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**An Investigation into English as a Foreign Language Learners'
Perceptions of and Attitudes towards the Use of QuillBot
Paraphraser in their Written Productions:
The Case of Master One Students of English at Biskra University**

Dissertation submitted to the Department of Letters and Foreign languages in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of **Master in Sciences of Language**

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Declaration

I, Ferdaoues **AZIZI**, do hereby declare that this dissertation was conducted for the purpose of obtaining a Master degree in Sciences of Language is my original work that has been written in my own words. This dissertation was submitted to the Department of Language and English Literature at Biskra University, and it has not previously submitted to any university or institution for a degree. Additionally, I certify that I have properly acknowledged and cited all sources used (List of references).

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate my dissertation

*To my beloved parents whose continuous support and encouragement made it possible
to me to do this work.*

*To "My mother", who taught me how to trust Allah, how to believe in myself. Your
endless support has been the foundation upon which I have built my work.*

You have been the light in my life.

*To precious father and teacher "Ismail", the one who taught me the value of the hard
work and all what I know from the beginning of my life until this moment*

*To my dear sisters "Salwa" and "Mouna" Thank you for providing me with the endless
support, love, and understanding. I Love you so much.*

To my brothers "Mahmoud" "Radhouane" and "Messoud"

I love you so much although sometimes you make me crazy

*Whatever I said, I would never find the right words that can express my feelings and
gratitude towards my wonderful family.*

*To my soul mate "Mannar TEDJINI". You are more than a friend, your kindness, love,
and encouragement have been the beautiful angle my life.*

*To my dear friend and sister from Biskra" Messouda BOUABDHALLAH" whom I have
met by a chance but you have become more than just a friend. I Love you so much.*

*To the memory of my beloved grandfather Aouadi AOUADI and my brother "Ahmed
Yassine", I wished you were here with me in this special moment.*

I miss you beyond words. May Allah grant you 'Al Jannah'

To everyone who believed in me and helped me complete my work.

Thank you all.

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(وَآخِرُ دَعْوَاهُمْ أَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ)

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Abstract

Despite the fact that paraphrasing is a crucial skill that English as a foreign language students need to master when writing academically, it seems to be a challenging task for them. Therefore, in light of artificial intelligence (AI), they rely on AI online paraphrasing tools like QuillBot. Nevertheless, a little attention is given to the understanding of how EFL students perceive this AI-assisted paraphrasing tool in their written instructions. Moving from this point, this study is conducted with the aim to shed light on the perceptions of and attitudes of EFL students towards the use of QuillBot Paraphraser in their written productions. Furthermore, the current study sought to explore the potential challenges faced by students while using this online paraphrasing tool. In order to reach these objectives, an Interpretive paradigm following a Qualitative Approach were applied. In accordance with the adopted case study design, this research employed a student unstructured questionnaire and focus group in order to collect the necessary data from a group of 25 master one students, who were selected following a purposive sampling technique. Ultimately, the findings revealed that the majority of students expressed positive responses towards the use of QuillBot Paraphraser as an AI assistant to refine their academic writing skills. They also indicated a variety of obstacles confronted by students while using the tool. By the end of this investigation, it can be concluded that incorporating AI-based technology such as online paraphrasing tools in EFL language classrooms could be beneficial in helping these students to overcome certain difficulties in their academic writing process.

Keywords: Academic writing, artificial intelligence, EFL students, paraphrasing, QuillBot Paraphraser

List of Acronyms

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

AW: Academic Writing

AI: Artificial Intelligence

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

CALL: Computer-Assisted Language Learning

TELL: Technology Enhanced Language Learning

ITSs: Intelligent Tutoring Systems

NLP: Natural Language Processing

CBT: Computer-Based Testing

List of Tables

Table 3.1 Students' Focus Group Items and Objectives.....	83
Table 4.1 Students' Views about the Significance of Academic Writing.....	89
Table 4.2 Students' Academic Writing Complexities and Obstacles.....	90
Table 4.3 Students' Perceptions on the Importance of Paraphrasing Technique.....	92
Table 4.4 Students' Level of Paraphrasing Skills.....	93
Table 4.5 Students' Paraphrasing Main Used Techniques.....	94
Table 4.6 Students' Perceptions on Using AI Tools in Academic Writing.....	95
Table 4.7 Students' Academic Writing Proficiency Areas Enhanced by AI Applications.....	96
Table 4.8 AI Tools Used by Students in EFL Academic Writing Classes.....	97
Table 4.9 Ethical Concerns Encountered by Students while using AI Tools.....	98
Table 4.10 Students' Familiarity with QuillBot Paraphraser.....	99
Table 4.11 QuillBot's Positive and Negative Impacts on Students' Writing Process.....	100
Table 4.12 Impact of QuillBot on Students' Vocabulary Expansion.....	101
Table 4.13 Students' Perceptions on Using QuillBot in Paraphrasing.....	102
Table 4.14 Students' Attitudes towards Integrating QuillBot Paraphraser into Academic Writing.....	103
Table 4.15 Students' Attitudes towards the Effectiveness of QuillBot Paraphraser.....	104
Table 4.16 Main Easy and Challenging Aspects in Using QuillBot Paraphraser.....	105

Table 4.17 Students' Strategies to handle Technical Issues while Using QuillBot Paraphraser.....	106
Table 4.18 Students' Evaluation of QuillBot Paraphraser's Accuracy and Reliability.....	107
Table 4.19 QuillBot's Affects on Students Motivation in Improving Paraphrasing Skills....	108
Table 4.20 Students' Overall Satisfaction with QuillBot Paraphraser.....	110

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 The Structure of an Essay.....	38
Figure 2.1 QuillBot Paraphraser's Interface.....	67
Figure 2.2 Using QuillBot Paraphraser in Standard Mode.....	68
Figure 2.3 Using QuillBot Paraphraser in Fluency Mode.....	68
Figure 2.4 Using QuillBot Paraphraser in Formal Mode.....	70
Figure 2.5 Using QuillBot Paraphraser in Academic Mode.....	70
Figure 2.6 Using QuillBot Paraphraser in Simple Mode.....	71
Figure 2.7 Using QuillBot Paraphraser in Creative Mode.....	71

List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Participant Informed Consent.....	145
Appendix 2: The Questionnaire Validation Form.....	147
Appendix 3: The Opinionnaire.....	148
Appendix 4: The Focus Group Questions Validation Form.....	150
Appendix 5: Students' Questionnaire.....	151
Appendix 6: Focus Group's Questions.....	156
Appendix 7: Focus Group Transcription.....	157
Appendix 8: Samples of Students' Questionnaire Answers.....	161

Contents

Declaration.....	2
Dedication.....	3
Acknowledgements.....	4
Abstract.....	5
List of Acronyms.....	6
List of Tables.....	7
List of Figures.....	9
List of Appendices.....	10

General Introduction

1. Background of the Study.....	17
2. Statement of the Problem.....	18
3. Main Research Aim and Specific Objectives of the Study.....	19
4. Research Questions.....	19
5. Research Hypotheses.....	19
6. The Research Methodology for this Study.....	20
6.1 Population, Sampling, and Sample Technique.....	21
7. The Significance of the Study.....	21
8. The Referencing Style for this Dissertation.....	22
9. Delimitations of the Study.....	22
10. Structure of the Dissertation.....	23

Chapter One: Academic Writing Conventions and Paraphrasing in English as a Foreign Language Context: Reviewing of the Fundamentals

Introduction.....	28
1.1 Definition of Writing.....	28
1.2 Definition of Academic Writing.....	30
1.3 Academic Writing Characteristics.....	31
1.3.1 Formality.....	31
1.3.2 Complexity.....	32
1.3.3 Objectivity.....	32
1.3.4 Precision and Conciseness.....	33
1.4 Academic Writing Process.....	33
1.4.1 Pre-Writing.....	34
1.4.2 Planning.....	34
1.4.3 Drafting.....	35
1.4.4 Revising.....	35
1.4.5 Editing.....	36
1.4.6 Publishing.....	36
1.5 Academic Writing Genres.....	36
1.5.1 Essays.....	37
1.5.2 Research Papers.....	38

1.5.3 Theses and Dissertations.....	39
1.6 Academic Writing Approaches.....	40
1.6.1 The Product Based Approach.....	40
1.6.2 The Process Based Approach.....	41
1.6.3 The Genre- Based Approach.....	41
1.7 Importance of Academic Writing in the English as a Foreign Language Context.....	42
1.8 The Main Challenges Faced by English as a Foreign Language Students in Academic Writing.....	44
1.9 Definition of Paraphrasing.....	45
1.10 Importance of Paraphrasing in Academic Writing for English as a Foreign Language Students.....	46
1.11 Techniques for Paraphrasing.....	47
1.11.1 Synonyms.....	48
1.11.2 Word Class.....	49
1.11.3 Passive and Active Voice.....	49
Conclusion	50

Chapter Two: Information and Communication Technologies and Artificial Intelligence Tools in English as a Foreign Language Context: Reviewing their Applications and Uses

Introduction	54
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2.1 Theoretical Background of Information, Communication, and Technology in Education.....	54
2.1.1 Computer- Assisted Language Learning.....	55
2.1.2 Technology Enhanced Language Learning.....	56
2.1.3 E-Learning.....	57
2.2 Artificial Intelligence.....	58
2.2.1 Definition of Artificial Intelligence.....	58
2.2.2 Types of Artificial Intelligence.....	59
2.2.2.1 Reactive Artificial Intelligence.....	60
2.2.2.2 Limited Memory Machines.....	60
2.2.2.3 Theory of Mind.....	61
2.2.2.4 Self-Aware Artificial Intelligence.....	61
2.2.3 Applications of Artificial Intelligence in Education.....	62
2.2.3.1 Personalized Learning.....	62
2.2.3.2 Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITSs).....	63
2.2.3.3 Virtual Assistants and Chatbots.....	63
2.2.3.4 Natural Language Processing (NLP).....	64
2.2.3.5 Computer-Based Testing (CBT) Platforms.....	65
2.2.3.6 Automated Transcription and Translation.....	65
2.3 QuillBot.....	65

2.3.1 Overview of QuillBot Paraphraser.....	66
2.3.2 The Use of QuillBot Paraphraser in Academic Writing Process.....	72
2.3.3 Benefits of QuillBot Paraphraser.....	73
2.3.5 Drawbacks of QuillBot Paraphraser.....	74
Conclusion.....	74

Chapter Three: The Methodology for this Study

Introduction.....	77
3.1 Research Methodology for this Study: Theoretical Background, Choices and Rationale.....	77
3.1.1 Research Paradigm.....	77
3.1.2 Research Approach.....	78
3.1.3 Research Design.....	78
3.1.4 Data Collection Methods.....	79
3.1.4.1 Students' Questionnaire.....	79
3.1.4.1.1 Structure and Aim.....	79
3.1.4.1.2 Validation.....	80
3.1.4.1.3 Piloting.....	81
3.1.4.2 Students' Focus Group.....	81
3.1.4.2.1 Structure and Aim.....	82
3.1.4.2.2 Piloting and Validation.....	83
3.1.5 Data Collection Procedures.....	83
3.1.6 Data Analysis Procedures.....	84
3.1.7 Population and Sampling Technique.....	84

Conclusion.....	85
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Chapter Four: Fieldwork and Data Analysis

Introduction.....	88
4.1 The Results.....	88
4.1.1 Results of the Questionnaire.....	88
4.1.1.1 Analysis and Interpretation of the Questionnaire.....	88
4.1.2 Results of the Students' Focus Group.....	104
4.1.2.1 Analysis and Interpretation of the Students' Focus Group.....	105
4.2 Synthesis of the Findings.....	111
Conclusion.....	121
Pedagogical Recommendations and Implications.....	121
Limitations of the Study.....	122
Suggestions for Further Research.....	123
General Conclusion.....	124
References.....	127
Appendices.....	142
ملخص الدراسة.....	165

General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

English as a foreign language learners (Henceforth, EFL) should cover all aspects of language skills, including listening, reading, speaking, and writing. The latter is not considered only the most important; but it has been indicated as the most challenging skill for EFL learners to master compared to the other skills. It has been argued that even native speakers struggle with producing a good piece of writing (Kukurs, 2012).

It has been assumed that mastering writing, especially academic writing for EFL learners is a challenging task due to the complex nature of writing and the higher-level proficiency it requires (Hyland, 2003). Academic writing difficulties for many EFL learners start with the most challenging aspect of academic writing itself, which is paraphrasing. Although the paraphrasing technique is vital in academic writing since it helps EFL learners to avoid plagiarism, they still struggle with correctly paraphrasing the English texts, as highlighted by Sarair et al., (2019), who noticed that the learners' works almost copied most of the sources.

As a result, a number of research studies have been conducted in order to address obstacles faced by learners in paraphrasing. Particularly, in light of artificial intelligence, when various applications and programs have been developed to assist learners in improving their paraphrasing skills as well as the whole academic writing proficiency. In this regard, this research will focus on investigating EFL learners' perceptions of and attitudes towards this AI-powered paraphraser tool, which is QuillBot, in their written productions.

2. Statement of the Problem

In academic writing, paraphrasing has a significant role because it helps authors avoid plagiarism. However, it can be a challenging skill for EFL learners, particularly those who are unfamiliar with academic writing techniques. Therefore, they rely on artificial intelligence (AI) paraphrasing tools, such as paraphrasing-tool.com, prepotseo.com or spinbot.com, QuillBot.com, for help. Despite the fact that numerous studies have indicated the value of these tools in assisting learners improve their academic writing, in general, and paraphrasing skills, in particular, there is a lack of understanding about how EFL learners perceive these online paraphrasing tools as academic writing aids.

The phenomenon under investigation has arisen from the researcher's personal observation. In addition, due to the researcher's academic status as a master student, we noticed that even our classmates frequently struggle to paraphrase correctly and effectively in their academic writing classes on a given topic, although having a thorough comprehension of the subject. Some students are unable to improve their paraphrasing skills although they receive guidance from their teachers, as well as rely on artificial intelligence (AI) tools like QuillBot.

For this reason, we think that investigation how EFL learners at Biskra University do perceive the integration of AI technologies in writing classrooms, and understanding the obstacles that these students face while utilizing them, can help to cover the phenomenon effectively. Correspondingly, the purpose of the present study is to shed light on the perceptions of and attitudes towards Master students of English at the Department of Language and English literature at Biskra University on using artificial intelligence paraphraser tool QuillBot in their writing.

3. Main Research Aim and Specific Objectives of the Study

The general aim of this study is to investigate EFL learners' perceptions of, and attitudes towards the use of QuillBot paraphraser tool in their written productions.

More precisely, this research work intends to:

- investigate English as a foreign language learners' perceptions on the use of artificial intelligence tools in academic writing;
- shed the light on students' experiences with the use of the QuillBot paraphraser tool in their writing; and
- find out the challenges that students face while using this tool of paraphrasing.

4. Research Questions

This research study seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How do Master English students at Biskra University perceive the use of artificial intelligence tools in their academic writing?

RQ2: In what way do Master English students at Biskra University experience the use of QuillBot paraphraser when drafting their writings?

RQ3: What are the challenges of Master English students at Biskra University when using QuillBot paraphraser?

5. Research Hypotheses

Based on the proceeding research questions, the following hypotheses have been proposed:

RH1: It is hypothesized that Master English students at Biskra University have positive perceptions towards the use of artificial intelligence tools in their academic writing.

RH2: It is hypothesized that the use of QuillBot paraphraser tool assists Master English students at Biskra University to improve their writing performance if they used appropriately.

RH3: It is hypothesized that Master English students at Biskra University encounter challenges when using QuillBot paraphraser for drafting their writings.

6. The Research Methodology for this Study

For this investigation, the researcher employed an interpretive research paradigm and adopted a qualitative approach due to the nature of the study. First, the research intended to gain insights on Master One English students' perceptions and describe their experiences regarding the use of AI tools, particularly the QuillBot paraphraser tool at the department of Language and English Literature at Biskra University. Additionally, the researcher sought to find out the challenges that these students meet in utilizing this AI aid. Under this research study, we adopted the Case Study design for the case of Master One students of English at the University of Biskra.

Based on the selected design, an unstructured questionnaire and a focus group were used as data collection methods. The unstructured questionnaire was administered to 25 EFL students to gain insights into their attitudes and perceptions towards the use of AI paraphraser tools in written productions, as well as collect data about their experiences while employing these tools.

In addition, a focus group sampling strategy was also used in order to cover the current phenomenon from different perspectives as well as minimize bias in the results. Lastly, to analyze data, a Thematic Analysis Method was used. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), Thematic Analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. They also add that is the first qualitative method that should be mastered since "it provides core skills that will be useful for conducting many other kinds of analysis" (p.78). Additionally, it is beneficial since it is flexible, as the data can be

interpreted using multiple ways. Moreover, thematic analysis allows the researcher to summarize the main aspects and provide a deep description of the data set. In short, its main objective is to determine significant or interesting themes i.e. patterns, and then use them to address a certain research or issue.

6.1 Population, Sampling, and Sample Technique

The target population for this research work was EFL students at Biskra University. The sample for this study was included mainly Master One English major students from Sciences of language classes, who were selected based on the non-probability purposive sampling technique. The reason behind choosing this sample is that Master One EFL students need direct and clear instructions in order to improve their paraphrasing proficiency as they would conduct research and dissertations for the next academic year.

Additionally, they might already have prior knowledge about the benefits of using AI tool to master paraphrasing skill in written productions. However, they maybe not aware enough of how utilize this tool appropriately and effectively. Thus, considering all these factors we conclude that Master One students can contribute to achieve the aims of our study.

7. The Significance of the Study

In recent years, the applications of artificial intelligence (AI) have increased in different fields, especially in education. Thus, it is crucial to determine its effects on the learners and look at how these tools, like QuillBot paraphraser influence the writing abilities of the learners. Therefore, the significance of the current research will make an essential contribution in the field of second language acquisition at the University of Biskra. Recognizing the writing proficiency in general and paraphrasing skill in specific as an important tool in academic performance.

Hopefully, EFL learners at the department of language and English literature at the University of Biskra will find this study useful in exploring their major challenges in using the QuillBot Paraphraser tool in their writing. Additionally, students of English, particularly Master students, would benefit from the findings of the research to learn more about how they can use this tool when paraphrasing appropriately. More interestingly, this study would offer explicit insights into the usage of AI paraphrasing tools in written composition as well as for future scholars and researchers who are interested in this subject.

8. The Referencing Style for this Dissertation

For this research study, the researcher opted for the American Psychological Association (APA) seventh edition writing style, except only for the "Justify Function", which is not followed. This is due to an agreement with the supervisor to ensure clarity and consistency to the highest academic standards.

9. Delimitations of the Study

The researcher has primarily emphasized on the following delimitations of the phenomenon being studied:

- QuillBot offers diverse features. However, the purpose of choosing mainly paraphrasing function is that it is a crucial component of language learning for EFL learners. Another reason, the critical thinking and writing skills can be enhanced by studying paraphrasing techniques. Therefore, researchers can assess how technologies such as QuillBot contribute to develop these skills among learners.
- The researcher has selected Master One students of English at Biskra University since the participants need to master their academic writing in general and

paraphrasing ability in particular, especially they are going to conduct research projects and prepare dissertations for the next academic year.

- Students' questionnaire has been assigned to cover the perceptions of and attitudes towards the use of artificial intelligence tools in academic writing classes at Biskra University in particular.
- A focus group has been undertaken to gain insights into the challenges that students face when using these tools as well as understanding the phenomenon being studied from various points of view.

10. Structure of the Dissertation

The structure of the dissertation is organized as follows:

Chapter one is divided into two sections. The first section is dedicated to theoretical examination of the writing skill; more precisely it deals with the academic writing in terms of its definition, importance, process, and the various approaches included. Furthermore, it demonstrates the main characteristics and genres of academic writing, as well as reporting major problems facing EFL students in academic writing. The second section deals with the paraphrasing skill, its definition and importance for EFL students in their academic writing classes in order to avoid plagiarism, in addition to highlight its common techniques.

Chapter two reveals a theoretical basis for information and technology instruction, identifying its fundamental branches. It also limits the scope of their relationship to the learners skill set, and benefits when integrated. Particularly, the chapter defines artificial intelligence, provides a thorough and general background for this technology and analyzes how much implementation can give learners more practice time during class. Finally, this

chapter offers an overview about QuillBot paraphraser, also its advantages and disadvantages.

Chapter three is purely concerned with the methodology grounded for the study. It systematically includes research methodology describing the sample technique, the data collection methods, and data analysis procedures used. In addition, it provides the rationale behind certain methodological choices.

