types with respect to the task type. The interaction of proficiency and task type, however, turned out to affect the use of moderate revision and substantial revision but not the other two paraphrase types.

As for the main effect of proficiency level on paraphrase type, the means and standard deviations are presented in Table 9.

TABLE 9
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR THE USE OF PARAPHRASE TYPE IN DIFFERENT PROFICIENCY LEVELS

Paraphrase type	Proficiency	Mean	SD
Near copy	Advanced	0.53	0.14
	High interm.	0.47	0.15
	Low interm.	1.68	0.15
Minima revision	Advanced	3.20	0.20
	High interm.	1.88	0.20
	Low interm.	0.49	0.21
Moderate revision	Advanced	1.86	0.13
	High interm.	0.69	0.14
	Low interm.	0.26	0.14
Substantial revision	Advanced	1.04	0.09
	High interm	0.21	0.10
	Low interm.	0.23	0.10

As the results show, the mean for the near copy in the lower-intermediate level participants is larger than that of the advanced and higher intermediate groups. In other words, the lower their proficiency level, the more the students have copied strings of words from the original text. The results of the post hoc test showed significant difference between the lower-intermediate level participants and the other two groups, but no significant difference was observed between the advanced and the high-intermediate group.

As for other paraphrase types, the results presented in Table 9 above show that the higher proficiency level students have used different paraphrase types more frequently than the other two groups. The results of post hoc test showed that for the minimal revision and moderate revision, there was significant difference among all the three proficiency groups; on the other hand, with respect to substantial revision, significant difference was observed between the advanced group and the other two groups, but no difference was observed between the high and low intermediate levels.

On the whole with respect to the impact of proficiency level on paraphrase type, one can say that, in paraphrasing of any proportion, the students at a high proficiency level outperform those at the lower proficiency levels.

These results are in line with those of Pecorari (2003) who also identified some excerpts in the majority of international students' doctoral theses which indicates that the use of near copy as textual borrowing strategy is not constrained to the undergraduate level or low proficiency level. In addition, these findings are in line with Shi (2004) who discovered that her Chinese participants frequently made use of nearly copied string of words in their summary and opinion tasks. Moreover, Keck (2006) found that international students may be somehow less aware that the use of near copy is unacceptable in many western institutions. These findings are also in line with those of Currie (1998), Howard (1996), John and Mayes (1990), and Shi (2004), who found that language proficiency affects students' decisions to copy from source text.

As mentioned above, the interaction of proficiency and task were found to affect the paraphrase type in two types of revisions, namely, moderate revision and substantial revisions, but not in the other two types. A follow-up test of MANOVA was run to find the effect of proficiency on these two paraphrase types in summary and opinion tasks. Table 10 represents the effect of proficiency on the two paraphrase types in opinion task.

TABLE 10
ANOVA FOR THE EFFECT OF PROFICIENCY ON PARAPHRASE TYPE IN OPINION TASK

Paraphrase type	Proficiency	Mean	SD	F	Sig.
Moderate revision	Advanced	1.42	0.13	13.16	0.00
	High interm.	0.76	0.83		
	Low interm.	0.00	0.00		
Substantial revision	Advanced	0.61	0.86	4.91	0.01
	High interm	0.33	0.73		
	Low interm.	0.00	0.00		

As the results indicate, for the opinion task proficiency influences the use of both moderate (F=13.16, *p*<0.01) and substantial revisions (F= 4.91, *p*<0.05). The results of the post hoc test showed significant difference among all the three proficiency levels. Thus, it can be said that in opinion task there is a linear effect of proficiency on large scale paraphrasing, i.e., moderate and substantial revision. Nonetheless, in minimal revision and copying, there is no difference between the three proficiency level. In fact, as mentioned before, in opinion task, the students' writings contain sentences that represent their own ideas rather than the ideas expressed in the source text. That is why one can see a low number of copied sentences. That is why one cannot see significant difference among the three groups in minimal revision and copying.

Another follow-up ANOVA test was run for the effect of proficiency on paraphrase type in the summary task. The results are presented in Table 11.

TABLE 11
ANOVA FOR THE EFFECT OF PROFICIENCY ON PARAPHRASE TYPE IN SUMMARY TASK

Paraphrase type	Proficiency	Mean	SD	F	Sig.
Moderate revision	Advanced	2.30	1.36	36.27	0.00
	High interm.	0.61	0.58		
	Low interm.	0.05	0.22		
Substantial revision	Advanced	1.47	0.99	35.07	0.00
	High interm	0.09	0.43		
	Low interm.	0.00	0.00		

The results for the summary tasks are, similarly, indicative of the fact that proficiency level affects the use of moderate and substantial revisions in a linear manner and the frequency of the use of these paraphrase types increases as the students become more proficient. The results of post hoc analysis, however, revealed that there was no significant difference between the high and the low intermediate students in using these two paraphrase types. Once more, it can be emphasized that since, in the summary task, the students are more dependent on the original text, only those with a high proficiency level would be more independent of the source text and try to paraphrase it, while the others, even those at an intermediate level, would be more dependent on the original text.

