


# Libyan EFL MA Students' Paraphrasing Skills: Perceptions, Challenges, and Techniques

Al-Shredi, Nisreen 

(Department of English, University of Tripoli, Libya)

[n.sheredi@uot.edu.ly](mailto:n.sheredi@uot.edu.ly)

Submitted: 11/10/2024 Accepted: 30/10/2024 Published 1/12/2024

---

## ABSTRACT

This study examines the perceptions of Libyan EFL Masters' students towards the strategy of paraphrasing in academic writing. It sheds light, particularly on the obstacles that students face during the paraphrasing process. Moreover, it explores the most frequent paraphrasing techniques implemented by students. The study involves 30 Libyan MA students studying in the Department of English. The research comprises a questionnaire to ascertain students' challenges and perceptions of paraphrasing. It also includes a paraphrasing test in order to uncover the common paraphrasing techniques employed by students. The study discloses three main challenges: 1) unfamiliarity of vocabulary skills 2) deficient reading comprehension skills, and 3) changing the main ideas of the original text. Moreover, the results of the paraphrasing test reveal that the synonym-changing technique is dominantly used by all the participants. The study finally suggests that there is a discrepancy between the students' perceptions of paraphrasing and their use of paraphrasing techniques.

**Keywords:** paraphrasing, perceptions, challenges, techniques, MA students

---

الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى البحث في تصورات طلاب الماجستير الليبيين حول مسألة إعادة أسلوب الصياغة في الكتابة الأكاديمية. وتسلط الدراسة الضوء بشكل خاص على الصعوبات التي قد يواجهها الطلبة أثناء إعادة صياغة النصوص. علاوة على ذلك، تستكشف الدراسة عن أساليب إعادة صياغة النصوص والأكثر استخداماً من قبل الطلبة. وقد تم اختبار الطلبة من أجل معرفة طرق إعادة أسلوب الصياغة الأكثر شيوعاً. وفي هذا السياق تم توزيع استبيان حيث تمت الاجابة عليه من قبل 30 طالب دراسات عليا يدرسون في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية. وكشفت الدراسة عن ثلاثة تحديات رئيسية: افتقار الطلبة لمعاني بعض المفردات، عدم فهم الطلبة لمحتوى النص، التغيير في الأفكار الرئيسية للنص الأصلي. واستنتجت الدراسة أيضاً أن تغيير المرادفات للنصوص الأصلية هي الأكثر نهجاً من قبل الطلبة. وأخيراً تشير الدراسة إلى وجود تباين بين تصورات الطلاب واستخدامهم لمهارات إعادة الصياغة.

## Introduction

Learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) necessitates mastering four essential skills, namely, speaking, reading, listening, and writing (Aprianto et al., 2024). However, writing is one of the hardest skills for EFL students, since it involves language components such as sentence structure, punctuation, and grammar (Zalfa & Aqiilah, 2023; Maiyoritza & Wahyun, 2021). According to Toba et al. (2019), EFL students must master writing because it is important for written communication and for academic purposes. Academic writing is defined as “a formal style of writing used by university students, instructors, and researchers” (Aldabbus & Almansouri, 2022, p.1). It is different in terms of sentence structure, the use of academic words, language style, and the audience for whom it is written (Maiyoritza & Wahyun, 2021). Moreover, academic writing is not based on the student’s personal views or opinions (Aldabbus & Almansouri, 2022). However, students are required to summarize and paraphrase information, develop their research skills, and use direct quotations with an accurate referencing system (Abdulkareem, 2013). Although it is considered a pivotal skill, academic writing may also be challenging for both undergraduate and postgraduate students, including those who are majoring in English language (Alaofi, 2020).

Paraphrasing is one of the strategies that should be implemented by students in academic writing in order to conduct a high-quality writing outcome (Hyytinen et al., 2017; Hirvela & Du, 2013; Hayuningrum & Yulia, 2012). The word paraphrase, which is originally derived from the Greek word ‘Paraphrasis’, means restating an idea or piece of information in different ways without changing the meaning (Rinjani & Ovilia, 2023; Rahmayani, 2018).

The restatement must include different words and different phrases that resemble the context and the tone of the original text (Leonhard, 2002). Paraphrasing also means including the relevant references or citing other authors' ideas to achieve an acceptable writing product (Rahmayani, 2018; Khairunnisa et al., 2014; Hayuningrum & Yulia, 2012).

For an efficient paraphrase, Zalfa & Aqilah (2023), Khairunnisa et al. (2014), and Dung (2010) identify several criteria. First, a paraphrase should include the essential ideas of the original passage, but the writing style should be distinct. In other words, a paraphrasing text should be written in words with different grammar and sentence structure. Also, students should not add their own thoughts or opinions to the text. In addition, students should not put an emphasis on any single point more than another. Moreover, the order of sentences or texts should change completely and flow well with clear meaning. Secondly, a paraphrase should maintain nearly the same length as the original. Thirdly, paraphrasing text should not be placed in quotation marks. Finally, the author's name and the publication's year should be enclosed in parentheses as an acknowledgment for the original source to prevent plagiarism. This means that students still need to include the references from which they gathered information even after paraphrasing (Zalfa & Aqilah, 2023).