Chapter four presents a thorough discussion of the obtained results from this study, and the analysis and interpretation of the collected data. It also illustrates some pedagogical recommendations and implications, along with suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER ONE

Chapter One: Academic Writing Conventions and Paraphrasing in English as a Foreign Language Context: Reviewing the Fundamentals

Introduction

1.1 Definition of Writing

1.2 Definition of Academic Writing

1.3 Academic Writing Characteristics

1.3.1 Formality

1.3.2 Complexity

1.3.3 Objectivity

1.3.4 Precision and Conciseness

1.4 Academic Writing Process

1.4.1 Pre-Writing

1.4.2 Planning

1.4.3 Drafting

1.4.4 Revising

1.4.5 Editing

1.4.6 Publishing

1.5 Academic Writing Genres

1.5.1 Essays

1.5.2 Research Papers

1.5.3 Thesis and Dissertation

1.6 Academic Writing Approaches

1.6.1 The Product Based Approach

1.6.2 The Process Based Approach

1.6.3 The Genre based Approach

1.7 Importance of Academic Writing in the English as a Foreign Language Context

1.8 The Main Challenges Faced by English as a Foreign Language Students in Academic Writing

1.9 Definition of Paraphrasing

1.10 Importance of Paraphrasing in Academic Writing for English as a Foreign Language Students

1.11 Techniques for Paraphrasing

1.11.1 Synonyms

1.11.2 Word Class

1.11.3 Passive and Active voice

Conclusion

Introduction

The present chapter intends to provide a holistic overview on the writing skill. More specifically, it addresses academic writing in terms of its definition(s), importance, process, and the multiple approaches involved. Furthermore, it demonstrates the main characteristics and some common genres of academic writing, as well as it reports the major problems that EFL learners encounter. Additionally, it deals with the paraphrasing skill, its definition and its significance for EFL students in their academic writing, in addition to highlight the common techniques for paraphrasing.

1.1 Definition of Writing

In learning English as a foreign language, (Henceforth, EFL) writing is one of the two productive skills that should be mastered. It is one of the most significant skills in which EFL learners can transmit their ideas, thoughts, feelings, and expressions in the form of writing. However, due to the difficulty to generate and organize ideas and to master various aspects of writing, such as: grammar, vocabulary, choice of words, and punctuation, it is considered as the most complicated skill among all the four other skills for EFL learners (Hapsari, 2011). In this respect, Muhammed et al., (2016) comment also that writing is the most difficult field in second language learning.

In the context of language teaching, the writing skill of a foreign language often does not attract much attention for a long time due to the fact that language is most significant in its spoken form and less important on the written one (Musa, 2016). However, in recent years writing has been gaining a vital importance and considered an essential skill of communication and underlying content in the process of learning a language (Hyland, 2003; Matsuda, 2003; Musa, 2016).

Recently, the rising interest in writing, particularly at advanced levels, has developed significantly becoming a distinct discipline on its own. Many scientists have made several attempts to provide an exact and accurate definition for the concept of writing. They seek to define it from different perspectives according to a specific field of study. For instance, Nunan states that writing is “An extremely complex, cognitive activity for all which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously.” (1989, p. 36). This highlights the complexity of the writing task, as well as the challenges learners face while writing due to the cognitive aspect, including mastering grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, content, and punctuation.

In the same line of thought, Widdowson (1978) defines writing as an act of producing correct sentences and transmitting them into words on a paper. In his definition, Widdowson demonstrates the writing skill is a way of reporting one's thoughts and feelings using a correct grammar in a concrete manner. Further, White and Arndt (1991) indicate that writing is more than just translating language into written symbols; it is a thoughtful process that takes time and mental effort. They reveal how writing is difficult, since it makes the writer engaged in mental and physical efforts, as well as the steps that should be followed in this process. In doing so, writers need to generate their ideas, which need to be monitored, selected, and prioritized; to translate the ordered ideas into text, using correct lexicon, grammar and genre rules; and to review the text in order to clarify meaning and eliminate errors. (Biggs, et al., as cited in Singleton-Jackson, 2003, p. 60).

Likewise, Wingersky (1999) regards writing as “A process of thinking which the writer discovers, organizes, and communicates his or her thoughts to the reader.” (p. 4). The author views writing a process through which a write can convey their ideas and thoughts in written form to readers. In other words, this skill, “It is about conveying meaning but using words that have been chosen and put together in written or printed

form.” (Farbin & Whinch, 1996, p. 32). From the aforementioned definitions, it can be concluded that writing goes beyond just combining words and sentences together. It is a cognitive complex process of communicating ideas, emotions, feelings, and entails utilizing the graphic code of a certain language, following all its conventions, and effectively mastering cognitive processes in order to ensure comprehension.

1.2 Definition of Academic Writing

The concept of academic writing can be defined in different ways. Jordan (2003) states that “In a broad sense academic writing refers to a formal style of writing that is produced in an academic setting.”(p. 3). In this respect, Hien (2023) declares that academic writing is a writing style that is used in universities and colleges for educational purposes. Thus, the writing style that entails scientific knowledge and used by university students, instructors, and researchers for instructional objectives is known as academic writing.

Labaree (2009) proposes a more detailed definitions indicating that “Academic writing refers to a style of expression that researchers use to define the intellectual boundaries of their disciplines and their specific areas of expertise.”(p. 37). To put it clear, academic writing is the way which helps scholars to clearly explain the limits of their field, as well as it allows them to share their research ideas within their particular areas of expertise.

Furthermore, Oshima and Hogue (2007) view academic writing as a style of formal writing used in high academic settings, which is obviously distinct from personal and creative writing. In this respect, Bowker (2007) adds that “academic writing does many of the things that personal writing does not.”(p. 2). Hence, the author affirms that academic writing demands using formal structure and specialized vocabularies. Unlike informal personal writing, it also addresses the appropriate use of mechanics such as connectors,

transitions, grammar, and punctuation which enable the reader to understand the intended meaning of the writer.

Ultimately, from the aforementioned definitions, it can be understood that academic writing is a formal genre of writing that used in academic settings, including schools, colleges, and universities. It requires the use of clear and precise language in order to illustrate certain ideas and research findings, as well as to ensure that the reader can easily comprehend the writer's intended meaning and avoid any bias or ambiguity (Pratiwi, 2016; Fadhel, 2019).

1.3 Characteristics of Academic Writing

Academic writing is a particular style of writing that is essential in the realm of Higher Education and academic research. It has specific features that distinguish it from the other types of writing. The most common characteristics of academic writing include formality, complexity, objectivity, precision, and conciseness. In addition, other features also have been mentioned by many researchers, such as: passive voice, complex grammar, specific vocabulary, coherence, and fluency and accuracy. In order for EFL learners, researchers, and professionals to effectively communicate their ideas and thoughts to the intended audience, they need to consider basic key features of academic writing. Examples of these features will be displayed in the following:

1.3.1 Formality

Formality is a valuable feature in academic writing, as it helps to make writing more professional and knowledgeable. Formal academic writing is typically associated with the use of a specific style or tone that is suitable for academic or scholarly communications, as well as it is reflected in the avoidance of slangs, contractions, idiomatic and colloquial expressions, or any informal language. Liardét et al., (2019) highlight that formal language

differs from informal language by avoiding subjectivity, direct interactions, and colloquial expressions. Importantly, formal academic writing tends to be clear and precise and free of ambiguity or implicit meaning in order to convey ideas accurately and avoid misunderstanding (Bailey, 2011).

1.3.2 Complexity

Complexity is also considered one of the most significant features of academic writing. Chelghum and Grine (2018) believe that written language is more complex than the spoken, as it has longer words with varied vocabulary, and usually sophisticated grammar. Additionally, complexity is mainly associated with formality because it is needed for academic literacy and complex texts. The latter uses specialized and advanced levels of terminology and vocabulary, like jargon that is specific to a certain field of study. Moreover, written language is more grammatically complex since it has more subordinate clauses and passives than the spoken one.

1.3.3 Objectivity

In addition, one of the defining characteristics of academic writing is its objective tone. Academic writing tends to be objective and free of personal opinions, emotions, feelings, colorful words, and judgmental language in order to ensure facts and credibility. Luuka and Markkanen (1997) assert that writers adopt a crucial communicative technique called impersonalization in order to express objectivity in their academic writing. Likewise, Hardjanto and Roselani (2022) affirm that this technique has a vital role in objectifying academic writing owing to its contributing in minimizing direct reference to persons, as well as it highlights information and backgrounds the writer's presence by focusing of the message rather than the person engaged in the discourse. Accordingly, objectivity in academic writing could be achieved by avoiding the use of personal bias.

Therefore, it is advisable for the academic writers to be neutral and express their thoughts and ideas accurately and objectively.

1.3.4 Precision and Conciseness

Several scholars (e.g., Mu & Lim, 2022) have argued that both precision and conciseness are valuable in academic writing as they improve the readability of the writing and contribute to convey effectively the intended meaning. Precision refers to the use of accurate and straightforward language besides selecting the exact words according to the target message, avoiding complex terminology to ensure that the ideas are presented clearly for the readers without ambiguity or misunderstanding (Ferchichi, 2024). On the other hand, conciseness means expressing ideas clearly without unnecessary wordiness to allow the readers grasp the main concepts efficiently in a direct manner without confusing them with unnecessary details (Mu & Lim, 2022). In brief, while using precise language means being accurate, using concise language means being brief.

Correspondingly, as these the aforementioned characteristics are considered as basics of academic writing, students are required to address with each feature during academic writing to produce a valuable writing based on the academic standards.

1.4 The Academic Writing Process

Academic writing is seemed to be a challenging task even for native speakers of English Language. In this respect, several researchers, including Fulwiler (1988), Williams (2003), and Murray (2005) claim that writers need to follow a structured process with series of steps or stages in order to create a well-written product. Donohue (2009) illustrates:

“The writing process is not a linear as presented in this typical model, where a piece starts at the beginning with students prewriting their ideas, and ends when the piece

is published. Instead, the writing process is recursive. This means that the writer is constantly revising the previous stages and finding new ways of refining a piece of writing in order to improve it". (p. 9).

The main stages of the writing process are pre-writing, planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. These stages indicate that writing is more about the process than the product. In the following a brief of these stages as presented:

1.4.1 Pre-writing Stage

Pre-writing is the initial stage in the writing process. According to Mohammed et al., (2023), the prewriting strategy includes all the preparations that should be completed before producing the final written draft. Also, these authors suggest that in this phase the student generates ideas and organizes them using a variety of techniques, including brainstorming, listing, free writing, clustering, questioning, and drafting. It is an important and effective strategy that should be taken into consideration since involving students in this stage fosters their critical thinking and creativity, thus making the writing task much easier.

1.4.3 Drafting Stage

According to Donohue (2009), drafting refers to the stage in which "the students are able to craft their own writing." (p. 12). Therefore, during this stage, learners need to put and translate their ideas and thoughts that have outlined in the planning step into written form regardless to grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors. Addedly, in this stage teachers have a significant role in encouraging students to enhance their writing abilities by teaching them the effective way of planning and organizing their ideas before discussing the quality of those ideas with their classmates or teachers (Dymoke, 2003).

1.4.3 Planning Stage

Williams (2003) defines planning as “Reflecting on the material produced during prewriting to develop a plan to achieve the aim of the paper.” (p. 106). In addition, the goal of planning an outline is to organize and present ideas in a logical order (Wilkinson & Hommes, 2010). However, planning could be a challenging step, although it is considered one of the most effective characteristics of the writing process (Williams, 2003). Briefly, planning is a crucial phase in the writing process since it enables students to organize their ideas and thoughts by collecting all sorts of information related to the purpose of their writing and the intended audience.

1.4.4 Revising Stage

Revising constitutes an essential component of the writing process that comes before editing. It refers to the critical process in which the learner reviews and rereads the draft's content to enhance clarity, coherence, and effectiveness. In this sense, Fulwiler (1988, p. 167) defines revision as “A type of conceptual work in which students reread, rethink, and rewrite their ideas on paper until they match what they are thinking in their heads.” Rethinking their approach, topic, argument, evidence organization, and conclusion, as well as experimenting with change, is what revising entails (as cited in Labidi, 2022, p. 34).

Another definition which explains this critical stage by Hedge (1988) states that “good writers tend to concentrate on getting the content right first and leave details like correcting spelling, punctuation, and grammar until later” (p.23). Thus, she views revising as the stage which distinguishes good writers from poor writers. Additionally, the revising stage allows the student to reconsider the modifications besides removing inappropriate ideas or change word placement to better communicate their thoughts to the reader.

1.4.5 Editing Stage

Editing is the stage before the final stage in the writing process, in which learners prepare their work for publication. Fulwiler (1988) declares that editing “is more about changing language than it is about changing ideas.” (p. 167). In this regard, editing is mainly concerned with carefully correcting errors than the content. Therefore, it is a significant step that gives the learners a chance to perform effective piece of writing that is reliable and professional besides clear and comprehensible to the addressed audience.

1.4.6 Publishing Stage

The last stage of the writing process is publishing, where students present and share their writing work to the target audience. Donohue (2009) asserts that “the final stage of the writing process includes sharing, reflection, and assessment of the students writing.” (p. 14). Thus, at this point, students add final adjustments to ensure that their work is polished and free of errors. Murray (2005) mentions a variety of reasons why students want to publish their writing. These reasons include career progression, personal fulfillment, development of writing skills to higher quality and recognition for their efforts (as cited in Rabehi, 2024, p. 36).

1.5 Academic Writing Genres

English as a foreign language learners in Higher Education have to be aware of the different genres of academic writing in order to get an idea about the differences between their purposes and the audience for each type. The most common genres are essays, research papers, and theses and dissertations. Each one has its own format, style, characteristics, and objectives.

1.5.1 Essays

The essay is one of the most commonly used genres of writing at university. It serves as a medium through which students can communicate their ideas, analyze information, and present logical arguments. It is written for various purposes, including exploring, informing, and persuading. According to Your Dictionary (2019), an essay is a short literary composition that can be analytical, interpretive, or reflective in nature, dealing with its subject in a non-technical, limited, and often unsystematic manner, and usually expressing the author's perspective and personality.

In addition, Ivanic (1998) highlights that an essay allows students to develop and express their understanding of a subject, reflecting not only their critical thinking but also their capacity in following the norms of academic writing. Furthermore, Oshima and Hogue (2006) state that an essay is a piece of writing several paragraphs which all of them address one topic. However, due to the complexity to discuss the topic of an essay in one paragraph, the writer needs to divide it into various paragraphs, one for each main point.

All the essays share a similar style and structure, regardless of their type and purpose. Generally, an essay consists of three main parts: An introductory paragraph, which introduces the topic and the thesis statement, and the body paragraph in which the writer develops ideas and arguments supported by evidence, analysis, and examples. This is followed by a concluding paragraph that summarizes the main points and restates the thesis in the light of the discussion. The following figure shows the structure of an essay.

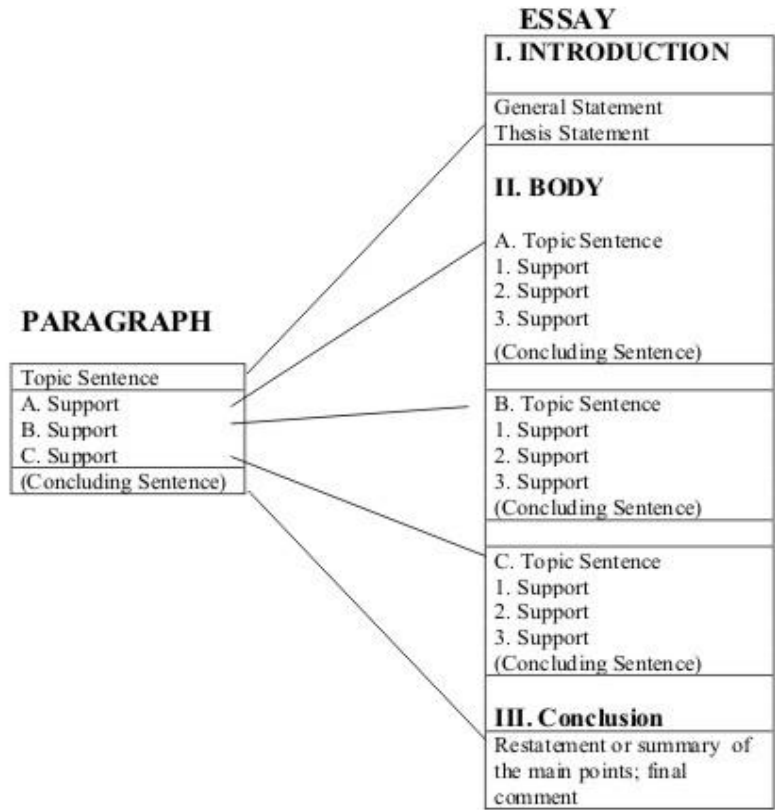


Figure 1.1: The Structure of an Essay (Oshima & Hogue 2007. p. 147)

1.5.2 Research Papers

A research paper is a common genre of academic writing that requires students to present an original analysis, evaluation, argument, or interpretation on a particular topic, based on thorough research, an existing literature review, and a discussion of findings. In this respect, Lester and Lester Jr (2015) describe a research paper as a scholarly document that demonstrates the authors original investigation, interpretation, and analysis of data, based on reliable sources, aiming to contribute to the academic discourse within a specific field.

Additionally, according to Serria College (2013), a research paper is a long essay in which students demonstrate what they have learned from the course through their own ideas. Students may use several sources simultaneously such as articles or books; however

they must be precise and concise because they are working on a paper of a certain length (as cited in Labadi, 2022, p. 29). Precisely, the research paper addresses the research field with incorporating the researcher's perspectives on the subject.

1.5.3 Theses and Dissertations

Most EFL undergraduate or postgraduate students are supposed to present a dissertation or a thesis at the end of graduation or post graduation. Sometimes, the two terms are used interchangeably; however, there is a clear difference between them. Smith (2019) mentions that students usually write a thesis at the master's level, while they work on a dissertation at the doctoral level.

In addition, Hyland (2016) points out that “the thesis is a complex genre that requires students to balance originality with disciplinary conventions, often under significant time and institutional pressures.” (p. 102). This indicates that the thesis is a challenging type of academic writing in which students have to combine their own ideas with recognized academic standards of their fields, while frequently managing deadlines and their institutional constraints. On the hand, a dissertation is an extended piece of academic writing designed to demonstrate the author's capacity in carrying out independent research, evaluating results, and providing new knowledge to their academic disciplines (Durnleavy, 2003). In short, both a dissertation and thesis generally have a similar fundamental structure, conventions, and aims; however, each university and institution may have distinct requirements for the composition of the.

1.6 Teaching Academic Writing Approaches

Due to the fact that writing academically is one of the complex tasks that EFL learners may face during their academic journey, several scholars have suggested efficient and effective approaches that cater to the specific needs and difficulties of language learners in teaching writing in EFL classrooms. However, over the last few years, the focus has been on three main approaches: product, process, and genre (Satjapiboon & Chuchart, 2010).

1.6.1 The Product Based Approach

The product-based approach is considered one of the traditional methods of teaching writing in EFL classrooms, and it focuses primarily on the final written product rather than the content and how the writing process is carried out. Hyland (2003) points out that this approach “encourages a focus on formal text units or grammatical features of texts.” (p. 3). In the same way, White and Arndt (1991) maintain that “the product approach prioritizes linguistic accuracy, ensuring that students produce grammatically correct and structurally sound texts.” (p. 15). They mean that this approach aims to identify students' writing strengths and weaknesses in terms of grammatical and syntactical forms of the language and improve their accuracy by giving the appropriate feedback about certain errors.

Although this approach can be practical to develop EFL learners' writing accuracy and proficiency, however, it has been criticized by many scholars. For instance, Hyland (2003) indicates that “while the product approach ensures linguistic accuracy, it often neglects the development of students' creativity and critical thinking skills.” (p. 19). This highlights that the process-based approach may not fully address the development of higher-order writing skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and problem solving of students. Indeed, this approach emphasizes the imitation of model texts, helping students in

mastering the norms and conventions of written language (Pincas, 1982); however these students do not write using their creativity, instead they only imitate what has been given to them.

1.6.2 The Process Based Approach

The process-based approach is an approach of teaching writing that focuses on teaching students how to produce writing ideas through the stages of the writing process, including pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Hyland (2003) states that the process approach significantly influences comprehension the nature of the writing and the way it is taught. Likewise, Tuffs (1993) affirms that the process approach focuses more on the stages that good writers go through before completing their final work (as cited in Rabehi & Hadfi, 2024, p. 30). Flower and Hayes (1981) further describe writing as "a recursive process involving planning, translating, and reviewing." (p. 366). This shows that this approach values the writing process as a recursive and dynamic activity rather than focusing on the final product.

The process-based approach could be a beneficial and useful method to teach writing, particularly academic writing, since it fosters students to develop their writing strategies and gain creativity and control over their writing skills. Besides, as asserted by Ferris (2003), "feedback is most effective when it is provided during the writing process, not just on the final product." (p. 19). Thus, it provides opportunities for feedback and improvement at each stage of the writing process.

1.6.3 The Genre Based Approach

The genre-based approach is an instructional method of teaching academic that focuses on teaching students writing by exploring the specific linguistic structures and

conventions of different academic writing genres or diverse types of texts, such as research papers, reports, and essays.