These results are in line with those of Keck (2006) who found that some L2 writers did not use moderate and substantial revisions because their linguistic knowledge was not developed. In addition, the results resemble those of Sherard (1986) in that she found that the use of near copy does not require high proficiency on the part of the students since they delete some elements of the texts and copy the remaining parts in their writing. However, the use of moderate and substantial revisions requires syntactic changes e.g. clause-level change as well as changes in lexis, e.g. substitution and synonym, which are difficult to handle for students at low levels of proficiency.

On the whole the results of the present study are indicative of the fact that both proficiency level and task type affect to what extent the student writers paraphrase the source text while doing a writing task. Concerning the level of proficiency, the findings indicate that more proficient students are more independent of the source text while doing a writing task and try to paraphrase the ideas expressed in the text. This independence of the source text is more conspicuous in the opinion task where the students are supposed to present their own ideas. Here one can see a linear effect of proficiency of the extent to which they paraphrase the source text.

As for the summary task, proficiency level is again a deciding factor; however, the effect is not as strong as the case of the opinion task. Here, only the students with a relatively high proficiency level use significantly more paraphrases as compare to the lower proficient students; this difference is not significant for the high intermediate and low intermediate students. In effect, in summary task, the students have to summarize the source text. This makes less proficient students to sometimes copy sentences from the source text. Hence, one can say that a main reason for plagiarism is the low proficiency level in L2 and too much independence on the source text. The results of the interview with the students will shed more light on these findings.

Research question three: Do students deliberately copy chunks of language from the source text and to what extent?

As mentioned above, in order to see to what extent the inferences made of the quantitative analysis are true, a sample of students were interviewed with respect to whether and to what extent they copied strings of words from the source text and if they knew they were plagiarizing.

In response to the first two questions, i.e., to what extent and why they copied from/paraphrased the source text, the advanced students from the summary group stated that they tried to rewrite and rephrase the main ideas expressed in the source text; they further stated that they copied sentences from the source text very rarely and only when they were not

able to rewrite the original sentence. Of course they stated that copying was mostly at word level and that they did it when they were not able to replace the word in the original text with another one. In addition, they believed that copying a sentence from the source text would jeopardize the coherence of the text. That is why the mean number of near copies for the advanced group turned out to be lower than the low intermediate group. Moreover, they had no idea what plagiarism was; some of them mentioned a main reason why they avoided copying whole sentences from the original text was that the summarized text would lose its coherence when one inserts a sentence into the summary.

The results of the interview with this group confirm the finding of the statistical analysis. As mentioned above, the mean of attempted paraphrase for the advanced group is significantly higher than the other two groups. Furthermore, the mean for the advanced group on the moderate and substantial revisions, which involve the highest scale of change in the original text, is larger than the other two groups.

In similar vein, the students in the advanced group who had accomplished the opinion task stated that they used paraphrasing when they needed to refer to a part of the text to express their opinion about it. However, they preferred to use their own ideas while doing the task. That is why we can see a lower mean of paraphrases in the opinion task than in the summary task. This group, too, stated that they copied words, rather than sentences, from the original text in case they were not able to replace them with their own words. That is why the mean for the attempted paraphrase for this group was lower than that of the summary group. In addition, the fact that they noted that they copied only words if needed justifies why in Table 5 above the mean for the copied sentences for the opinion task was zero. This group too had no idea was plagiarism was exactly.

The results of the interview for the low intermediate group were, nonetheless, to some extent different. The students of this group said that, in doing the summary task, they mainly deleted the parts that they considered irrelevant and kept the sentences of the original text. Of course, they said they tried to paraphrase the sentences but they felt the sentences they made would not be correct enough and not as beautiful as the sentences of the original text. They further said that they mainly tried to replace some words in the original text with synonymous ones but the sentences mostly remained the same. The results of the interview for this group show why we can see a very low mean for the attempted paraphrase for the low intermediate group as compared to the advanced one. In addition, the statements of this group show why the man for the moderate and substantial revision for this group was zero. With respect to the question about plagiarism, this group too, did not think copying the sentences from the original text would be ethically wrong.

The students of the low intermediate group in the opinion group had almost the same views. There were, however, a few students who said that since it was an opinion task and they were supposed to write their opinions they sometimes tried to paraphrase part of the source text. They, nonetheless, noted that they did not write their own ideas since they did not rely so much on their writing ability and their knowledge of grammar. That is why, according to Table 5 above, we cannot see any sentences representing the idea of the students of this group. The students of this group, too, did not consider plagiarism a big deal.

On the whole, a common finding of the interview with the students is that plagiarism is not considered as an act violating the ethics. In fact, in a country where the majority of the books are pirated and the copyright law is not observed and the original books are simply offset, it is not surprising that the students do not see anything wrong with plagiarism particularly the students with a low proficiency level who are not able to compose a text of their own.

IV. CONCLUSION

The present study examined whether language proficiency and writing task (summary and opinion) have an impact on the extent to which the students make an attempt to paraphrase the original text and what paraphrase type they would use more.