Hyland (2003) argues, “genre-based pedagogy helps learners understand how texts are structured and why they are written in certain ways.” (p. 21). Thus, this approach typically used in academic instruction in order to assist students understanding and producing the specific features and requirements of each genre of writing. As well, according to Tuan (2011), the genre-based approach emphasizes the social and cultural contexts of writing in which the language can be used, and the particular conventions and purposes related to various genres, rather than focusing only on being aware of genres and types of writing. In addition, Swales (1990) defines the genre-based approach as the following:

“A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purpose. The expert genre recognizes them. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constraints choice of content and style” (p. 85).

The author views a genre as a type of communication (such as essays or reports) described by a common purpose (e.g., to convince, inform.) These genres can be recognized by specialists based on their aim which determines their structures and impacts the content and style. In brief, despite the fact that each one of these approaches has its particularities and characteristics in teaching writing, however teachers can combine and adapt them to suit the specific needs of students and the teaching context.

1.7 The Importance of academic writing in EFL context

Recently, academic writing has been attracting a significant attention from several scholars in the EFL context, as it plays essential roles in empowering success in the higher

education journey. In the first place, academic writing is valuable for EFL learners to succeed in higher education and professional careers, since it enables them to communicate complex ideas clearly and effectively with their instructors and colleagues. Swales and Feak (2012) claim, "The ability to write academically is a cornerstone of success in the global academic community, enabling learners to participate in scholarly conversations and contribute to their field." (p. 3). That is to say, this skill is very crucial for learners to succeed in academia, as it allows them to join in scholarly discussions and share new knowledge in their fields.

Moreover, EFL learners can develop their grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure by engaging in academic writing, because it provides a structured context to practice sophisticated language forms. Hyland (2016) states, "Academic writing is not just about producing texts; it is about engaging with the language in a manner that fosters deeper understanding and mastery of linguistic structures." (p. 45). The author highlights that academic writing goes beyond simply generating written texts; however, it involves engaging actively with the language in a way that achieves a further comprehension and mastery of linguistic forms.

Furthermore, Flowerdew (2015) points out that "Academic writing requires learners to think critically, question assumptions, and present well- reasoned arguments, which are vital skills in higher education." (p. 12). In other words, academic writing helps learners to ameliorate their critical thinking skills by encouraging them to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize the information to convey their ideas, which are important skills for academic success. In the same line, Weigle (2002) indicates that writing and the necessary cognitive skills for pursuing one's education are closely related. Additionally, engaging in academic writing offers EFL learners a chance to practice and enhance their language abilities,

thereby developing their confidence in expressing their ideas in using English effectively for various purposes (Ferris, 2018).

In short, academic writing can be deemed to be challenging for learners in EFL contexts. However, it is a very crucial and demanding skill for them, because it is an effective mode of communication with others in diverse disciplines, as well as it improves their language proficiency, critical thinking skills, and confidence in communication. Accordingly, learners are required to engage in academic writing and cultivate acceptable writing skills to succeed in academic and professional careers.

1.8 Major Problems Facing EFL learners in AW

Due to the fact that writing is a complex cognitive activity which requires “careful thought, discipline, and connection” (Grami, 2010, p. 9), EFL learners find it as the most difficult skill to be learnt and mastered compared to the other skills. In this regard, Hedge (1988) and Westwood (2008) argue that writing is the most difficult of the four basic skills whether the language is a second or foreign. Moreover, Raimes (1983) thinks that “When students complain about how difficult it is to write in a second language, they are talking not only about the difficulty of finding the right words and using the correct grammar but also about the difficulty of finding and expressing ideas in a new language.” (p. 13). Thus, as it described as the process of transforming thoughts into language, writing requires both mental and physical efforts from the writer. In fact, the native speakers of the language themselves struggle with writing correctly, accurately, and effectively even on what they are well familiar with. That is to say, the writing difficulties are commonly shared among both native and non-native speakers of the language (Aragon et al., 2013).

Furthermore, a number of studies indicated that the problem of mastering the skills of academic writing is a common issue among all university students in different parts of

the world. For instance, Aldabbus (2017) analyzed the nature of challenges experienced by some Bahrani Teachers College students in acquiring reading and writing skills. The results revealed that mechanics of writing, lack of organization, and outlying their ideas are on the top of their weaknesses in writing. In another study conducted by Raza (2015) showed that the lack of summarizing a text or paraphrasing it accurately, determining whether a quotation is required or not, as well as plagiarism are the main source of obstacles encountered by the students.

Consequently, it can be inferred that EFL learners may face various core areas of difficulty in academic writing. In the first place, organizing ideas logically and producing a structure coherently is a common challenge, as learners regularly have trouble generating a clear outline and linking their ideas easily. Additionally, EFL learners could make several spelling, punctuation, and sentence formation errors due to their frequent struggle with choosing suitable academic vocabulary and applying the grammatical rules correctly in their academic writing. Lastly, EFL learners may find a difficult to effectively address the paraphrasing and summarizing techniques which are considered crucial components of academic writing. In short, these findings highlight the significance of providing efficient support to assist EFL learners to handle these challenges and improve their academic writing proficiency.

1.9 Definition of Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is considered one of the advanced academic writing skills, which is commonly implemented in research writing (McInnis, 2009). It is an essential writing skill for language students. This skill entails deriving the primary ideas from a source text and restating them without copying the original either syntactically or lexically. (Inayah, Sulistyaningrum, 2021 and Rahmayani, 2018 as cited in Alammam & Abdel- Reheem Amin, 2023, p.4).

As well, Richards and Schmidt (2010) define paraphrasing as “an expression of the meaning of a word or phrase using other words or phrases, often in an attempt to make the meaning easier to understand.” (p. 420). Moreover, Swales and Feak (2012) describe paraphrasing as “a restatement of the ideas in the original and good paraphrasing can indicate the comprehension and can avoid plagiarism.” (p. 202). Furthermore, Bailey (2006) presents the notion of paraphrasing as it includes changing a text while still keeping its meaning.

In short, as these definitions show, it can be stated that paraphrasing is one of the essential components of academic writing skills. It is an alternative method used by students to rewrite or rephrase a certain word, phrase, sentence, and even entire paragraph using different lexical and syntactical language items. This tool is designed to produce a new text without changing the original meaning of the source. The main aim behind using this technique is to develop updated versions of the previous content and to avoid plagiarism.

1.10 The Importance of Paraphrasing in Improving EFL Students' Academic Writing Skill

Several scholars have claimed that paraphrasing has a vital role in improving EFL students' academic writing skill. First and foremost, paraphrasing enable EFL learners to avoid plagiarism (Fitria, 2022; Rakhmanina & Serasi, 2022). In this regard, Ramadhani (2019) declares that paraphrasing allows writers to rephrase others' direct quotes using their own words; therefore it is an effective way to avoid plagiarism in which the quality of research papers can be developed. Likewise, according to Harris (2002) paraphrasing helps students to write a paper written in their own way to avoid the copy-paste technique that shows the lack of "flow" (as cited in Bouguerra & Meknassi, 2016, P. 39). Thus, the risk of

plagiarism can be evaded with the appropriate use of paraphrasing, in which the writers can prove respect for intellectual property of others' works.

Furthermore, it can reflect learners' comprehension and knowledge of the source text (Keck, 2006; Wette, 2010) and reveal their reading and writing skills in their second language, as learners are not solely altering words when paraphrasing; they are involving in the material. Therefore, it is a helpful indicator for L2 teachers to obtain insights into their learners' reading and writing abilities (Li & Casnave, 2012).

Additionally, paraphrasing is significant for university students in particular since it helps them to master their writing proficiency. Mainly, it makes students thinking creatively and engaging with the content helping them to expand their vocabulary. As they look for alternative ways to express concepts from a certain text differently without changing the original text's meaning (Nguyen, 2022). Moreover, paraphrasing can contribute to develop the critical thinking of the students. It fosters them to analyze critically the original source they are reading, highlight its key ideas, and then find a new way to convey them in their own styles and words. As a result, this technique enhances the students' analytical abilities and assists them to be thoughtful writers. To summarize, paraphrasing technique is a valuable writing exercise for EFL students to improve their academic writing skills. It mainly helps them to avoid plagiarism, enhance their understanding of the text content, expand their vocabulary, and encourages them to think critically.

1.11 Techniques of Paraphrasing

Numerous scholars, among them Jordan (1999), Harmer (2001), Harvey (2008), and Wallwork (2011) have suggested various techniques in order to help EFL learners obtaining a clear comprehension to communicate the author's idea and expressing it in new

and distinct ways avoiding plagiarizing. Mainly, these are by replacing synonyms, changing word classes, or by changing voices (active & passive).

1.11.1 Synonyms

One of the most common paraphrasing techniques is using synonyms, in which the learners replace the original words with new vocabulary or expressions that have equivalent meanings. However, the learners should not substitute technical words or proper names in the main source text, such as medical terms, economic terms, and so on. (Harvey, 2008, as cited in Bouguerra & Meknassi, 2016, P. 35).

Due to the fact that many English vocabulary may have numerous meanings and positively or negatively connotations, many students may struggle with using synonyms to paraphrase and they may be hesitant to opt for the suitable synonym (Wallwork, 2011). That is to say, words can be substituted by synonyms based on their context, as Harmer (2001) indicates, “words do not only have diverse meanings, nevertheless. They also can be stretched and twisted to suit various situations and purposes” (p. 19).

According to Higher Score's article (2007), two paraphrased equivalents illustrate the use of synonym technique.

Examples:

- It **can be** difficult to choose **a suitable** place to study English. (The original)
- It **is often** a challenge to pick up (x) **a relevant** (x) school to learn English.

(Paraphrase 01)

- It **is sometimes** hard to select **an appropriate** place to learn English. (Paraphrase

02)

1.11.2 Word Class

Word classes refer to the parts of speech that are classified based on their function in a sentence. The basic common word classes in English include nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, prepositions, and conjunctions. Learners can change some words in the source text into new different parts of speech as another technique for paraphrasing in writing.

In order to provide a further clarity on the technique of changing word classes, consider the following example from Koch (2013):

-Somebody **is knocking** on the door.

- There is **a knock** at the door.

"**is knocking**" is a verb in the first passage. In the second passage, it is replaced by a noun "**a knock**".

1.11.3 Passive and Active Voice

In some cases, students may be able to alter sentences written in the active voice to the passive voice and vice versa during the paraphrasing process. Changing voices entails a change in word order from one situation to another. Additionally, according to Jordan (1999), the majority of sentences are written in the active voice. However, in case where the performer is unknown, insignificant, a secret, understood, or clear, the passive voice can be used either to delete the subject of the active verb or to keep the subject-verb order.

For further explanation, the changing from active to passive and conversely, the following example from Higher Score's article (as cited in Bouguerra & Meknassi, 2016, P. 23) could be regarded as follows:

• From Passive to Active

The ICT Ministry **was assigned** by **the cabinet to oversee** the electronic ID card bidding.
(The original)

- **Step1** \Rightarrow The ICT Ministry **was appointed** by **the government to supervise** the electronic ID card bidding.

- **Step2** \Rightarrow The government **appointed** the ICT Ministry to supervise the electronic ID card bidding.

• From Active to Passive

PTT and Siam Cement will **fund** the **building** of new water pipelines in the Eastern seaboard. (The original)

- **Step 1** \Rightarrow PTT and Siam Cement **will finance** the **construction** of pipelines in the Eastern seaboard.

- **Step 2** \Rightarrow the construction of new water pipelines in the Eastern seaboard **will be finance** by PPT and Siam Cement.

Conclusion

As to conclude, EFL learners are required to master their academic writing especially in higher education context since it is pivotal for their success in academic and professional careers. Therefore, this chapter sought to address the writing skill; more precisely, it dealt with academic writing in terms of its definition, importance, genres, and distinct characteristics. Subsequently, it covered some of the fundamental approaches that can be adopted to teach this kind of writing; besides, it highlighted the common difficulties that EFL learners may face.

Moreover, it provided the main stages that EFL learners need to go through in order to produce an understandable piece of writing. The last part was fully devoted to

presenting the paraphrasing technique as a useful skill to write academically, showing its significance for EFL learners to improve their writing ability, and mentioning the typical techniques for effective paraphrasing. In the forthcoming chapter, artificial intelligence application in the EFL context will be presented and discussed.

CHAPTER TWO

Chapter Two: ICTs and AI Tools in EFL Context: Reviewing their Applications and Uses

Introduction

2.1 Theoretical Background of Information, Communication, and Technology in

Education

2.1.1 Computer- Assisted Language Learning

2.1.2 Technology Enhanced Language Learning

2.1.3 E-Learning

2.2 Artificial Intelligence

2.2.1 Definition of Artificial Intelligence

2.2.2 Types of Artificial Intelligence

2.2.2.1 Reactive Artificial Intelligence

2.2.2.2 Limited Memory Machines

2.2.2.3 Theory of Mind

2.2.2.4 Self-Aware Artificial Intelligence

2.2.3 Applications of Artificial Intelligence in Education

2.3 QuillBot

2.3.1 Overview of QuillBot Paraphraser

2.3.2 The Use of QuillBot Paraphraser in Academic Writing Process

2.3.3 Benefits of QuillBot Paraphraser

2.3.5 Drawbacks of QuillBot Paraphraser

Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the integration of artificial intelligence in education and EFL classroom by highlighting its significance. It also narrows the scope to establish the theoretical foundation of the QuillBot paraphraser, define it, and underline some of its merits and drawbacks. Ultimately, the chapter shows the reader how this application can be beneficial in improving EFL students' academic writing skills.

2.1 Theoretical Background of Information, Communication, and Technology in Education

Today, information and communication technologies (ICTs) revolutionize all aspects of human life, making creatively changes in their lifestyles as well as the demands of the society. These influences of new technologies have also been increasingly noticed in educational institutions.

ICT integration in education refers to the use of technology in the daily classroom teaching and learning process (Upadhayaya, 2023). In this digital age, the integration of ICT in education particularly in the classroom becomes significantly required due to the fact that students are familiar with technology. Also, the pedagogical aspects can be profoundly improved with the application of ICT that fosters effective learning through the support and help provided by numerous ICT elements and components (Jamieson-Procter et al., 2013). Subsequently, ICT presents a variety of benefits, transforming the learning and teaching experience for both students and teachers.

In addition, ICT plays a salient role in providing students with opportunities to learn and apply the needed 21st century skills (Ratheeswari, 2018). Besides giving both students and teachers more chances in adapting learning and teaching to individual needs, ICT can also assist those teachers to present their teaching attractively to their learners at any level

of educational programs. Further still, whereas the objective of integrating ICT is to enhance the quality, accessibility, and cost-effectiveness of how education is delivered to students, it also emphasizes the benefits of networking learning communities to tackle the challenges of today's globalization (Albirni, 2006).

ICT generally means the use of digital technologies and resources, such as computers, multimedia devices, the internet, wireless networks, and so on in order to enable people and institutions transmitting, creating, storing, and accessing information. According to UNESCO "ICT is a scientific, technological and engineering discipline and management technique used in handling information, its application and association with social, economic and cultural matters". It aims to enable societies creating inclusive knowledge by handling the effects of the latest developments in technology on education and learning, for instance, Artificial Intelligence, the Internet, and Mobile Technologies.

2.1.1 Computer-Assisted Language Learning

The term "CALL" stands for Computer Assisted Language Learning. It refers to the use of computer by teachers and students as a part of language courses (Hardisty & Windeatt, 1989). The integration of computer in language learning dates back to the 1960s, although they have been used since the first half of the 20th century (Gündüz, 2005). In its early stages, it was only available to students at universities. The best-known tutorial system, PLATO (Programmed Logic for Automatic Teaching Operations), at the University of Illinois was one of the first programs designed to provide mainframe based-drill-and-practice activities such as vocabulary drills, grammatical explanations, and translation tests at various intervals (Warschauer & Healey, 1998). This project was considered as a turning point in the development of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) (Marthy, 1981).

In the 1970's and 1980's, there was a rush in CALL program development, due to the emerging of communicative CALL in which the mainframe computers were replaced by personal computers (PCs) which became more widely available. For numerous proponents of communicative CALL, the emphasis should be on students' collaboration with each other while using the machine, instead of focusing on their interactions with the computer (Warschauer & Healey, 1998).

Hence, CALL is an interactive approach of instruction that allows learners to work at their own pace and capacity to attain their learning objectives. In this method, computer technology is employed in all stages of the teaching/learning process, including presentation, practice, and feedback (Kumar & Sreehari, 2009, as cited in Labidi, 2022, p. 9).

2.1.2 Technology-Enhanced Language Learning

The shift in emphasis from computers to technology places more attention on the media of communication enabled by computers, rather than the computers themselves (Kranthi, 2017). Subsequently, the difference between Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Technology-Enhanced language learning (TELL) is that the former focuses on using the computers as a tool, while the latter encompasses a range of technologies, including social media, mobile devices, and online resources, therefore the computers become less visible yet more prevalent.

According to Dewi (2019) TELL is the use of digital technology, including software, hardware, and the internet to enhance language learning by enabling learners to access online dictionaries, online communication, and view global events (as cited in Iberahim et al., 2023). However, it should be noted that TELL is not inherently a teaching method, but

rather a strategy that can be integrated with a teaching method to improve the learning process (Ibrahim et al., 2023).

In addition, TELL promotes computer-mediated communication (CMC) which explored to enhance students' writing and speaking competences in a targeted language (Kranthi, 2017). The core purpose of this field of study is developing and improving language learning through the integration of multiple forms of technology (Golshan & Tafazoli, 2014; Hubbard, 2013; Yeşilel, 2016). Teachers can use a range of technological tools to successfully perform their teaching activities, increase students' engagement and motivation in the learning process, and evaluate their work not just in the classroom, but also outside of it.

On top of that, some technologies allow teachers to adapt tasks and homework assignments tailored to the needs of students, thereby enhancing the language learning experience (Patel, 2017). Conversely, as the technologies used in language learning and instruction are constantly evolving and some of them become outdated and are no longer used, both learners and instructors need to keep up with their new applications and developments and have a thorough understanding of these technological advancements in order to effectively learn and teach the language.

2.1.3 E-Learning

The term "E-learning" first used in the year 1998 (Aulakh, 2023). It is made up of two parts: "E" stands for electronic, and "learning" refers to the process of acquiring knowledge (as cited in Labidi, 2022, p.10). E-learning generally refers to a technology-assisted learning system that is commonly known as online learning, mobile learning, web-based learning, or distance education (Aulakh et al., 2023). It is a modern form of distance education used as an alternative to a traditional classroom learning methods to deliver

training or educational material through digital devices like computers, tablets, and Smartphones. Furthermore, E-learning is an instructional process that enables learners to access a wide range of courses and resources independently of place and time, making it flexible and efficient approach to learning (Ratheeswari, 2018).

In addition, E-learning technologies are widely used for providing a customized learner-focused, new innovative way to deliver learning content and facilitate educational experiences, and interactive educational environment to students (Chitra & Raj, 2018). Ultimately, it can be inferred that E-learning is a program that incorporates all educational activities that are performed by individuals or groups working synchronously (online) or asynchronously (offline) using networked computers and other electronic devices for course delivery, interaction, and/or facilitation (Chitra & Raj, 2018).

2.2 Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a rapidly expanding technological discipline that has been studied for decades and it remains one of the most elusive subjects within the realm of computer science. Recently, it has the potential to make many adjustments in various aspects of our social life. Particularly, in the field of education, AI has started to create new teaching and learning tools which are presently being evaluated in multiple contexts.

2.2.1 Definition of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

First and foremost, the term "artificial intelligence" was coined by Johan McCarthy when he held the first academic conference at Dartmouth college in 1956 on this subject. However, over time, several scholars have sought to provide a clear and accurate definition to the term "artificial intelligence". According to Deng (2018), artificial intelligence (AI) can be defined as the field of computer and technology dedicated to the development of

theories, approaches, techniques, algorithms, and real-world applications intended to replicate and enhance human intelligence.

In addition, Owan et al., (2023) precisely highlight that “AI is the ability of machines to adapt to new and emerging situations, problem solve, answer questions, create plans, and perform other intelligent functions typically associated with human beings”. (p. 1). That is, AI is concerned with enabling machines to perform activities that commonly related to human intelligence, such as adjusting to new conditions, solving problems, and answering questions.

Further still, AI is the process through which machines, especially computer systems, can simulate human intelligence processes (Tucci, 2021). Correspondingly, Williams (1983) points out that “Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) is a multidisciplinary field whose goal is to automate activities that presently require human intelligence.” (p.94). This implies that AI incorporates numerous disciplines such as computer science, mathematics, and engineering aiming to create computer programs and systems that can imitate human intelligence processes, such as problem solving, learning, and decision-making.

In short, it can be argued that artificial intelligence (AI) is technological field that is designed to enable computers and machines in simulating the cognitive functions of human beings, including learning, reasoning, comprehension, making decisions, or solving problems.

2.2.2 Types of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence can be broadly categorized into two categories: AI based on capability and AI based on functionality. This study seeks to classify AI based on functionality, in this respect, it can be classified into four primary types include reactive

machines, limited memory, theory of mind, and self-awareness. Each type has specific scope, principles, aims, and methodologies used.

2.2.2.1 Reactive Machines

According to Mitchell (2019), “Reactive machines are the simplest form of AI, designed to respond to immediate stimuli without any form of memory or learning capability.” (p. 56). As this definition indicates, reactive machines are the most fundamental form of AI. These systems lack of memory and respond to stimuli without the ability to memorize the past experience or previous outcomes, they only work with presently available data. Additionally, reactive AI is characterized by lack of self-awareness and consciousness.

These systems are typically designed in order to perform specific tasks that require immediate and accurate reactions to particular situations. However, they are incapable of recollecting memories or past encounters for future decisions-making. Alternatively, reactive machines assess the present state of the world and make decisions merely based on that assessment (Sahota, 2023). An example of reactive AI is IBM's Deep Blue that is known for its achievement in beating the chess world champion Garry Kasparov in 1997.

2.2.2.2 Limited Memory

Unlike reactive AI, this kind of AI has the ability to store and recall certain past events and outcomes as well as monitor particular objects or situations over time. Furthermore, limited memory AI can use past and present moment data to decide on desired aims. Nevertheless, its ability to retain that data in a library of past experiences to use over a long-term period is restricted. Moreover, Goodfellow et al., (2016) indicate that “Limited memory artificial intelligence represents a significant leap forward, enabling machines to learn from historical data and improve their performance over time.” (p. 78).

These limited memory machines can enhance their performance as a result of its training on more data over time. Generative AI tools such as "ChatGPT" and "Self-driven cars" are the most common examples of limited memory AI.

2.2.2.3 Theory of Mind

Theory of mind AI is considered one of the functional classes of general AI. This type of unrealized AI is designed to create systems that can interpret and comprehend cognitive states of other agents and entities, such as intentions, beliefs, thoughts, emotions, and desires, facilitating more natural and intuitive human-machine communication. Moreover, as theory of mind AI can infer individuals' motives and needs, it would personalize its interactions with humans based on their unique requirements and intentions. It would also be able to contextualize and generalize data to a variety of problems, which today's generative AI tools are unable to do. To date, artificial emotional intelligence is being developed, as AI scholars hope it will be able to analyze voices, images, and other kinds of data to realize, imitate, and respond suitably to humans' emotions. Precisely, theory of mind holds the capacity to understand the world and the mental and emotional states of other beings.

2.2.2.4 Self-Aware Artificial Intelligence

Self-aware artificial intelligence is the final and most advanced kind of AI that is basically characterized by consciousness and it is also called artificial super intelligence. This type of AI is strictly theoretical similar to theory of mind AI, if ever achieved, it would have the ability to understand its own internal states and characteristics as well as emotions and thoughts of human beings. In addition, according to Jorge (2023, as cited in Ferchichi, 2024, pp. 26-27) the concept of self-aware entails developing AI systems that comprehend their own existence, identity, thoughts, and emotions, this capacity could

empower AI to engage with the world more deeply, mirroring certain facets of the human experience

2.2.3 Applications of Artificial Intelligence in Education

In recent years, the proliferation of AI has revolutionized various aspects of modern life. It has been increasingly used to fulfill a wide range of objectives in several sectors, including healthcare, entertainment, and finance. Therefore, numerous scholars and academic professionals have been thoroughly monitoring the incorporation of AI within the field of education. Jiahui et al. (2021) indicate that “the application of AI in the field of education has realized the full integration of teaching and learning, and also provided an opportunity for the reform of teaching and learning.” (p. 207). Thus, AI technology application in education has the potential to be useful, particularly in terms of enhancing learning and teaching quality.

Additionally, the growing use of technological tools and educational software has profoundly impacted learning and teaching languages by improving the way that knowledge is transferring between teachers and students, as well as among peers (Oluwafemi Ayotunde et al., 2023). However, AI should be applied in an effective and proficient manner in order to enhance education. Accordingly, this section summarizes how AI tools can be applied in education in these essential key points.

2.2.3.1 Personalized Learning

Tools and systems based on AI have the potential to provide students with personalized learning that is tailored to their needs, interests, and learning styles, besides heightening their motivation and engagement in learning, as stated here: "The use of AI as a technique for motivating students is an exciting and rapidly developing area of research

in education, with the potential to provide personalized learning experiences that can enhance motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes." (Neji et al., 2023, p. 98).

In addition, AI-powered platforms can offer effective feedback to students based on their learning needs by analyzing data from various sources such as homework, assignments, and quizzes. Furthermore, Adiguzel et al., (2023) argue that along with developing lesson contents and learning experiences, AI tools can be also used for individualized learning. This enables students to learn at their individual pace and address the aspects where they struggle, ensuring more efficient and targeted learning.

2.2.3.2 Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITSs)

AI-powered tutoring systems are computer-based educational tools that use AI to provide immediate and customized instruction and feedback to students, similar to those offered by human tutors (as cited in Ferchichi, 2024, p. 28). These systems dynamically adapt to students' learning styles, tailoring content to their individual needs (Owan et al., 2023). This helps learners enhance their learning outcomes, ensuring that they are neither overwhelmed nor bored, and keeping engagement and motivation levels high. Along with this, intelligent tutoring systems have the capacity to furnish instructors with insights into students' progress, common challenges, and areas where they need additional support (Koedinger & Tanner, 2013). This fosters continuous improvement and reduces waiting time for traditional grading, as well as allowing teachers to intervene effectively. Examples of these systems include Carnegie Learning, ALEKS, and Knewton (Owan et al., 2023).

2.2.3.3 Virtual Assistants and Chatbots

Virtual assistants and chatbots are AI-powered tools designed to assist students with administrative tasks such as scheduling, reminders, and information retrieval, besides providing them with immediate feedback and answers to their academic questions. These

tools typically aid learners in staying organized and focused, allowing them to effectively manage their time and complete their coursework.

Moreover, chatbots can simulate human conversations through voice commands, text chats, or both to offer swift assistance and make learning accessible for both learners and teachers. Further still, when appropriately programmed, chatbots and virtual assistants serve as counselors, student support, and guidance tools, reducing labor costs and enabling teachers to analyze students with AI assistance (Goyal, Minz, & Sha, 2023, as cited in Ferchichi, 2024, p. 29).

2.2.3.4 Natural Language Processing (NLP)

AI-powered natural language processing (NLP) tools refer to AI systems designed to understand, interpret, and generate human language. NLP tools can be used in educational contexts to assist students in learning languages and enhance their writing skills by offering grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation feedback. Additionally, these tools can contribute to the improvement of students' critical thinking skills by analyzing and evaluating arguments and evidence (Owan et al., 2023).

Furthermore, NLP AI supports students with relevant study materials, articles, and reliable resources adapted to fit their needs, saving their time and effort. Moreover, instructors can gain insights into student learning and commitment using NLP software by examining and interpreting natural language data, such as student essays, discussions, assignments, and social media posts. There are several NLP-powered systems that provide real-time help to students on their tasks, including Grammarly, IBM Watson, Google Cloud Natural Language, and Microsoft Azure Cognitive Services (Owan et al., 2023).

2.2.3.5 Computer-Based Testing (CBT) Platforms

Computer-Based Testing (CBT) Platforms are software systems that widely used in education as an alternative to the traditional pen-paper-based testing method and to improve the entire testing process for both test-takers and administrators. Educators mainly use these platforms to administer online tests and assessments, including multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, and essay questions. As well, CBT platforms enable educators to assess student knowledge, provide them with instant feedback, and save time on grading (Bassey et al., 2020). ExamSoft, ProProfs, and Questionmark are the common examples of CBT platforms.

2.2.3.6 Automated Transcription and Translation

AI technologies enable students to transcribe and translate lectures and other educational materials. They are particularly beneficial for those students who may struggle with understanding the language used in their coursework or may have hearing impairments. These systems can also translate spoken content into various languages, breaking down language barriers, and making the same educational content more accessible to a broader spectrum of students, especially those who may speak different languages. Accordingly, they are useful in multilingual classrooms and for international students. As an illustration, Google Voice uses AI-powered speech recognition to transcribe real-time lectures and other educational contents. Other examples involve Amazon Transcribe, Otter AI, and Dragon Naturally Speaking.

2.3 QuillBot

The development of technology over time has significantly influenced various aspects of people's lifestyles, including learning and teaching methods. Artificial intelligence is a pivotal component of technology that seeks to incorporate human-like

thinking and problem-solving abilities into machines. The aim is to enable those machines performing numerous tasks typically associated with human intelligence. One of these tasks is the academic writing skill. As academic writing is regarded one of the most challenging and sophisticated tasks that require students be skillful writers as well as critical thinkers, there are several AI-powered technologies and applications have been designed to facilitate the writing activities for EFL students. One practical application of AI is QuillBot, which has emerged as a potential solution to the difficulties that writers encounter (Nurmaynti & Suryadi, 2023; Xuyen, 2023; Fitria, 2021).

QuillBot stands out as one of the most common online platforms designed to reduce writing barriers and help to produce effective writing work (Thohir et al., 2024). It serves as an AI-powered writing assistant that proves valuable in aiding EFL students in enhancing their writing skills by offering a variety of functionalities, including sentence paraphrasing, grammar checking, summarizing, and detecting plagiarism (Nurmaynti & Suryadi, 2023). Given the array of functions provided by this tool, including its paraphrasing features, it has been proven that these features are highly beneficial for professional writers, teachers, students, and various other users to improve their writing abilities (Fitria, 2021; Kurniati & Fithriani, 2022; Xuyen, 2023).

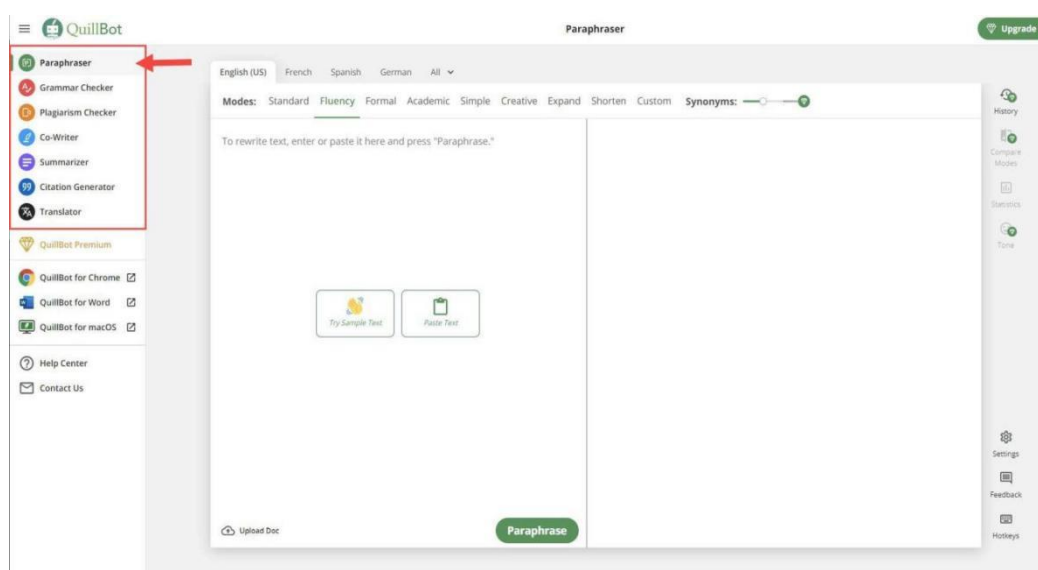
2.3.1 An Overview of QuillBot Paraphraser

QuillBot paraphraser is an advanced online paraphrasing application that uses cutting-edge artificial intelligence to rephrase any piece of content effectively. It is one of the most popular used free online paraphrasing tools (Fitria, 2021). It is an AI-mediated tool that its primary aim is to generate sentences that are identical to those in the original text in the main meaning; however, they are written in a distinct syntax. This AI application has been founded by three computer science students: Rohit Gupta, Anil Jason, and David Silin in 2017. They have continuously introduced new features to enhance the

product's quality in the application since its inception. In essence, QuillBot provides several other features beyond its paraphrasing functions, including grammar checker, plagiarism checker, summarizer, co-writer, and citation generator (Rakhmania & Serasi, 2022). The figure below displays QuillBot Paraphraser user interface.

Figure 2.1

QuillBot Paraphraser's User Interface



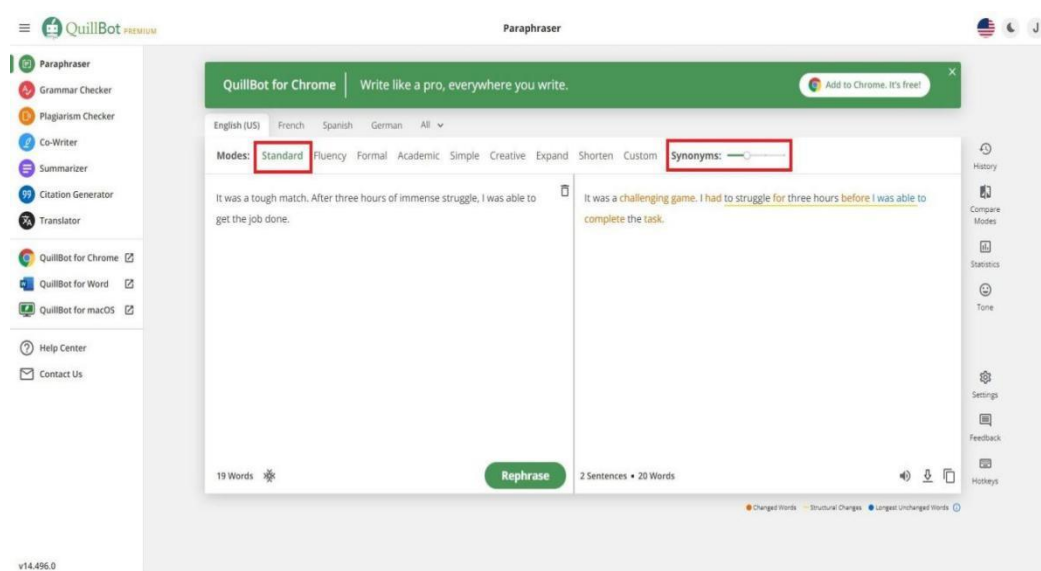
The user can access to QuillBot's homepage by visiting their online platforms on their website.

Furthermore, owing to its richness of vocabulary and ease of use, QuillBot has gained the trust of millions of users, including teachers, writers, bloggers, students, and others (Chapelle & Saura, 2019; Fitria, 2021). In order to meet the different needs and preferences of users, QuillBot offers both free and premium versions. On the one hand, the free version has a character limit of 125 characters to be paraphrased at once, and it solely provides the Standard and Fluency modes. The former reliably emphasizes making the text appear as natural as possible while remaining its intended meaning. However, the latter

makes slight modifications to the one's writing while ensuring to keep the original meaning intact.

Figure 2.2

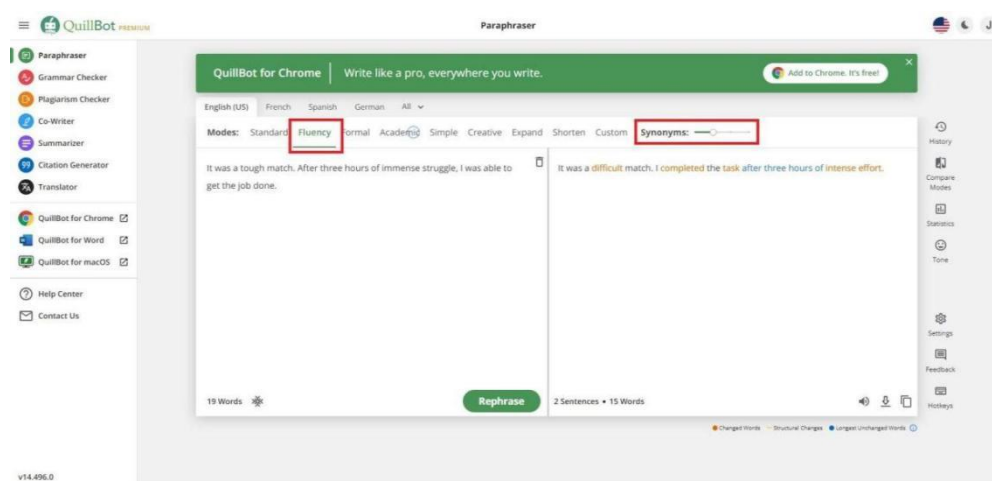
Using QuillBot Paraphraser in Standard Mode



Standard mode serves as the default feature. It balances modifying the content with maintaining the original meaning to make it sound as natural as possible.

Figure 2.3

Using QuillBot Paraphraser in Fluency Mode

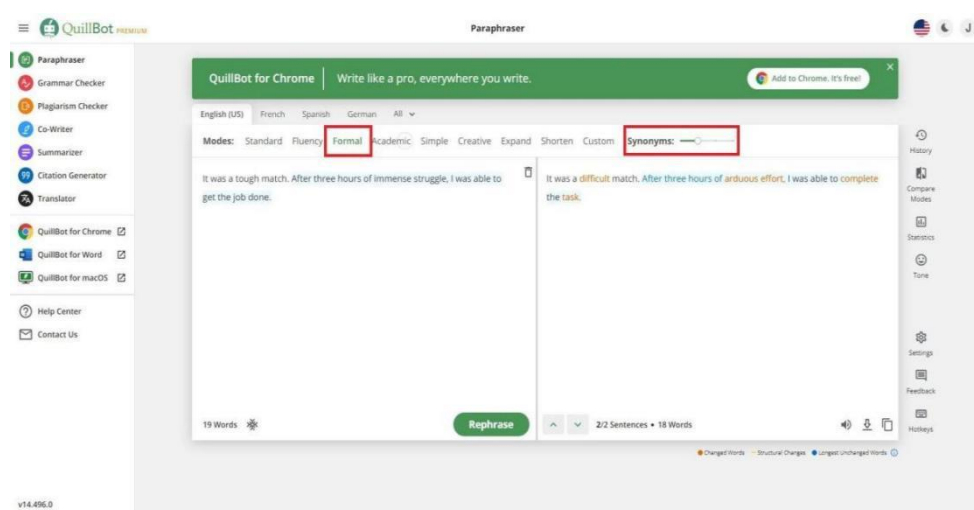


This picture shows an example of using QuillBot paraphraser in fluency mode. Particularly, this mode makes minimal changes, correcting grammatical mistakes and ensuring that the text sounds genuine. It also offers the user with synonym substitutions features to flexibly change the words that would be able to be marked by yellow color.

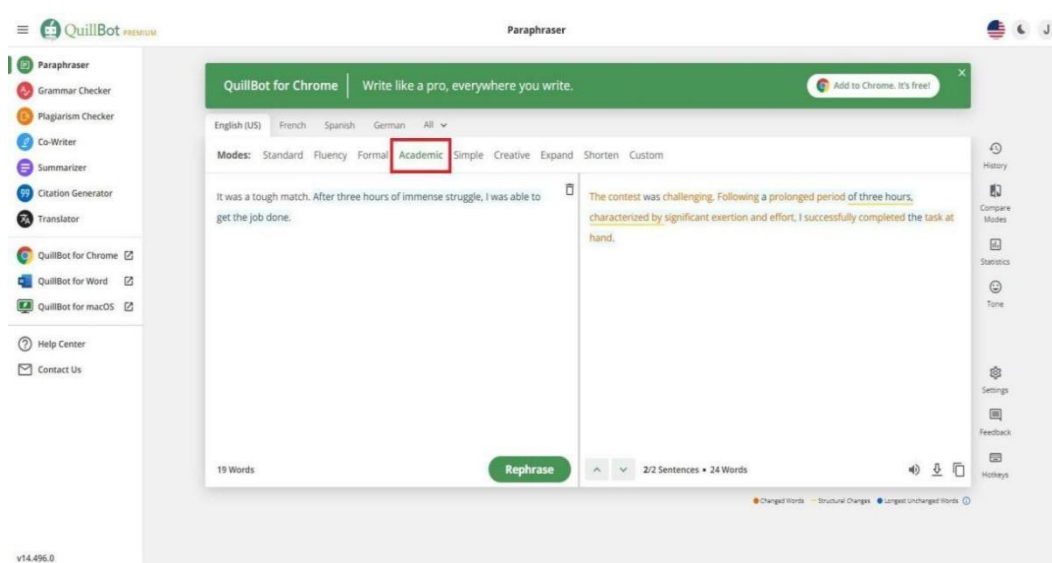
On the other hand, the premium version allows its users to increase the maximum character limit to 10,000. Additionally, unlike QuillBot's free version, this version boasts more valuable features to help in making paraphrasing easier at any mode, including Formal, Simple, Creative, Expand, and Shorten. Moreover, with the premium edition, users are able to use the highest level on synonym option, where they can paraphrase rapidly and enhance their work.

The platform does not offer a wide range of subscriptions that we can choose from, yet it does have a free version even though it presents limited features. The cost of the paid full version of the QuillBot paraphraser app in 2025 will be determined by the length of the users' subscription.