With respect to the results presented in this study, proficiency level turned out to influence the mean number of attempted paraphrases used by the students. In addition, task type also appeared to affect the use of attempted paraphrase. Moreover, the interaction of proficiency and task type influenced the mean number of attempted paraphrases. On the whole, the results showed that the students at a higher proficiency level used more attempted paraphrases than those at a lower level; the results also revealed that the students used a higher number of attempted paraphrases in the summary task than in the opinion task.

The result of the study also confirmed the significant influence of proficiency level on the mean number of all the four paraphrase types used by the students. However, the task did not affect the use of paraphrase types. Finally, the interaction of proficiency and task type was also found to affect the mean number of moderate and substantial revisions but not the other two paraphrase types, i.e., near copy and minimal revision. Advanced students used more minimal and moderate revisions in their writing. Conversely, high and low intermediate students used less or no minimal and moderate revision in their summary and opinion tasks.

In advanced level, in addition, students used more substantial revisions in the summary task than in the opinion task. Conversely, low intermediate students used no substantial revision in their writing. what the results indicate is that the interaction of proficiency and task type turned out to affect the paraphrase type in two types of revisions, namely, moderate revision and substantial revisions, but not in the other two types. That is, high proficient students used more moderate and substantial revisions in both summary and opinion task. However, those who did the summary task used more moderate revision and substantial revisions, since the use of the source text was obligatory for them. what one can

infer from the obtained results is that only those with high level of language proficiency can manipulate and paraphrase the original text, or the use of original text is optional for those who did the opinion task.

V. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

First, the result of this study have expanded our understanding of the types of textual borrowing strategies including paraphrasing strategies employed by Iranian EFL university students. The results of the study showed that the use of strategies such as exact copy and near copy was more prevalent among low level students. Therefore, we can design different summary and paraphrase tasks for different proficiency levels and gear our expectations of the students to their level of proficiency both with respect to the extent of the summary and the task type we give them. Also, we can help our students to become confident and successful academic writers by designing some writing courses, handbooks, and manuals which include paraphrasing strategies. In addition, teaching these materials in the academic institutions especially at universities can help them to integrate source texts into their writing without any footprint of plagiarism.

VI. LIMITATIONS

Like other empirical studies, the findings of this study should be interpreted in the light of certain limitations. First of all, the participants are from intact classes and may not represent the population they come from. Second, the present subjects each did one of the tasks either the summary or the opinion task. A within-subject design with each student doing both tasks would allow more accurate identification of the task effect on the use of paraphrase type among students writing.

VII. FURTHER RESEARCH

Future studies can replicate the study with more subjects; in addition, they need to explore the use of paraphrase type across such variables as language background, sex, and different kinds of texts in different contexts, so that we can enrich our understanding of paraphrasing strategies employed by different students.

APPENDIX A

Excerpt 1.
Physicians Can Ethically Assist in Suicide, **by Sidney H. Wanzer**
et al. (from Biskup & Wekesser, 1992, pp. 54-55)
In the patient whose dying process is irreversible, the balance between minimizing pain and suffering and potentially hastening death should be struck clearly in favor of pain belief. Narcotics or other pain medications should be given in whatever dose and by whatever route is necessary for relief. It is morally correct to increase the dose of narcotics to whatever dose is needed, even though the medication may contribute to the depression of respiration or blood pressure, the dulling of consciousness, or even death, provided the primary goal of the physician is to relieve suffering. The proper dose of pain medication is the dose that is sufficient to relieve pain and suffering, even to the point of unconsciousness. The principles of medical ethics are formulated independently of legal decisions, but physicians may fear that decisions about the care of the hopelessly ill will bring special risks of criminal charges and prosecution. . . . The physician should follow these principles without exaggerated concern for legal consequences, doing whatever is necessary to relieve pain and being comfort, and adhering to the patient's wishes as much as possible. To withhold any necessary measure of pain relief in a hopelessly ill person out of fear of depressing respiration or of possible legal repercussions is unjustifiable.

Excerpt 2.
Physicians Cannot Ethically Assist in Suicide, **by David**
Orentlicher (from Biskup & Wekesser, 1992, pp. 59-60)
This long-standing rejection of assisted suicide reflects a number of concerns with assisted suicide. patient contemplating assisted suicide will naturally want to discuss that possibility with his or her physician. If the physician appears sympathetic to the patient's interest in suicide, it may convey the impression that the physician feels assisted suicide is a desirable alternative. Such an impression may not be very comforting to the patient. Moreover, if the patient decides to reject suicide, will the patient have the same degree of confidence in the physician's commitment to his or her care as previously? In short, assisted suicide might seriously undermine an essential element of Patient-physician relationship. Patients who are enfeebled by disease and devoid of hope may choose assisted suicide not because they are really tired of life but because they think others are tired of them. Some patients, moreover, may feel an obligation to choose death to spare their families the emotional and financial burden of their care. Finally, assisted suicide is problematic in terms of its implementation. For many patients, the progression of disease will result in the impairment of decision-making capacity, either from the effects of the disease itself or those of drug treatment. Consequently, it may be difficult to ensure that a competent decision is being made .... At what point in the contemplation of suicide by the patient, for example, can the physician be confident that the patient has made a firm decision to end his or her life.

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