- Premium Monthly Subscription: \$9.95
- Premium Semi-Annual Subscription: \$36.95
- Premium Annual Subscription: \$49.95

Figure 2.4*Using QuillBot Paraphraser in Formal Mode*

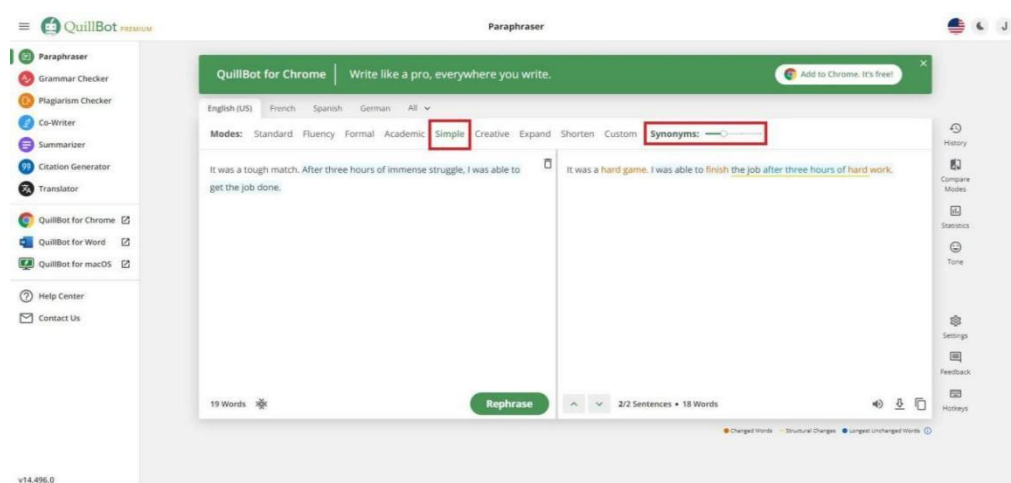
This mode is beneficial especially for those who working in academic or professional contexts, as it modify the text to look more polished and professional, making it appropriate for academic or business contexts.

Figure 2.5*Using QuillBot Paraphraser in Academic Mode*

Unlike other modes, academic mode does not present any synonym bar. Instead, it rewrites the text in a more scholarly way, giving further details and wordings suitable for academic contexts.

Figure 2.6

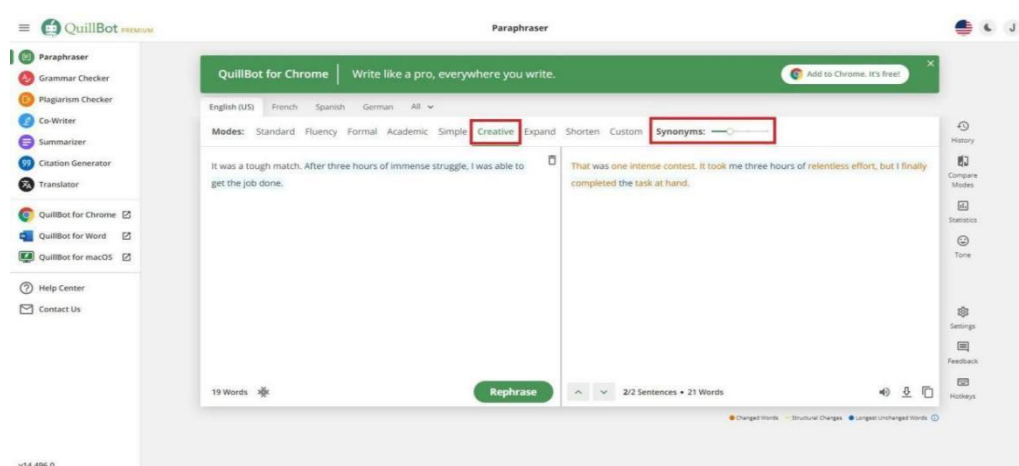
Using QuillBot Paraphraser in Simple Mode



Simple mode could be the ideal choice for the user when clarity and direct communication is needed since it simplifies the content, making it easier to grasp and more accessible.

Figure 2.7

Using QuillBot Paraphraser in Creative Mode



With this mode, the original meaning of the text could be significantly altered, as it entirely changes its content. It is useful for content creators who looking for a new perspective on their writing.

2.3.2 The Use of QuillBot Paraphraser in Academic Writing Process

Writing academically in English tends to be a challenging task for any writer; however ESL or EFL learners may find it more challenging (Lin & Morrison, 2021). Improving academic writing proficiencies is a priority for EFL students especially those at higher education institutions, since English language is demanded in the most academic papers, particularly articles, dissertations, or international journals and conferences.

Mastering this skill requires a solid knowledge on how to structure a paragraph or essay as well as a basic comprehension of how to write in English (Na & Mai, 2017). In that case, paraphrasing technique is crucial for those students as it enables them to write effectively and logically connect ideas in sentences, paragraph, or essays (Xuyen, 2023). In addition, writing in academic contexts depends heavily on paraphrasing skills to prove that the author understands the primary idea of what they have read and uses properly referenced evidence to back up their claim (Fillenbaum, 1970; Keck, 2006, 2014; Shi, 2012; Rogerson & McCarthy, 2017 as cited in Manalastas, n.d). Also, this technique helps EFL learnersto avoid plagiarism (Fitria, 2022; Rakhmanina & Serasi, 2022).

Regardless its value in academic writing, paraphrasing skill creates some difficulties for EFL learners. They are frequently struggling with performing an effective content free of plagiarism and addressing the intended meaning. For this reason, QuillBot, as one of the automated writing evaluation programs has been developed to address these challenges and assist students to improve their paraphrasing abilities and enhance the overall quality of their writing work. Several studies shed light on the potential and benefits of integrating

QuillBot in academic writing process. In the same way, many researchers like Chui (2022), Fitria (2022), Kurniati and Fithriani (2022), Huong (2022), and Junaidi et al. (2022) believe that QuillBot can be beneficial to students in terms of avoiding plagiarism, paraphrasing, and auto-correcting writing (as cited in Xuyen, 2023).

2.3.3 Benefits of QuillBot Paraphraser

Several researchers and academic experts (e.g., Fitria, 2022; Nurmayanti & Suryadi, 2023; Rakhmanina & Serasi, 2023) in a significant number of studies have looked into using QuillBot paraphraser to assist EFL students address their challenges in their academic writing classes. This online tool may help students in a variety of ways. In the first place, QuillBot paraphraser uses state-of-the-art artificial intelligence to simplify any text paraphrase process; therefore it is a time-saving tool, especially for those who lack the time to paraphrase manually. In addition, it assists students in finding the appropriate synonym by involving a built-in thesaurus feature that enables them to change particular words.

Furthermore, it is a user-friendly program; users simply copy and paste pre-existing text, then they only need to press the "Paraphrase" button, and QuillBot paraphrases it. Along with this, it gives the students the chance to develop the scope of their vocabulary with the use of its feature of synonym slider, which allows them to immediately edit their contents. In short, QuillBot paraphraser may have a crucial role in aiding EFL students overcome paraphrasing difficulties, thereby improving their writing's quality.

2.3.4 Drawbacks of QuillBot Paraphraser

QuillBot paraphraser proves to be an efficient and effective AI writing assistant, however it has demonstrated certain limitations. First of all, QuillBot's free version has limited features that may be not useful for its users even though it is accessible to all of

them. On the other side, the premium version includes advanced features compared to those in the free one, yet it requires paid subscription, which may be expensive and inaccessible to all users. Moreover, the use of this automated paraphrasing tool may result in poor language quality and incorrect terminology (Ansorge et al., 2021). Furthermore, the overreliance on QuillBot paraphraser may hinder students' ability to learn effectively.

Conclusion

To recapitulate, education has witnessed remarkable advancements in light of artificial intelligence use which has made a great influence on our foreign language learning experiences, especially in higher education contexts. It has provided diverse tools and programs that can be persistent assistants in the learning process. This chapter sought to present an overview of integrating artificial intelligence into education, and it was mainly focused on QuillBot paraphraser.

So far, this tool is seen as an effective AI tool that is potentially capable to assist EFL students to fulfill the academic needs with its ability to reduce mistakes and provide the needed paraphrasing contents, thus they can exploit it to improve their academic writing skills. However, it is crucial to look for both sides of QuillBot paraphraser as it can facilitate some tasks as it can be also harmful, because using it can present obstacles and concerns to ensure effectiveness and ethical considerations around using artificial intelligence. Accordingly, the chapter also has mentioned some of its advantages as well as some of its disadvantages.

The following chapter will be devoted to present a theoretical description concerning the adopted methodology for the current research alongside with the rationale of methodological procedures and choices.

CHAPTER THREE

Chapter Three: The Methodology for this Study

Introduction

3.1 Research Methodology for this Study: Theoretical Background, Choices and Rationale

3.1.1 Research Paradigm

3.1.2 Research Approach

3.1.3 Research Design

3.1.4 Data Collection Methods

3.1.4.1 Students' questionnaire

3.1.4.1.1 Structure and aim

3.1.4.1.2 Validation

3.1.4.1.3 Piloting

3.1.4.2 Students' focus group

3.1.4.2.1 Structure and aim

3.1.4.2.2 Piloting and validation

3.1.5 Data Collection Procedures

3.1.6 Data Analysis Procedures

3.1.7 Population and Sampling Technique

Conclusion

Introduction

In the present chapter, the researcher attempts to provide a description of the key components constituting the research process that was conducted to investigate the perceptions of and attitudes towards the use of QuillBot paraphraser by EFL learners in the context under study to ameliorate their written productions. Precisely, this chapter accounts for the current research's methodology namely, the research paradigm, research approach, and research design. In the same line, data collection methods, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, and sampling techniques will be described. Additionally, it offers the rationale behind adopting each element of the methodological fieldwork.

3.1 Research Methodology for this Study: Choices and Rationale

This section attempts to highlight the methodological choices used in the current study and provides a rationale behind each choice.

3.1.1 Research Paradigm

In the current study, the researcher is investigating a phenomenon at the Department of Language and English Literature at Biskra University, and making an effort to better understand perceptions of, attitudes towards, and challenges of Master students concerning the use of QuillBot paraphraser to improve their written productions. Giving this, the interpretivist paradigm is hereby adopted due to its relevance to the nature of investigation and its flexibility, as it enables the researcher to take part in the study by interacting with the phenomenon or the subject being studied from the experience and perspective of the participants.

According to Cohen et al., (2018), the interpretivist paradigm construes the social reality through the experiences of different participants, as well as it encourages the researcher's own intervention arguing that subjective meaning may be as empirically

testable as objective statements. Thus, this paradigm considers that researchers' beliefs cannot be detached from the research process and accordingly influence it.

In addition, since this study aims to collect qualitative data, i.e., learners' perceptions, attitudes, and challenges on using QuillBot paraphraser, interpretivism is the point of the departure for this study. Furthermore, the rationale behind opting for this paradigm is because it allows the use of a variety of data collection methods to completely comprehend the phenomenon under investigation. Overall, with regards to the nature of the study, the research questions that were raised, and the research aims, the interpretivist paradigm was the suited paradigm to be employed in the present study.

3.1.2 Research Approach

In compliance to the interpretivist research paradigm, a qualitative research approach has been employed to data collection and analysis for this study. This particular type has been selected due to the nature of the problem and the formulated research questions. In precise terms, since the study presents a description of a specific educational phenomenon in which the researcher attempts to evaluate the perceptions, attitudes of the participants, and truthfully reported their experiences, it is required to use qualitative research data (non-numeric) to fulfill the objectives and answer the questions of the present research study. As a result and considering what has been mentioned, the qualitative approach is the most appropriate research approach for the current research.

3.1.3 Research Design

According to Kumar (2011) a research design is, “A procedural plan that is adopted by the researcher to answer questions validly, objectively, accurately and economically” (p. 96). This proves that it is a practical blueprint or road map that enables the researcher to answer their research questions in a systematic way. Thereby, aligning with an interpretivist paradigm and following the qualitative approach to data collection, a Case

Study Design was chosen for the present inquiry. Crowe et al., (2011) defined a case study design as, “A research approach that is used to generate an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context.” (p. 1). Thus, this research design can be used in diverse research studies for numerous purposes and reasons, allowing the researchers to produce a profound comprehension of a certain issue.

The researcher seeks to state a clear view and explanation of an existing educational phenomenon in its natural real-life context to attain a better and inclusive understanding about its nature. In light of what proceeds and due to the descriptive nature of the present inquiry, the approach that corresponds most with the current study is the case study research design.

3.1.4 Data Collection Method(s)

Data collection methods refer to the instruments that can be employed by the researcher in order to gather the required data and provide clear answers to the research questions. As far as this research follows a qualitative approach, two qualitative data collection methods were adopted to fulfill the aforementioned aims. These tools are: An unstructured questionnaire and a focus group.

3.1.4.1 Students' Questionnaire

The primary data collection instrument selected to collect the necessary data and answer the research questions under the present study was the unstructured questionnaire.

3.1.4.1.1 Structure and Aim. The administration of a questionnaire to the targeted sample was a crucial step in order to gain a detailed comprehension of the current research. Primarily, it was designed to cover the perceptions of and attitudes towards of Master students regarding the use of artificial intelligence tools in academic writing classes. More specifically, the stimulus for adopting this data collection method is to answer these research questions: (1) how do Master students English at Biskra University perceive the

use of artificial intelligence tools in their academic writing? (2) In what way do Master students of English at Biskra University experience the use of QuillBot paraphraser when drafting their writings?

The questionnaire was addressed to 25 Master students (Sciences of Language) at Biskra University. It was unstructured (containing open-ended questions), and involved three sections that had an overall of 16 questions. The first section included five questions regarding the students' attitudes towards academic writing, what complexities they usually face while writing academically, how they evaluate their overall paraphrasing skills, and their strategies that they use when paraphrasing. Additionally, section two dealt with students' perceptions about using AI tools in academic writing. Lastly, section three incorporated questions that identify students' familiarity and opinions regarding the integration of QuillBot paraphraser application into academic writing.

In this way, the students were allowed to add further explanations and share answers based on their personal experiences and observations when needed. It is important to point out that consent letters have been distributed to the target students in order to ensure their participation in the study. Subsequently, the researcher coordinated a suitable time for all the respondents to submit the questionnaire. The latter has been handed out to the students as hard-copies during their class sessions to collect the needed data.

3.1.4.1.2 Validation. With the aim to ensure the credibility of the unstructured questionnaire, as well as minimizing bias and confirming that it effectively supports the study's objectives, four teachers from our University, including our supervisor, validated the questionnaire. It is worth mentioning that these teachers were provided with an Opinionnaire, including question items about any ambiguity in the instructions, the layout, and formulation of questions, etc. Their remarks were mostly positive except for one teacher who noted that there were some questions repeated and therefore, they should be

replaced by another. That concerned with the third Question in section one and Question six in section three, they were respectively: How do you view the importance of paraphrasing technique in academic writing? : How important do you think that using QuillBot is in mastering your paraphrasing abilities? As highlighted by the teacher both ask about the importance of paraphrasing in academic writing and mastering paraphrasing skills, accordingly we have taken their remark into consideration and then we reformulated the questions.

Also, they proposed including the following question “What ethical concerns, if any, have you encountered while using AI tools for academic writing?” As it would be relevant to the purpose of the questionnaire. Therefore, feedback and observations received from these expert teachers were taken into consideration, and the questionnaire was then revised based on their feedback.

3.1.4.1.3 Piloting. Subsequent to the validation stage, the questionnaire has been also piloted to ensure its reliability and clarity before distributing it to the main sample. Accordingly, the piloting process was carried out at the department of English on February 2025. Ten Master students of Sciences of Language were chosen to answer the questionnaire and provide feedback during their Research Methodology course tutorial session and they were given 20 minutes to finish it. They recommended that the questionnaire should be shorter in length. However, due to the nature and the objective of the study and based on the supervisor's instruction, the researcher kept the questions as they are.

3.1.4.2 Students' Focus Group

The Focus Group was another data collection tool employed in this research in order to gain a deeper qualitative data concerning the phenomenon under investigation.

3.1.4.2.1 Structure and Aim. The focus group was another data collection method used in this study. The major aim of the focus group was to gain in-depth understanding on the phenomenon being studied from various points of view. More specifically, it addressed the third research question (What are the challenges of Master English students at Biskra University when using QuillBot Paraphraser?). Additionally, it has been mentioned in the literature that little attention given to examine the challenges that students meet during the use of QuillBot Paraphraser. Therefore, the focus group interview was held with the students who had experience in using QuillBot Paraphraser in their academic writing instructions. The goal was to obtain a thorough comprehension on what aspects do students find them difficult when using the aforementioned AI-powered tool. The following table outlines the items of the students' focus group and their objectives.

Table 3.1

The Items and Aim of Students' Focus Group

Item(s)	Objective
1	To get insights on which aspects can be easy or challenging to students when using QuillBot Paraphraser
2	To identify solutions or strategies used by our sample to handle any limitations in using the application.
3	To assess QuillBot Paraphrase's effectiveness in providing precise and concise suggestions, focusing on its accuracy and reliability.
4	To evaluate how QuillBot Paraphraser influences students' enthusiasm to enhance their paraphrasing skills.
5	To assess the students' overall experience and level of satisfaction with the QuillBot Paraphraser.

3.1.4.2.2 Piloting and Validation. In order to ensure validity and reliability and reduce any ambiguity or lack of clarity that may arise from the question items, it was required to validate this tool as well. Hence, this research instrument was emailed as a Word document linked with an Opinnionaire to three teachers, in addition to the supervisor. All of them reported no major adjustments, except one teacher who pointed out Question 3. The question used to read, “What is your view on the accuracy and reliability of QuillBot Paraphraser? How do you verify the quality of its output?” The teacher asked us to reword the question so that it would be more clarified. We took that into account and reformulated the question to “How would you evaluate QuillBot Paraphraser's accuracy and reliability? What methods do you use to verify its output quality?” Owing to time constraints and the students' busy schedules; it was not possible to pilot the focus group's items. Consequently, it was only validated and directly conducted with the participants.

3.1.4 Data Collection Procedures

Taking the issues of ethical considerations and research requirements, the researcher had to confirm the acceptance of the target participants to take part in the current investigation. Therefore, before starting the data collection stage, the researcher contacted the participants and informed them of what the study entails by providing them with written consents. Moreover, the researcher explained the aims of the study and assured that their data, opinions, and answers would be treated with strict confidentiality and respect. Additionally, the researcher asked the participants to ask for any clarifications when needed. All of the participants in this research had agreed to answer the questionnaire and to take part in the focus group discussion.

The process of data collection was carried out simultaneously within one week. The questionnaire was submitted to 25 Master students on Sunday, February 09th, and thanks to the help of our supervisor, they answered the questionnaire in the Research

Methodology course tutorial session. Meanwhile, for the focus group, it was conducted with 10 M1 students from the same sample on Monday, February 10th in the same week. All the contacted participants demonstrated positive support and engagement in contributing in the focus group discussion. Ultimately, the process of data collection has been finished by the conduction of the students' focus group.

3.1.5 Data Analysis Procedures

In accordance with the qualitative research approach that has been followed in the present study, the data collected was by its nature of qualitative type. They involved mainly open-ended items from the unstructured questionnaire and the focus group interview. In this respect, while dealing with the qualitative data, a thematic analysis procedure was the most appropriate option for the interpretation of textual and verbal data.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), Thematic Analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. They also add that is the first qualitative method that should be mastered since " It provides core skills that will be useful for conducting many other kinds of analysis" (p.78). Additionally, it is beneficial since it is flexible, as the data can be interpreted using multiple ways. Moreover, Thematic Analysis allows the researcher to summarize the main aspects and provide a deep description of the data set. In short, its main objective is to determine significant or interesting themes i.e. patterns, and then use them to address a certain research or issue.

3.1.6 Population and Sampling Technique

The current study took place at the Department of Language and English Literature at Biskra University. The target population was EFL students. More specifically, the sample of this study was composed of 25 first-year master students majored in 'Sciences of Language'. This sample has been chosen based on the non-probability purposive sampling technique, under which "the main idea is to pick out the sample in relation to some

criteria” (Hoadjli, 2019, as cited in Henouda, 2020, p. 102). Clearly put, the researcher selected the participants non-randomly based on certain criteria, and because there is no intention to generalize the findings of the sample to the target population, but rather to gain insights from a sample of participants to understand the phenomenon being investigated.

Within this context, the sample of 25 Master students was purposefully chosen because they are expected to be aware of using AI tools, particularly writing tools the QuillBot Paraphraser. Besides, they are most concerned with enhancing their academic writing abilities, as they would conduct research and dissertations for the next academic year to complete their degree. Additionally, those students might already have prior knowledge about the benefits of using AI tools to master paraphrasing skills in their written productions. However, they maybe not aware enough of how utilize these tools appropriately and effectively. So that, considering all these factors we conclude that Master One students can contribute to achieve the aims of our study.

Conclusion

In the current chapter, the researcher intended to elaborate the theoretical background of the underlying methodology for this study. Supplementing this, the rationale behind selecting the main elements in research including research paradigm, approach, design, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures have been illustrated, as it enables the readers of this investigation to understand the methodology adopted. Thus far, this chapter paves the way to the following one that will be dedicated to data analysis and discussion of the results.

CHAPTER FOUR

Chapter Four: Fieldwork and Data Analysis

Introduction

4.1 The Results

4.1.1 Results of the Questionnaire

4.1.1.1 Questionnaire Analysis and Interpretation

4.1.2 Results of the Students' Focus Group

4.1.2.1 Focus Group Analysis and Interpretation

4.2 Synthesis and Discussion of the Findings

Conclusion

Introduction

The primary goal of the present chapter is to present, analyze, interpret, and discuss the data and the results through data collection methods used with regard to this study. This chapter will be organized to two main sections. The first one is reserved to present and analyze the data gathered from the unstructured questionnaire and students' focus group. On the other hand, the second section is dedicated for the discussion and the summary of the findings, pedagogical implications of the study, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

4.1 The Results

In this section, the researcher tries to present, discuss, and interpret the outcomes gained from the unstructured questionnaire and the student's focus group.

4.1.1 Results of the Questionnaire

4.1.1.1 Analysis and Interpretation of the Questionnaire

Section One: Student's Attitudes towards Academic Writing

Question 1: How do you view the significance of academic writing in your educational journey?

The first question in this section seeks to gauge students' views on the importance of academic writing in their educational journey. In fact, all the respondents (25) of our sample indicated that this skill is essential in terms of diverse aspects that are summarized into key themes in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1*Students' Views about the Significance of Academic Writing*

1. Skill development and academic writing proficiency	<p>Academic writing is crucial as it enhances students' critical thinking skills.</p> <p>Academic writing helps to write academically and to know more about academic norms.</p> <p>It is important for improving the writing style and performance of student.</p>
2. Communication and knowledge acquisition	<p>Academic writing allows us to deliver and share information in the most appropriate manner.</p> <p>It is significant in educational journey in terms of expanding our knowledge.</p> <p>It enables us to express ideas and thoughts effectively and clearly.</p>
3. Research and academic success	<p>Academic writing is a key aspect that enables the future research and student to gain a variety of notions easily.</p> <p>It is very essential to reach your purpose which is presenting a formal and good dissertation.</p>

Based on students' attitudes towards the significance of academic writing in their educational journey, it is understood that refining academic writing has a vital role in several aspects. Moreover, Master One students highlighted that academic writing is not only necessary for research and academic success, but also for developing certain skills such as critical thinking and the ability to present the ideas in a clear and coherent manner. In addition, they focused on the role of improving academic writing in fostering self-

confidence to actively engage in scholar discussions, express their ideas and thoughts effectively and clearly, and expand their knowledge. Accordingly, mastering academic writing is a must, and it is needed in all academic and professional settings.

Question 2: What complexities or obstacles do you face in academic writing while conducting your research?

The second item, in this section, tries to identify the main complexities and obstacles that M1 students usually encounter in academic writing while conducting their researches. Those complexities are categorized as the followings:

Table 4.2

Students' Academic writing Complexities and Obstacles

1. Language style and proficiency	Maintaining academic tone
	Avoiding judgmental language
	Lack of clarity and precision in complex statements
	Limited vocabulary
	Using formal language
2. Grammar and Punctuation errors	Spelling mistakes
	Grammar Errors
	Lack of academic vocabulary
	Intensifiers usage
	Unawareness of Grammar rules
	Misuse of punctuation
3. Structural and organizational issues	Difficulty to find scientific vocabulary
	Inability in organizing ideas
	Lack of coherence
	Lack of consistency between ideas

4. Access to resources and information constraints	Finding the primary sources
	Lack of collecting a huge amount of information on the time
	Inability to generate ideas
5. Academic Integrity and writing standards	Avoiding plagiarism
	Maintaining the originality and the accuracy of the information
	Lack of citation the sources
	Paraphrasing challenges
	Difficulty to summarize

These findings highlight the common obstacles faced by the majority of Master1 students in academic writing while conducting their researches. Importantly, the students stated that they struggle with adapting their writing to academic conventions, including tone, formality, and clarity. Besides, they find difficulties in mastering the grammar rules in terms of spelling and punctuation issues, and finding the scientific vocabulary, as well as ensuring the consistency and coherence between ideas. Furthermore, those participants do not have limited accessibility to the primary sources and information only, but they also struggle with maintaining academic integrity in their writing, including proper citation and avoiding plagiarism. In short, these multifaceted complexities and obstacles reflecting the students' need for improving writing quality and research efficiency with sufficient guidance and support.

Question 3: What is your perspective on the importance of paraphrasing techniques in academic writing?

Table 4.3

Students' Perspectives on the Importance of Paraphrasing Technique

<hr/> 1. Avoiding plagiarism and ensuring academic integrity	<hr/> Paraphrasing is important due to the fact that of giving credits to other authors. Paraphrasing is essential since it helps to avoid plagiarism.
<hr/> 2. Encouraging creativity and original thought	<hr/> Paraphrasing is crucial in academic writing because it allows me to present information in my own way.
<hr/> 3. Improving writing skills	<hr/> Paraphrasing is important as it helps improving the critical thinking skills of students by rewriting in their own style. Paraphrasing technique enables student to explore broader vocabulary and also to improve grammar competence. <hr/>

The third question in this part attempted to determine how M1 students perceive the importance of paraphrasing technique in academic writing. The results in Table 4.3 indicate that the students acknowledge the significance of paraphrasing in their academic writing process in diverse aspects. Substantially, they stated that paraphrasing has a crucial role in ensuring the credibility of others' academic works and avoiding plagiarism. Further still, this technique enable students to develop their abilities in rethinking and interpreting contents, inspiring their creativity and allowing them to present ideas and information in their own ways. Lastly, with regular use of paraphrasing technique, students can enhance their linguistic proficiency in terms of boosting their grammar competence and critical thinking skills, and exploring new advanced vocabulary.

Question 4: How do you assess your own paraphrasing skills?**Table 4.4***Students' Level of Paraphrasing Skills*

Student's Level	Frequency	Percentage
Advanced	2	8%
Intermediate	8	32%
Upper intermediate	12	48%
Beginner	3	12%
Total	25	100%

This task seeks to evaluate students' levels of paraphrasing skills. The Table 4.4 indicates that nearly half of students constituting (48%) have an upper-intermediate level of paraphrasing, and about (32%) of them have intermediate levels. Additionally, only (8%) confirmed that they have an advanced level of paraphrasing capabilities, whereas (12%) of participants declared that they are still beginner in paraphrasing.

Accordingly, the following results above highlight that there is a diverse range of paraphrasing skills among M1 students, however the findings show that the majority (80%) falling into intermediate and upper-intermediate levels, denoting that most students are moderately competent in paraphrasing, but may need further practice and guidance. On the other hand, the 8% advanced category reflects a significant mastery and confidence, probably due to extensive practice and experience. Meanwhile, the last (12%) beginner group likely implies limited awareness with paraphrasing techniques or a need for tailored support to develop their paraphrasing skills.

Question 5: Which techniques or strategies do you use when paraphrasing?

Table 4.5

Students' Paraphrasing Main Used Techniques

Technique (s)	Frequency	Percentage
Rephrasing with Synonyms	15	37.5%
Changing Sentence Structure	9	22.5%
Simplifying Complex Ideas	3	7.5%
Using different Word Forms	2	5%
Maintaining Key Ideas	8	20%
Using Paraphrasing AI Tools	3	7.5%

According to Table 4.5, which presents the main paraphrasing techniques used by M1 students, the most popular techniques include substituting words with synonyms (37.5%) and changing sentence structure (22.5%). This signifies that most students prefer simple and immediate paraphrasing techniques, as these methods are straightforward and effortless to apply. In comparison, other participants focus on simplifying complex statements (7.5%) and maintaining key ideas (20%), demonstrating the significance of ensuring the clarity of the paraphrased content and retaining the core meaning. Meanwhile, few number of students (5%) prefer using different word forms when paraphrasing, this may indicate that they are less confident or less aware in using more sophisticated paraphrasing techniques. Finally, the small percentages (7.5%) of students who rely on AI tools may suggest that there is increasing familiarity with AI applications as assistants to enhance paraphrasing abilities and the overall writing quality.

Section Two: Student's Perceptions on Using AI Tools in Academic Writing

Question 1: How do you perceive the integration of AI tools in your academic writing process?

Table 4.6

Students' Perceptions on Using AI tools in Academic Writing

Perception	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	18	72%
Neutral	7	28%
Negative	0	0%
Total	25	100%

The first question in this section was about AI tools. The participants were asked about their perceptions on the integration of AI tools into their academic writing processes. Based on the findings in Table 4.6, it is observable that the majority of students (72%) maintained a positive perception on integrating AI tools into academic writing. This suggests that they likely benefit from AI applications to fulfill certain tasks in their academic writing process such as improving grammar proficiency, clarity, and coherence, assessing to various sources, and learning new vocabulary. From a different perspective, only seven respondents (28%) showed a neutral perception, which points to potential knowledge gaps in understanding the full benefits of AI tools. Ultimately, the lack of negative responses may demonstrate the effective use of AI applications without significant limitations or challenges among this category.

Question 2: In what areas specifically did AI applications enhance your academic writing proficiency significantly?

Table 4.7

Students' Academic Writing Proficiency Areas Enhanced by AI Applications

1. Grammar and language precision	Correction spelling and grammar mistakes. Refining sentence structure.
2. Paraphrasing and summarizing	Improving paraphrasing and summarizing skills.
3. Content structuring and coherence	Developing meaningful piece of writing. Enhancing the structure of paragraphs. Organizing the overall content.
4. Writing style	Adapting writing style to be more formal, ensuring the academic writing standards. Gaining advanced vocabulary.

This question principally accounts for the areas in which students have observed enhancements in their academic writing proficiencies using the AI tools. Building on the results in Table 4.7, it is clear that using AI applications had a positive impact on students' academic writing skills with regard to mastering grammar and language precision, and improving paraphrasing and summarizing skills. In addition, they could develop their writing style to be formal and coherent, ensuring the academic writing standards. Overall,

these findings provided valuable insights into the particular areas where students have benefited from the use of AI applications in their academic writing.

Question 3: What AI tools do you frequently use?

Table 4.8

AI Tools Used by Students in EFL Writing Classes

AI Tool(s)	Frequency	Percentage
ChatGPT	20	46.51%
QuillBot	10	23.26%
Grammarly	8	18.60%
Others	5	11.63%

Table 4.8 presents a variety of AI tools that can be used by EFL students in their writing classes. The results reveal that the most frequently used AI tool by the participants is "ChatGPT" with a rate of 46.51%, reflecting its prevalent popularity among them for tasks, including answering questions, generating ideas, expanding vocabulary, and drafting texts. On other position, approximately (23.26%) of the students stated using "QuillBot" for paraphrasing. Following closely, "Grammarly" that is mentioned by a small number of the participants (18.60%) for its adeptness in grammar correction and proofreading, whereas, only (11.63%) reported using other tools such as "Deepseek" or "Gemini". Ultimately, these results highlight that EFL students use multiple AI applications to address different aspects of their writing process.

Question 4: What ethical concerns, if any, have you encountered while using AI tools for academic writing?

Table 4.9*Ethical Concerns Encountered by Students while Using AI Tools*

1. Plagiarism and originality	<p>Detection of plagiarism while copying the work.</p> <p>Loss originality in writing.</p>
2. Over-Reliance on AI	Using AI tools all the time.
3. Academic integrity and accuracy of information	<p>Some students use AI tools to cheat and present others works as their own.</p> <p>Lack of accessing to the sources and references.</p> <p>Incredibility and invalidity of the giving information.</p>

The last item in this section sought to identify any ethical concerns that may be encountered by EFL students while using AI tools for academic writing. As demonstrating above in Table 4.9, participants highlighted several issues concerning the ethical considerations. First and foremost, students may struggle with maintaining originality and avoiding plagiarism when copying the work, as AI tools usually generate texts based on existing information. Along with this, some students may become excessively rely on AI applications for writing rather than cultivating their writing abilities. This over-reliance on AI tools may hinder their intellectual creativity and critical thinking skills. Finally, those students also mentioned that ensuring academic integrity and the accuracy of information could be another ethical concern in drafting content based on AI-assisted writing tools.

Section Three: Student's Attitudes towards QuillBot Paraphraser

Question 1: How familiar are you with QuillBot Paraphraser?

Table 4.10

Students' Familiarity with QuillBot Paraphraser

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	17	68%
No	8	32%
Total	25	100%

Table 4.10 presents the familiarity of QuillBot Paraphraser AI tool among EFL students. The findings show that the AI tool is quite popular in the EFL classroom. It seems around 68% are aware of using this tool. Meanwhile, 32% of the total participants are unfamiliar with QuillBot.

Consequently, the widespread awareness and usage of QuillBot among M1 students can be explained by the fact that incorporating it as an AI aid into academic writing process could be useful to enhance students' academic writing skills and may contribute to reduce the obstacles that they usually struggle with during their academic writing courses. Alternatively, the unfamiliarity of other students with this AI tool highlights different possible gaps. In essence, they may not have been introduced to the application. Furthermore, they might either do not use AI tools for writing, instead they rely on manual editing, or they may prefer alternative writing assistance tools.

Question 2: What experience have you had in which QuillBot significantly impacted your writing process either positively or negatively?

Table 4.11

QuillBot's Positive and Negative Impacts on Students' Writing Process

1. Positive Impact	Enhancing clarity and precision	Deconstructing complex ideas into straightforward concepts.
	Vocabulary growth	Suggesting diverse synonyms and alternative sentence structures.
2. Negative Impact	Misinterpretation of context	Failing to provide suggestions that match the original meaning.

The researcher purposefully designed this question in order to gain insights into M1 students' experiences in which QuillBot significantly had impacted their writing process either positively or negatively. Therefore, based on students' shared experiences, it can be implied that QuillBot had positively impacted their writing in terms of enhancing the clarity and precision of the content, by breaking down the sophisticated ideas into simple ones, making them easy for the reader to grasp. Moreover, students stated that QuillBot helped them in enriching their writing style by providing them with diverse synonyms and numerous alternative sentence structures.

Conversely, other participants highlighted that this AI tool had affected their writing negatively, particularly, when it comes to its inaccuracies in the paraphrased statements, because sometimes QuillBot presents suggestions that are not aligned with the intended meaning of the original content. To sum up, the contrasting experiences that shared by

students regarding the impact of QuillBot indicate that this application is twofold, that is, it has positive and negative impact.

Question 3: In what way has QuillBot helped you broaden your vocabulary, particularly with synonyms?

Table 4.12

Impact of QuillBot on Students' Vocabulary Expansion

1. Improving sentence variety	QuillBot helps in avoiding repetition
2. Enhancing synonym awareness	QuillBot Provides several academic vocabularies.

The findings that presented in Table 4.12 above show in what ways QuillBot has helped M1 students broaden their vocabularies, particularly with synonyms. Precisely, students mentioned that QuillBot encourages them to explore different ways of expressing ideas, helping them avoid repetition and develop linguistic adaptability. Besides, it allows them to expand their choice of words and be familiar with more academic vocabularies. In short, it can be concluded that QuillBot had significantly assisted EFL students broaden their vocabularies.

Question 4: How do you perceive the use of QuillBot in mastering your paraphrasing abilities?

Table 4.13*Students' Perceptions on Using QuillBot in Paraphrasing*

Perception	Frequency	Percentage
Positive perception	8	32%
No answers	17	68%
Total	25	100%

As shown in Table 4.13, the majority of students (68%) did not answer this question. This could imply that either they did not have an experience with QuillBot enough to show their opinions, or they are uncertain about its effectiveness. Conversely, the students who responded positively maintained that QuillBot has a vital role in assisting them master their paraphrasing abilities. They likely pointed out its usefulness in expanding vocabulary, improving clarity and coherence, and providing alternative expressions of ideas. This affirms the claim that AI tools like QuillBot could be helpful to develop academic writing skills.

Question 5: What is your attitude towards incorporating QuillBot Paraphraser into your academic writing process, particularly regarding its effectiveness in improving your writing skills?

Table 4.14

Students' Attitudes towards Integrating QuillBot Paraphraser into Academic Writing Process

Attitude	Frequency	Percentage
positive	16	64%
Negative	2	8%
No answers	7	28%
Total	25	100%

This question seeks to explore the benefits of integrating QuillBot Paraphraser for improving M1 students' academic writing skills. It seems, according to the responses provided in Table 4.14, the majority of students (16, representing 64%) had a positive attitude, expressing their view that integrating this tool has several benefits, in terms of providing immediate feedback and multiple paraphrased samples to the main passages and contents. Nevertheless, this is not the case for two students (8%) who responded negatively, indicating that they believe that incorporating QuillBot Paraphraser is not beneficial for improving writing skills. They stated that its effectiveness depends on student's level and it is designed only for getting assistance and being aware of different formats of paraphrasing, but not mastering writing. Lastly, 28% of participants abstained from answering to the question, leaving it unanswered, which could be due to a lack of familiarity with the application itself.

Question 6: How confident do you feel about the quality of the output provided by QuillBot?

Table 4.15*Students' Attitudes towards the Effectiveness of QuillBot Paraphraser*

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Highly confident	9	36%
Neutral confident	6	24%
Less confident	3	12%
No answer	7	28%
Total	25	100%

The responses mentioned above illustrate a spectrum of confidence levels among M1 students regarding the effectiveness of QuillBot Paraphraser. The findings denote that the majority of students, approximately 36% with high confidence and 24% with neutral confidence maintained a positive attitude towards QuillBot's output quality. Therefore, it can be implied that they benefit from using QuillBot to refine their paraphrasing abilities. In comparison, only three, equivalent to 12% of respondents reported a less favorable attitude towards the tool's effectiveness. This demonstrates potential challenges or dissatisfaction with the application. Finally, the 28% who did not answer may reflect a lack of experience with the tool. In brief, this analysis sheds light on the overall positive perception on QuillBot Paraphraser in the students' academic writing classes.

4.1.2 Results of the Students' Focus Group

The researcher has conducted a focus group in order to better gain insights into the challenges that can be encountered by EFL students while using QuillBot Paraphraser.

4.1.2.1 Analysis and Interpretation of the Students' Focus Group

To better analyze the collected data, a thematic analysis procedure has been chosen in the analysis of students' focus group.

Question 1: what aspect do you find particularly easy or challenging when using the QuillBot Paraphraser?

Table 4.16

Main Easy and Challenging Aspects in Using QuillBot Paraphraser

Easy Aspects	Challenging Aspects
Creativity and vocabulary diversity	Lack of Contextual Understanding
✓ QuillBot provides varied and multiple choices of synonyms, boosting writing quality.	✓ QuillBot may misinterpret the context of the written work which can lead to misunderstanding and provide incorrect suggestions.
	Lack of flexibility
	✓ QuillBot keeps the same structures of sentences with all paraphrased contents.

The rationale behind asking this question is to gain insights into which aspects do EFL students find them easy or challenging while using QuillBot Paraphraser. In the first side, participants highlighted that one of the main QuillBot's easy and straightforward aspects is providing a variety of synonyms and diverse expressions, enhancing their writing quality and linguistic style. On the other side, despite its strengths, they mentioned that the tool sometimes does not grasp the intended meaning of the context, leading to

occasionally misinterpretations and inaccuracies. This lack of understanding the deeper meaning of the sentences by the application can be due to the fact that QuillBot AI-generated paraphrasing tool depends on algorithms rather than comprehension.

Consequently, it may present paraphrased content that does not align with the original meaning. Additionally, students claimed that QuillBot Paraphraser is not flexible in providing the paraphrased expressions; it remains the same sentence structure with any written work. That is, they may need to manually improve their sentences for better clarity and coherence. Chiefly, it can be said that while QuillBot Paraphraser could be a valuable tool for students, however, its use may pose certain challenges for them.

Question 2: How do you handle technical issues or limitations when using QuillBot Paraphraser in your academic writing?

Table 4.17

Students' Strategies to Handle Technical Issues while Using QuillBot Paraphraser

1. Manual refinement and editing	Adjust and refine the sentence structures and terminology provided by QuillBot Paraphraser manually.
2. Balancing QuillBot's output and critical thinking	Students use QuillBot Paraphraser as a starting point to supplement its suggestions with their own revisions.

The current question was primarily designed to pinpoint the solutions or strategies used by students to handle any limitations or technical issues while using QuillBot Paraphraser. In simple terms, the respondents highlighted mainly two different strategies they use in case they encounter any limitations or challenges with the tool. As observed in

the Table 4.17, students may make manual refinements and editing in the sentence structures and vocabularies that provided by QuillBot Paraphraser. This can be attributed to the fact that students aware of their role in ensuring the academic writing standards in terms of the clarity, accuracy, and coherence of the paraphrased texts in order to better align them with the intended meaning of the main contexts. Besides, they mentioned that they may integrate their own ideas critically with the application's output to maintain originality and academic integrity in their writing, reflecting that human judgment is essential in AI-assisted tasks. Briefly, these preceding strategies that used by students demonstrate that QuillBot Paraphraser in not entirely useful and needs certain adaptations, as well as highlight the significance of the human being in evaluating AI applications' effectiveness.

Question 3: How would you evaluate QuillBot Paraphraser's accuracy and reliability?

Table 4.18

Students' Evaluation of QuillBot Paraphraser's Accuracy and Reliability

1. Diversity of QuillBot's Modes	QuillBot Paraphraser presents diverse modes (fluent, standard, creative...etc) which can fulfill the needs of users.
2. Vocabulary expansion	QuillBot Paraphraser provides a variety of word choices and synonyms, helping students to ensure clarity and richness in their texts.
3. Making mistakes in complex sentences	QuillBot Paraphraser's output is not accurate especially when dealing with complex sentence structures.
4. Misinterpretation of the context	QuillBot Paraphraser sometimes fails to interpret certain expressions and meanings.

The researcher has formulated the current question with the purpose of gauging QuillBot Paraphraser's effectiveness in providing concise and precise suggestions, focusing on its accuracy and reliability. Within this context, the students mentioned that the application introduces diverse modes (fluent, standard, creative, and so on), fulfilling their needs, as well as provides numerous word choices and synonyms that help them to maintain clarity and richness in their contents, suggesting that QuillBot Paraphraser can be accurate and reliable.

On the contrary, the respondents also highlighted certain negative aspects, reflecting that this tool could not be entirely accurate and reliable. Particularly, this happens when the tool deals with sophisticated passages, in which it sometimes makes mistakes that might result in inaccuracy in the paraphrased text. Lastly, in some cases, QuillBot Paraphraser may also lack interpreting and understanding certain expressions, leading to alter the intended message of the context.

Question 4: How does using the QuillBot Paraphraser affect your motivation to learn and improve your paraphrasing skills?

Table 4.19

QuillBot's Affects on Students' Motivation in Improving Paraphrasing Skills

	Overuse and reliance on QuillBot
1. QuillBot lacks creativity and increase laziness	leads to laziness and kills creativity.
	Using QuillBot as a starting point,
2. QuillBot encourages the manual refinements.	enhancing its suggestions to develop paraphrasing style.

The intention behind this item is to evaluate how QuillBot Paraphraser influences students' motivation to improve their paraphrasing skills. In accordance with the information presented in the Table 4.19, it is apparent that QuillBot Paraphraser has affected students' motivation in two different contrasting ways. In essence, some respondents asserted that over relying on the tool may limit their ability to think critically and hinder their creativity and motivation. On the other hand, other students expressed that QuillBot Paraphraser can be beneficial in encouraging them to enhance their paraphrasing abilities by refining its output and suggestions manually instead of accepting them passively. Thereby, the impact of QuillBot on students' paraphrasing skills likely depends on the way they use and interact with the application.

Question 5: Can you describe your overall satisfaction with the QuillBot Paraphraser?

Building on the previous items, the present question was specifically included with the aim of assessing students' overall experiences and satisfaction with the QuillBot Paraphraser. While the majority of the respondents reflected positively to the effectiveness and the value of QuillBot, a small number of them disagree about its effectiveness. The main findings of the responses are categorized as following themes in the table below:

Table 4.20*Students 'Overall Satisfaction with QuillBot Paraphraser*

1. Ease of use and accessibility	QuillBot paraphraser is a valuable tool in terms of its simplicity in using and straightforward functions.
2. Time saving and efficiency	QuillBot paraphraser can be a time saving by quickly provides sufficient suggestions, making the writing process more efficient especially for users who have time constraints.
3. Enhancing academic writing quality	QuillBot paraphraser has the potential to refine the academic writing quality by offering diverse vocabularies and multiple sentence structures.
4. Over-reliance and ethical concerns	Over-reliance on QuillBot paraphraser might limit students' critical thinking abilities. Using QuillBot paraphraser may lead to the risks of falling in plagiarism.

As mentioned previously, this question is designed to gain a comprehensive understanding about the overall experiences of M1 students with QuillBot Paraphraser. Thus, drawing from the results of responses in the Table 4.20, it is noticeable that the respondents had different perspectives on the application's output based on their shared experiences. Furthermore, it can be implied that the majority of them are likely satisfied with QuillBot's effectiveness, because they reported its main advantages in terms of improving academic writing quality by providing various vocabularies and sentence structures.

In addition, they affirmed that due to the application's simplicity in using and straightforward functions, it can be a time saving by quickly offering sufficient

suggestions, making the writing process more efficient especially for those who have time constraints. Nevertheless, there are few students who seem to be highly dissatisfied with this AI tool. Their claims were depending on some concerns about the potential limitations of using QuillBot Paraphraser, particularly the risk of falling in plagiarism and overreliance on it could be another obstacle to their writing, as it might hinder their cognitive and critical thinking skills. Chiefly, it can be concluded that overall satisfaction with QuillBot Paraphraser's usefulness relies on the balance between its strengths and limitations.

4.2 Synthesis and Discussion of the Findings

As the previous section tackled the demonstration of the findings and their preliminary interpretation, the current part is devoted for the holistic summarizing and discussion of the main findings. To recapitulate, the present study was carried out as an endeavour to investigate the perceptions and attitudes of EFL students towards the use of QuillBot Paraphraser in their written productions. In accordance with the qualitative approach, the three main research questions were addressed following the case study design. In addition, the data obtained from the two main instruments, namely, students' questionnaire and focus group will be summarized and discussed, in order to address the formulated research questions, as well as the corresponding hypotheses.

The first two posed questions in the current research delved respectively into covering the students' perceptions about the use of AI tools in their academic writing. In accordance with this aim, an unstructured questionnaire was administered to the study sample.

RQ1: How do Master English students at Biskra University perceive the use of artificial intelligence tools in their academic writing?

RQ2: In what way do Master English students at Biskra University experience the use of QuillBot Paraphraser when drafting their writings?

First and foremost, it is crucial to note that the first section of the questionnaire serves as an initial phase to examine the participants' basic academic writing skills. In this regard, the focus was on their attitudes towards the significance of academic writing in general, and paraphrasing skills in particular. In addition to highlight the underlying complexities and obstacles they confronted while engaged in academic writing tasks, and pinpoint the common paraphrasing techniques used by them.

Accordingly, drawing from the findings, it is observable that students argued that academic writing is a crucial skill for them in their educational journey. Within this context, they indicated that academic writing is not only limited for research and academic success, but also it is essential to develop their critical thinking abilities and expressing their ideas and thoughts effectively and clearly to the target audience when engaging in scholar discussions. Ultimately, these results align with previous studies emphasizing that mastering academic writing is not only required in academic settings, but also for future and professional career.

Despite the students' acknowledgement of the importance of academic writing skill, they still face certain obstacles with it. Based on the findings, these difficulties significantly include inability to adapt their writings to academic standards in terms of using academic tone and formal and clear language, lack of mastering the grammar rules, and difficulty in assessing the primary sources and references. However, students' troubles in academic writing are not confined to these limitations, but they also cross into significant challenges in generating and organizing ideas, improper citation of the sources, limited vocabulary, incorrect punctuation, and troubles in paraphrasing and summarizing.

Interestingly, these findings suggest that there are numerous reasons behind the complexities and obstacles faced by students in academic writing. Hereby, these factors may include an insufficient time for learning and practicing writing in class, and the lack of motivation and inappropriate feedback provided by the instructors. This is in line with what was shown by many researchers which confirmed that what was mentioned above are the significant reasons contributing to students' academic writing weaknesses (Aldabus, 2017; Al-Khairi, 2013 Al-Mubark, 2017). Despite this, scholars have suggested diverse procedures to master academic writing skills and eliminate its difficulties, such as fostering students to do extensive and regular reading, practice writing simultaneously, in addition to following the instructor's guidance and feedback (Alfaki, 2015; Al-Marwani, 2020; Fareed & Ashraf, 2016).

As the main concern of the present investigation is typically related to one of the needed techniques in academic writing process which is paraphrasing, it was essential to address the participants' perceptions about the importance of this skill, their common used techniques, and their overall levels in paraphrasing. Thus, building upon the provided results, it can be inferred that respondents are significantly aware of the importance of paraphrasing in their academic writing process, particularly its vital role in helping them to maintain the academic integrity and avoid plagiarism. The same claim was highlighted by other scholars in different contexts (Ariyanti & Anam, 2021; Ramadhani, 2019; Zohra et al, 2022). Moreover, the respondents emphasized that paraphrasing does not assist them in expanding their vocabularies, but also it aids them in improving their critical thinking skills, as they tend to engage with the content and rewrite it in their own ways. Thus, paraphrasing technique has a crucial role in refining students' academic writing skills. A similar conclusion was drawn by Fitria (2021), who stated that paraphrasing helps EFL students master their academic writing proficiencies.

In addition, according to students' answers regarding the common paraphrasing techniques used by them, it can be deduced that they opt for a variety of techniques, ranging from the simple and straightforward techniques such as rephrasing with synonyms to slightly complicated ones like using different word forms and restructuring sentences. This variety can be a good indication that there are differences in skill levels and proficiencies among students with paraphrasing, as well as suggests the cognitive adaptability and a comprehension of context-specific paraphrasing needs. Lastly, in terms of students' paraphrasing levels, the majority of them, approximately 80% can be classified as having an intermediate level, which reflects that they are likely competent in paraphrasing, yet they need further improvements and supports.

The second section of the questionnaire which sought to explore the students' perceptions on using AI tools in academic writing indicated that the majority of respondents had positive attitudes towards the integrating of AI tools into academic writing process. This is clearly reinforced by the high percentage (72%), and the lack of negative responses. Furthermore, the participants mentioned the main areas in which AI applications could contribute to enhance their academic writing proficiencies, including mastering grammar and language precision, expanding and improving paraphrasing and summarizing skills. This supports the claims of several researchers who pinpointed that the utilization of AI-powered tools can improve students' academic writing quality (Fitria, 2021; Hien, 2024; Nazari et al, 2021).

In depth, they highlighted a variety of AI tools they frequently use to address different aspects of their writing tasks. The displayed findings illustrate that the most common used AI tool among students is "ChatGPT", demonstrating its widespread popularity and effectiveness for fulfilling certain activities like generating ideas, expanding vocabulary, and answering questions quickly. Along with this, they outlined other diverse

applications such as "QuillBot" which is used for paraphrasing, "Grammarly" for grammar correction, "Deepseek" and "Gemini". This varied landscape of AI tools usage underscores the nuanced choices among students, potentially impacted by factors such as simplicity in using, functionality, and certain features tailored to cater their different writing needs.

While the respondents recognized the benefits of these aforementioned AI applications in refining their academic writing abilities, they claimed that there are certain ethical concerns encountered by them while using these AI tools. This is typically related to the struggles in ensuring originality and avoiding plagiarism, as well as the issue of overreliance on using AI apps, which may limit their intellectual creativity and critical thinking skills. These findings are consistent with recent research, which emphasizes the idea that students should see AI as supportive tool rather than a replacement for their academic writing skills (Abdullayeva & Musayeva, 2023). Generally speaking, students' responses showcase an overall agreement and positive attitude towards the use of AI tools in academic writing. Accordingly, the findings of this section confirm the first hypothesis which asserts that Master English students at Biskra University have positive perceptions towards the use of artificial intelligence tools in their academic writing.

The last section of the questionnaire is assigned to address the second research question, that is, "In what way do Master English students at Biskra University experience the use of QuillBot Paraphraser when drafting their writings?" On this basis, we initially aimed to examine the familiarity of the QuillBot Paraphraser AI-powered tool among M1 students. The results showed that even though approximately 68% of the total number of participants reported that they are familiar with the QuillBot Paraphraser, 32% declared their unawareness of using this tool. Therefore, considering these outcomes, on one hand, we may point the prevalent popularity of QuillBot among students to the fact that it could be an efficient assistant in order for them to improve their academic writing abilities. On

the other hand, opting for alternative AI-assisted writing tools and relying on manual editing could be the reasons contributing to the lack of familiarity with it among other respondents.

When it comes to the impact of QuillBot Paraphraser on students' academic writing process, it can be inferred based on their shared experiences that the tool had impacted their writing in two contrasting ways. On one side, the positive impacts of using QuillBot Paraphraser noted by respondents included improving the clarity and coherence of their texts and enriching their writing with diverse vocabularies and suitable synonyms. These findings align with those of Chui (2022), Fitria (2021), Kharbach (2023), and Kurniati and Fithrani (2023), who demonstrated that QuillBot Paraphraser positively impacts students' academic writing skills.

On the contrary, according to different studies such as the study by Ansorge et al. (2021) as well as the viewpoints of other participants in the present study, we can suggest that the negative aspect concerning QuillBot Paraphraser is that its paraphrasing suggestions may not always convey the intended meaning of the source text, leading to inaccuracy and inconsistency in the content. These contradictory findings from previous studies and the current study signify that QuillBot Paraphraser can be a double-edged-application, that is, it has positive and negative effects.

The data analysis about the ways in which QuillBot Paraphraser has assisted the target sample broaden their vocabularies reveal that it significantly has encouraged them to be familiar with numerous ways of conveying their thoughts to the target audience, as well as the tool enables them expanding their choice of words and being familiar with several academic terminologies. Students' use of QuillBot Paraphraser to refine their different academic writing needs has been also pointed out by Fitria (2021) and Kharbach (2023).

Building upon the preceding results regarding students' attitudes towards integrating QuillBot Paraphraser into academic writing process, it can be deduced that the negative attitude as well as the lack of responses among some students could be either due to a lack of experience with the application, or uncertainty about its effectiveness. However, the positive attitude which noted by the majority of the participants (64%) can be explained by respondents' overall agreement on incorporating QuillBot Paraphraser into academic writing process, as they specified its potential benefits, particularly in terms of providing immediate feedback and varied paraphrased suggestions to the source content. These attitudes are supported by the findings of previous studies, which have found that EFL students prefer to use this AI tool to master their academic writing skills (e.g., Fitria, 2021; Kurniati & Fithriani, 2022; Nurmayanti & Suryadi, 2023; Syahnaz & Fithriani, 2023).

At the end of this section, the researcher intended to examine the confidence levels among M1 students regarding the effectiveness of QuillBot Paraphraser. Thus, the findings show that approximately half of the respondents highlighted a positive perception about QuillBot' output quality, demonstrating that they benefited from using the tool in mastering academic writing abilities. In the same line, Fitria (2022) and, Kurniati and Fithriani (2022) have also asserted that this AI-powered application could be a useful aid in order for EFL students to enhance their academic writing proficiencies.

Nevertheless, 12% of students expressed a less positive attitude towards the aforementioned web-based program's effectiveness; this suggests potential limitations or gaps in using the tool. Lastly, the lack of familiarity with QuillBot Paraphraser could be the rationale behind why 28% of the total participants opted for leaving the question unanswered. In conclusion, the provided findings and assorted interpretations obtained from this section validate the second research hypothesis, asserting that the use of QuillBot

Paraphraser tool assists Master English students at Biskra University to improve their writing performance if they used appropriately.

RQ3: What are the challenges of Master English students at Biskra University when using QuillBot Paraphraser?

Delving into the underlying challenges faced by the target sample of the present research while using QuillBot Paraphraser, the third research question sought insights collected from a focus group conducted with 10 M1 EFL students. The obtained data presented in the form of tables, provides a profound understanding on the phenomenon being investigated from various perspectives.

First and foremost, the first question item in the focus group discussion aimed at listing the main aspects did students find them either easy or challenging when using QuillBot Paraphraser. Therefore, the students' answers clarified that offering distinct and numerous synonyms and multiple sentence structures is the main straightforward aspect in using this application. In contrast, the major challenging features notably involve contextual misinterpretation and presenting fixed paraphrased suggestions with any written works, indicating a potential need for students' manual adjustments to ensure the clarity of their texts. Accordingly, it can be understood that, although QuillBot Paraphraser serves as a useful AI-assisted writing for students, navigating its features might sometimes be challenging.

Another question was addressed within this discussion was how do students handle any limitations or technical issues while using QuillBot Paraphraser. In this respect, the respondents highlighted two key strategies they opt for in order to deal with the tool's limitations. The former involves modifying and doing manual editing in the application's paraphrased suggestions and results since QuillBot may not always meet their

expectations. Rane (2023), as cited in Manalasts (n. d), highlighted that users are better writers than these AI-powered tools because they are human beings with views, experiences, ideas, and preferences. As for the second strategy, the students mentioned that they may combine their own ideas critically with QuillBot's output to create a more compressive and cohesive content, as well as ensure the originality in their written work. Consequently, it can be inferred that the human adjustment is needed while using such AI tools like QuillBot Paraphraser, as they may sometimes lack meeting the user's needs and expectations.

In terms of QuillBot Paraphraser's accuracy and reliability, the respondents pointed out two contrast perspectives. On one hand, the students noted that the tool could be accurate and reliable, since it assists them uphold the consistency and variety in their writing with its varied modes which can fulfill their needs. On the other hand, they claimed that QuillBot Paraphraser can sometimes generate output that is less accurate, slightly awkward, and does not effectively communicate the intended meaning of the main input. It is noteworthy that this result is consistent with the finding of a study conducted by Rogerson and McCarthy (2017), who concluded that despite the helpfulness of QuillBot Paraphraser to EFL students, one cannot be sure that this tool always produces flawless and accurate results. Therefore, according to the same authors, proofreading and editing the content generated by QuillBot Paraphraser becomes a requirement.

Meanwhile, based on the data analysis of students' responses to both the fourth and last fifth question that the focus group attempted to address, we can derive the following insights. Importantly, it can be implied that the majority of students are likely satisfied with QuillBot Paraphraser's effectiveness, since they mentioned its benefits specifically in terms of saving time due to its faster feature in generating alternate versions of a given text. They further indicated that the application motivates them boost their writing skills and

paraphrasing capabilities. Similarly, a number of studies related to the use of AI-assisted paraphrasing tools have emphasized the benefits of online paraphrasing tools such QuillBot in aiding college and university students refine their overall academic writing skills.

While there is no doubt that QuillBot Paraphraser could be a useful assistant for students in many ways, there are certain issues making them slightly dissatisfied with the tool. In this regard, the respondents claimed that using QuillBot excessively may limit their thinking and writing abilities, demotivating them from engaging critically and independently with the source material and developing their own ideas. Therefore, it is necessary to train students in paraphrasing techniques and raise their awareness of the potential drawbacks of overreliance on this AI tool, a conclusion was drawn by Rahmayani (2018). The results from the present study highlight and confirm the findings of previous studies conducted by Miranda (2021) and Rogerson and McCarthy (2017), who demonstrated that it could be a serious risk to academic integrity due to the fact that QuillBot Paraphraser encourages students to copy other people's work and rely on AI-generated outcomes instead of their own skills.

Given that, it serves as a reminder for students to use this application wisely in order to better enhance their general academic writing proficiencies. In conclusion, the focus group's findings provide valuable insights into the main challenges faced by the study sample while using QuillBot Paraphraser, and consequently confirm the research hypothesis number three that EFL students encounter challenges when using QuillBot Paraphraser for drafting their writings.

Conclusion

To summarize, in this chapter, the researcher attempted to address the analysis, interpretation, and discussion of the findings from the data that is collected from the unstructured questionnaire and students' focus group. The aforementioned data collection methods were both addressed to Master students (Sciences of Languages) at Department of Language and English Literature at Biskra University. The aim of questionnaire was mainly to cover the perceptions and attitudes of EFL students regarding the use of artificial intelligence tools generally, and QuillBot AI-powered tool particularly, in their academic writing classes.

In addition to the focus group which sought to identify students' challenges that they face in using QuillBot Paraphraser, as well as gain more detailed understanding about the phenomenon being studied based on their experiences. The data was analyzed descriptively using a thematic analysis method, where a variety of tables were used for a better interpretation of the gathered data. In conclusion, from the synthesis and discussion of the results, it becomes obvious that the research questions were answered and the formulated hypotheses were confirmed.

Pedagogical Recommendations and Implications

Building upon the analysis of the results obtained by the study, we propose a number of pedagogical recommendations for both students and teachers that should be taken into consideration in the future, especially in the EFL context.

- Academic writing module should be included in the students' curriculum from the first years of license degree instead of teaching it only at the master levels.
- Teachers need to adopt new alternative methods of teaching academic writing that meet the students' needs rather than the traditional methods.

- Teachers have to put more emphasize on practicing academic writing inside the classroom, as well as they should train and familiarize their students with a variety of paraphrasing strategies through selecting certain activities that could potentially be useful for students in avoiding plagiarism and boosting their academic writing and paraphrasing abilities.
- Teachers should be consciously aware of the main gaps and weaknesses related to academic writing process and paraphrasing techniques among their students.
- Teachers have to provide their students with sufficient and efficient feedback to eliminate their challenges facing in paraphrasing tasks.
- EFL students have to practice the different techniques of academic writing process specially paraphrasing, as the regular practice is required for gaining proficiency in and becoming skillful at producing writing products free of plagiarism.
- Students should opt for the QuillBot Paraphraser at the final stage of writing process, meaning they must use it wisely as a writing aid rather than a substitute to their own skills.
- A combination of teachers' instructions and assistance from QuillBot Paraphraser AI-assisted writing would create an effective approach for students to master their paraphrasing abilities and accordingly the overall academic writing skill.
- Increase students' consciousness of understanding the potential drawbacks resulted from the overreliance on AI paraphrasing tools such as QuillBot.

Limitations of the Study

In the process of conducting any research, there is always a possibility to face certain limitations and constraints. Accordingly, the most important ones met in the current study are listed below:

- One main limitation faced in our research is a lack of generalization of the results since it was conducted with a small sample of 25 EFL students at the Department of Language and English Literature at Biskra University.
- Due to the time constraints, it was challenging to assess the real-world effectiveness of QuillBot Paraphraser among EFL students. Consequently, we only opted for a descriptive method of the phenomenon being investigated.

Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the limitations mentioned above, we conclude with these suggestions for further research:

- Future research may include a more significant number of participants and a variety of research instruments in order to gain a more profound comprehension and depth insight into the use of QuillBot paraphrasing tool to overcome students' academic writing complexities.
- Further research may opt for a mixed-method design to generate more conclusive, reliable, and solid data regarding the research problem under investigation.
- Researchers may also conduct studies to compare the online paraphrasing tools' outputs to that of human paraphrasing.
- Apart from the paraphrasing feature, further studies may explore other QuillBot' tools, including Plagiarism Checker, Grammar Checker, Summarizer, and so on.

General Conclusion

In the context of teaching and learning English as a foreign language, the study of academic writing has become an essential aspect, particularly in high educational institutions. Despite this, it has been noticed that EFL learners encounter numerous difficulties when it comes to writing academically. Primarily, their problems start with the most challenging part in academic writing itself, which is paraphrasing. The latter is known as the most difficult skill in academic writing. In the same line, Sarair et al., (2019) found that the students still failed to properly paraphrase the English texts as they observed that the students' words nearly copied most of the sources (as cited in Inayah A.M & Sulistyaningrum, 2021, p. 52).

Consequently, in an attempt to address students' difficulties in academic writing especially in paraphrasing, the researchers suggested the incorporating of technology, particularly artificial intelligence-based paraphrasing tools in writing instructions as a helpful tool for teachers to improve their students' performance in academic writing (Malvado et al., 2022; Bui & Vu, 2023; Faisal & Sukmaningrum, 2023). In this respect, one practical app of AI that has been found to be effective in refining students' academic writing skills and helping them to overcome their troubles in doing paraphrasing is QuillBot (Fitria, 2021; Nurmayanti & Suryadi, 2023; Xuyen, 2023).

Nevertheless, in the previous studies, these scholars have highlighted the benefits of QuillBot Paraphraser in order for EFL students to master their paraphrasing abilities; in the Algerian context and at the level of Biskra University in particular, very few instances got research EFL students' perceptions and challenges regarding the use of this AI-powered tool in written productions. As a result, the current study aimed primarily to investigate EFL learners' perceptions and attitudes towards the use of QuillBot Paraphraser tool in their academic writing classes. More specifically, the aims of the study were to: (1)

investigate English as a foreign language learners' perceptions towards the use of artificial intelligence tools when paraphrasing; (2) shed the light on students' experience with the use of QuillBot paraphraser tool in their writing; (3) find out the challenges that students face when using this tool of paraphrasing. The preceding research aims were raised based on the following questions: (1) how do Master English students at Biskra University perceive the use of artificial intelligence tools in their academic writing? (2) In what way do Master English students at Biskra University experience the use of QuillBot paraphraser when drafting their writings? (3) What are the challenges of Master English students at Biskra University when using QuillBot paraphraser?

Correspondingly, with a focus on answering these research questions thoroughly, a set of systematic steps has been followed. In this respect, a sample of 25 Master students (Sciences of Language) was chosen through the purposive sampling technique. Besides, reflecting on the descriptive nature of the present research, an interpretivist paradigm following the qualitative approach was adopted. In accordance with the used paradigm and approach, a Case Study Design was employed for more accurate interpretation and representation of the qualitative data collected. The latter was gathered through two data collection instruments, namely, students' questionnaire and focus group. It is noteworthy mentioning that both instruments were carefully designed, validated, and piloted to ensure the credibility of the data.

Given the questionnaire findings, it can be deduced that majority of students at Biskra university expressed positive responses towards the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, as well as the use of QuillBot Paraphraser as an AI assistant to master their academic writing skills. Furthermore, the results revealed that the aforementioned AI app has impacted students' writing in two contrasting ways based on their shared experiences. In addition, within the framework of this study, and by means of

analyzing the results of the students' focus group, the underlying challenges confronted by Master students at the Department of Language and English Literature at Biskra University while using QuillBot Paraphraser are mainly included contextual misinterpretation, the issue of overdependence on the tool that could potentially limit their writing abilities, and risk of falling into plagiarism. In conclusion, in light of these findings the researchers have provided certain pedagogical recommendations and implications in order to better address the phenomenon being studied in the future.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Participant Informed Consent

Informed Consent

Dear Participant,

I am conducting a research into investigation perceptions of and challenges towards the use of QuillBot paraphraser in written productions among English as a foreign language learners. At this phase of research, I will be collecting the data among master students in order to investigate their perceptions and attitudes regarding the use of artificial intelligence tools, particularly QuillBot paraphraser in their academic writing classes.

Therefore, you are kindly invited to take part in this research study, through participating to answer a questionnaire that will be administered in an effort to explore your perceptions and opinions concerning the use of the AI paraphraser tool "QuillBot" in your written productions. Furthermore, a focus group interview will be organized to gain insights into the challenges you face when using the aforementioned AI tool, with the aim of understanding the phenomenon being studied from different perspectives.

Confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity of your personal information and data gathered throughout the process of conducting this research work will be ensured. Your participation in this research project is voluntary, and your consent can be withdrawn at any time.

If you consent to participating in this study, please sign the attached consent form. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

For further questions regarding this research project, you are welcome to contact the researcher.

Yours sincerely,

Researcher Contact Details:

Full Name: Ferdaoues AZIZI

Supervisor: Prof. Ahmed Chaouki HOADJLI

Email: aziziferdaoues0@gmail.com

Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra

Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages

Department of Language and English Literature

I have read and clearly understood the researcher's request. I consent to volunteering as a participant in the research project being undertaken by Ferdaoues AZIZI.

Name:.....

E-mail:.....

University:.....

Faculty:.....

Department:.....

Date:.....

Signature:

Appendix 2: The Questionnaire Validation Form

I hereby certify that I have read the students' questionnaire in the study carried out by Ms. Ferdaoues AZIZI who is presently working on her MA dissertation at Biskra University.

I have provided the researcher of this study regarding an investigation into English as a Foreign Language Learners' Perceptions of and Challenges towards the Use of QuillBot Paraphraser in their Written Productions with remarks and comments concerning the layout, as well as the contents of the questionnaire.

Background Information on the Expert:

Name:

University:

Present Occupation:

Degree:

Telephone Number:

Email Address:

Signed:

Researcher's Contact Details:

Ms. Ferdaoues AZIZI

Email: aziziferdaoues0@gmail.com

Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra

Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages

Department of English Language and Literature

Appendix 3: The Opinionnaire

1. Are there any repetitive questions?

Yes ☐

No ☐

- If yes, please specify them.

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2. Did you find any grammar/spelling mistakes in the questions?

Yes ☐

No ☐

- If yes, please notify them below.

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3. Are there any irrelevant questions that need to be removed?

Yes ☐

No ☐

-If yes, please provide the number of the question(s) below.

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4. Is the questionnaire of reasonable length?

Yes ☐

No ☐

5. Are there any ambiguous questions that need to be reformulated and / or clarified?

Yes ☐

No ☐

-If yes, please indicate which questions require rewording.

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6. What do you think of the layout?

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7. Are the response categories appropriate?

Yes ☐

No ☐

8. If there are any questions that you believe are of close relevance to the purpose of the questionnaire but were not included, please write them below.

.....

.....

.....

Thank you very much for your time and collaboration

Appendix 4: The Focus Group's Questions Validation Form

I hereby certify that I have read the students' questionnaire in the study carried out by Ms. Ferdaoues AZIZI who is presently working on her MA dissertation at Biskra University.

I have provided the researcher of this study regarding an investigation into English as a Foreign Language Learners' Perceptions of and Challenges towards the Use of QuillBot Paraphraser in their Written Productions with remarks and comments concerning the layout, as well as the contents of the questions.

Background Information on the Expert:

Name:

University:

Present Occupation:

Degree:

Telephone Number:

Email Address:

Signed:

Researcher's Contact Details:

Ms. Ferdaoues AZIZI

Email: aziziferdaoues0@gmail.com

Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra

Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages

Department of English Language and Literature

Appendix 5: Student's Questionnaire

Dear Students,

For the purpose of accomplishing a master's dissertation in Sciences of Languages, you are kindly invited to fill in this questionnaire, attempting to investigate your opinions and experiences regarding the use of QuillBot paraphraser AI- tool in your academic writing courses. Please try your best to read and reflect on the questions, as your answers will help in collection of valuable data on the research topic. Your anonymity is ensured and, the provided answers will be only used for academic purposes aligning with the research aims.

Section One: Student's Attitudes towards Academic Writing

Q1: How do you view the significance of academic writing in your educational journey?

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Q2: What complexities or obstacles do you face in academic writing while conducting your research?

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Q3: What is your perspective on the importance of paraphrasing techniques in academic writing?

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Q4: How do you assess your own paraphrasing skills?

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Q5: Which techniques or strategies do you use when paraphrasing?

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Section Two: Student's Perceptions of Using AI Tools in Academic Writing

Q1: How do you perceive the integration of AI tools in your academic writing process?

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Q2: In what areas specifically did AI applications enhance your academic writing proficiency significantly?

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Q3: What AI tools do you frequently use?

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Q4: What ethical concerns, if any, have you encountered while using AI tools for academic writing?

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Section Three: Student's Attitudes towards QuillBot Paraphraser

Q1: How familiar are you with QuillBot paraphraser?

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Q2: What experience have you had in which QuillBot significantly impacted your writing process either positively or negatively?

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Q3: In what way has QuillBot helped you broaden your vocabulary, particularly with synonyms?

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Q4: How do you perceive the use of QuillBot in mastering your paraphrasing abilities?

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Q5: What is your attitude towards incorporating QuillBot paraphraser into your academic writing process, particularly regarding its effectiveness in improving your writing skills?

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Q6: How confident do you feel about the quality of the output provided by QuillBot?

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Q7: If there are any questions that you believe are of close relevance to the purpose of the questionnaire but were not included, please write them below.

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.....

Your collaboration, interest, and time will be highly appreciated.

Appendix 6: Focus Group's Questions

Q1: What aspect do you find particularly easy or challenging when using the QuillBot paraphraser?

Q2: How do you handle technical issues or limitations when using QuillBot paraphraser in your academic writing?

Q3: How would you evaluate QuillBot paraphraser's accuracy and reliability?

Q4: How does using the QuillBot paraphraser affect your motivation to learn and improve your paraphrasing skills?

Q5: Can you describe your overall satisfaction with the QuillBot paraphraser?

Appendix 7: Focus Group Transcription

I: good morning and thank you so much for being part of my study. My study is about, paraphrasing. Okay, just to brainstorm some ideas, so you can answer freely and purposely. Yes. There is no correct or wrong answer. Just feel at ease. You can talk whenever you are comfortable. I will start, the first question, what aspect do you find particularly easy or challenging when using the QuillBot paraphraser?

S1: So yes, I think incorrect in form. Sometimes your own paraphrasing lacks some. Punctuation, lack some sentences order. When you give it a keyboard, to QuillBot, it will like order and fix it in the academic way.

I: Nice.

S2: So the availability of vocabulary as it suggests many.

S1: Synonyms, synonyms of same notions.

S2: Yeah. It's like a variety of options. You know, you have multiple sentence structures and whatever, so you can choose. Yeah. Maybe the correct grammar because I use it.

I: Nice. Yeah. What about synonyms?

S2: So I took only the correct grammar. It provides a number of synonyms that are not like 100% accurate but similar. Yeah. No the like the job is yours to pick the right synonym the most suitable for the context. Yes. This is it.

I: Yes. Thank you. So, what aspect do you find it challenging in using it? Yes. Do you find it challenging? No.

S4: As Sarah said, context. You know, sometimes, QuillBot doesn't know your context or your setting or the environment or which you're going to present this paraphrasing. So sometimes they mislead.

I: Yes. Do you mean, for example, it doesn't provide you with a word that could be misleading the main meaning of the context?

S4: yeah, it could be misleading.

S1: Doesn't give you the intended meaning according to the context.

S2: Also, if the text. I'm sorry. Yes. The text or the paraphrase is like, too long, you know, it's not functional.

I: What do you think of the paraphrasing itself? Is it good?

S5: I think it keeps the same structure.

S5: If you are a flexible student and you want different structures, it doesn't provide you with different structures. It only has one structure that it always depends on.

S2: The idea is that you should not take it like as it is. You should make your own details and yeah, no not details version, Yeah, improvements and additions.

I: So how do you evaluate its accuracy and reliability in this case?

S2: I think it's accurate or reliable.

S5: If we compare the QuillBot to other applications, it's one of the best of them. Yes. It's very popular in the choice of words, the vocabulary, and I believe it does give a good paraphrase.

S4: Also like to mention the options. Sometimes they ask you if you wanted to be fluent, if you want to be standard. Yeah, So those options are very helpful.

S2: Yeah.

I: Okay. So in case, for example, do you face any technical or technical issues or limitations? How do you handle these limitations?

S2: Changes from your own? Yes.

S4: As Sara said, because it has the same structure, they keep it with all input that you want to paraphrase.

S4: The fixed structure. Sometimes it's challenging. So you need to put your own touch as you are.

I: you mean that we should use it as a starting point or make some refinements with its suggestions.

S4: Exactly. And then you give your own detail. Your own version.

S2: Sometimes it's better to use a dictionary to find the words that are more suitable for you, or reflecting your meaning.

I: Yes.

S2: And also not only to rely on QuillBot, for example, as the only source of, like paraphrasing, because our tools vary and you can use many to serve your purpose too.

S1: Yes.

S2: To give a final product. Yeah, exactly.

I: ok, before the last question. So how does using this application influence your motivation to improve your academic writing or paraphrasing skills, especially motivate you to practice more?

S2: No.

S1: So we can say sometimes it demotivates you. Yes. You become addicted.

S2: Yeah, exactly.

S1: Dependent on.

S4: It limits your creativity.

S2: So you may lose the skill in you. That's the issue.

S4: But overall it's good for your academic research and academic work if you use it well.

S4: Don't overuse on it.

S2: It. Yeah, exactly.

S1: Actually, this is the last question. So can you describe your overall satisfaction with this application? Are you satisfied or dissatisfied?

S2: I think can I talk with percentages? Yes, yes. For example 75% satisfaction.

S1: Satisfied about this?

S2: Yes. I mean, it does the job. Personally, I don't fully rely on it. I just like take the words, maybe the punctuation, and the word structure. Yes. And that's it. I mean, I don't like copy as it is. Yes, like it does. Yes. Yes, exactly. It gives me choices. That's it. Yeah. I think it's, beneficial to an extent, since some teachers, have advised me to use it. Yes. Like so they know, that I mean, they know how to use benefit from.

I: Yes, yes. So it saves time.

S2: Yes. It saves time. But in the end, I believe that, a combination of both I use of historical books and your personal efforts are essential. Yes.

I: You want to add anything? No. Thank you so much, I appreciate it. Thank you.

S2: Good luck. Yeah. It's simple. Yes.

I: Good luck. Thank you so much.

Appendix 8: Samples of Students' Questionnaire Answers

Student's Questionnaire

Dear Students,

For the purpose of accomplishing a master's dissertation in Sciences of Languages, you are kindly invited to fill in this questionnaire, attempting to investigate your opinions and experiences regarding the use of QuillBot paraphraser AI- tool in your academic writing courses. Please try your best to read and reflect on the questions, as your answers will help in collection of valuable data on the research topic. Your anonymity is ensured and, the provided answers will be only used for academic purposes aligning with the research aims.

The researcher,

Section One: Student's Attitudes towards Academic Writing

Q1: How do you view the significance of academic writing in your educational journey?

Academic writing is very significant in educational journey in.....
terms of expanding your knowledge and developing your writing.....
skills.....

Q2: What complexities or obstacles do you face in academic writing while conducting your research?

The main obstacles a student may face in academic writing are.....
the disability to gather a huge amount of information, hardship of choosing
appropriate writing methodology while conducting research.....

Q3: What is your perspective on the importance of paraphrasing techniques in academic writing?



Q4: What ethical concerns, if any, have you encountered while using AI tools for academic writing?

It is a positive way to help students in their Academic writing.

Section Three: Student's Attitudes towards QuillBot Paraphraser

Q1: How familiar are you with QuillBot paraphraser?

We use it sometimes.

Q2: What experience have you had in which QuillBot significantly impacted your writing process either positively or negatively?

It is very efficient in paraphrasing.

Q3: In what way has QuillBot helped you broaden your vocabulary, particularly with synonyms?

It enriches our vocabulary and it has a large capacity in synonyms.

Q4: How do you perceive the use of QuillBot in mastering your paraphrasing abilities?

Paraphrasing technique is mainly important. It helps in avoiding plagiarism, and also helps your research seem more original and... Credible.....

Q4: How do you assess your own paraphrasing skills?

To assess my paraphrasing skills, I need to read carefully the text and construct the main points around it using different vocabularies.....

Q5: Which techniques or strategies do you use when paraphrasing?

First, we keep the same length, we change the vocabulary, and change the sentence structure, we keep the same language in the text.....

Section Two: Student's Perceptions of Using AI Tools In Academic Writing

Q1: How do you perceive the integration of AI tools in your academic writing process?

I believe that using AI tools in my academic writing is very helpful in enhancing my writing skills.....

Q2: In what areas specifically did AI applications enhance your academic writing proficiency significantly?

It helps to write more academically, using advanced vocabulary, and more formal and objective circumstances.....

Q3: What AI tools do you frequently use?

Chat-GPT, DeepSeek, Quillbot.....



I see it useful tool and
help the student in their
academic writing

Q5: What is your attitude towards incorporating QuillBot paraphraser into your academic writing process, particularly regarding its effectiveness in improving your writing skills?

I use it carefully and when it need

Q6: How confident do you feel about the quality of the output provided by QuillBot?

not perfectly you can't depend
on academic writing so it help
it help a lot

Q7: If there are any questions that you believe are of close relevance to the purpose of the questionnaire but were not included, please write them below.

The negative effect of using the
tools of Quill bot

Your collaboration, interest, and time will be highly appreciated.

ملخص الدراسة

على الرغم من أن إعادة الصياغة مهارة أساسية يجب على طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية إتقانها عند الكتابة الأكاديمية، إلا أنها تبدو مهمة صعبة بالنسبة لهم. لذلك، وفي ضوء الذكاء الاصطناعي (AI)، فإنهم يعتمدون على أدوات إعادة الصياغة عبر الإنترنت مثل QuillBot. ومع ذلك يُولى القليل من الاهتمام لفهم كيفية إدراك طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لأداة إعادة الصياغة هذه بمساعدة الذكاء الاصطناعي في تعليماتهم الكتابية. انطلاقاً من هذه النقطة، أجريت هذه الدراسة بهدف تسليط الضوء على تصورات ومواقف طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية تجاه استخدام QuillBot Paraphraser. علاوة على ذلك سعت الدراسة الحالية إلى استكشاف التحديات المحتملة التي يواجهها الطلاب أثناء استخدام أداة إعادة الصياغة عبر الإنترنت هذه. ولتحقيق هذه الأهداف تم تطبيق النموذج التفسيري متبع بالمنهج الكيفي. ووفقاً لتصميم دراسة الحالة المعتمد استخدم هذا البحث استنباطاً غير منظم للطلاب ومجموعة تركيز من أجل جمع البيانات اللازمة من مجموعة من 25 طالب ماستر، والذين تم اختيارهم بإتباع أسلوب أخذ العينات الهادف. في النهاية، كشفت النتائج أن أغلبية الطلاب أبدوا ردود فعل إيجابية تجاه استخدام QuillBot Paraphraser كمساعد ذكاء اصطناعي لتحسين مهاراتهم في الكتابة الأكاديمية، كما أشارت النتائج إلى مجموعة متنوعة من العقبات التي واجهها الطلاب أثناء استخدام هذه الأداة. بنهاية هذا البحث يمكن الاستنتاج أن دمج تقنيات الذكاء الاصطناعي مثل أدوات إعادة الصياغة عبر الانترنت في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL)، يمكن أن يكون مفيداً في مساعدة طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية على التغلب على بعض الصعوبات في عملية الكتابة الأكاديمية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الكتابة الأكاديمية، الذكاء الاصطناعي، طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، إعادة الصياغة،

QuillBot Paraphraser