The failure to paraphrase appropriately could lead to plagiarism. When it comes to academic writing, plagiarism is a serious issue, particularly for EFL students (Al-Shredi & Harb, 2022; Rezeki, 2018; Kashku et al., 2010). As a consequence, paraphrasing can be used as an effective method to prevent plagiarism. Unfortunately, not all students know the correct ways of paraphrasing (Ardelia & Tiyas, 2019). Also, paraphrasing is often ignored by EFL students, and they usually resort to direct quotations (Miranda, 2021). Additionally, online paraphrasing tools became easily accessible and prevalent to students in recent years (Alammar & Amin 2023; Roe & Perkins 2022; Sulistyaningruma, 2021; Miranda, 2021).

However, there is a growing concern pertaining to the possibility of “over-reliance” on these tools and how they could impact students’ critical thinking skills (Zalfa & Aqilah, 2023, p. 1).

EFL students may face serious challenges if they do not receive adequate instruction in paraphrasing (Clarín et al., 2023; Hayuningrum & Yulia, 2012). These difficulties could be contributed to poor reading comprehension, unfamiliarity with the text’s subject matter, limited vocabulary, lack of referencing ability, low L2 proficiency, or inaccurate use of paraphrasing techniques (Azkar, 2021; Adi Badiozaman, 2014). Also, most students do not bother doing the writing themselves and choose to copy and paste directly from the internet (Aldabbus & Almansouri, 2022). Particularly, students who are not confident enough with their writing abilities (Liao & Tseng, 2010). Another contributing factor to these difficulties is the inappropriate feedback provided by instructors. Finally, the lack of practice is another reason for students not being able to paraphrase properly (Maiyoritsa & Wahyun, 2021).

Paraphrasing can be achieved by the use of several techniques (Azakar, 2021). A sentence may be syntactically different from the original text when the grammar is altered. For instance, the structure is changed from active to passive, positive sentences become negative sentences, clauses are shortened to phrases, long sentences are divided for simplicity, short sentences are combined, or phrases are expanded for clarity. Also, sentences or words can be semantically distinct from the original text. This entails replacing the original text’s words with either synonyms and antonyms, changing the word order, changing the word form, i.e., verbs or adjectives become nouns, or vice versa. A final technique involves changing the ways ideas are organized in the original text (Azakar, 2021; Rahmayani, 2018). These techniques are crucial for students who want to paraphrase English texts effectively.

### **Aims of the study**

The study aims to investigate the perceptions of Libyan EFL MA students on the use of paraphrasing skills. The study focuses on the challenges that confront students in paraphrasing. It also scrutinizes the most common paraphrasing techniques utilized by Libyan EFL MA students in academic writing.

### **Research Questions**

The present study addresses the following key research questions:

- 1) What are the perceptions of Libyan EFL MA students of paraphrasing?
- 2) What difficulties do Libyan EFL MA students encounter when paraphrasing English academic texts?
- 3) Which paraphrasing techniques do Libyan EFL MA students frequently use?

### **Previous Studies**

Numerous studies have been carried out to examine the issue of paraphrasing in academic writing. A study was conducted by Aprianto et al. (2024) on students studying English literature at Bumigira University. The objective of the research was to identify the most frequent paraphrasing techniques used by students of both genders. The study also sought to shed light on the difficulties that students encounter. The results of the study revealed that male students favored syntactic changes in their paraphrasing, i.e., changing sentences from active to passive tense. Female students, on the other hand, went towards semantic changes, i.e., changes in word forms. Regarding the challenges, students were concerned with comprehending the original text, issues of stylistic modes in sentence structure, as well as problems in grammar and vocabulary. In the study of Clarin et al. (2023), the research examined the difficulties faced by English language students at one of the higher education institutions in Ozamiz City. It was found that students encountered various difficulties in paraphrasing, including

limited vocabulary, inaccurate use of paraphrasing techniques, and inadequate reading comprehension skills. In Rinjani & Ovilia (2023), it was revealed that changing synonyms and converting active sentences to passive sentences were the most frequently used techniques by students. The main challenges addressed by students were related to limited reading comprehension skills as well as lexical and syntactic problems. Similarly, the research of Pratama & Prawesti (2022) has shown that the students of the Department English Language at Persada University had difficulties in using their own words to produce an appropriate paraphrasing text. It was also reported that changing words in the original text was the most common strategy implemented by the students. In Azkar (2021), the students of the Department of English Language in the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training at the Ar-Raniry State Islamic University faced several challenges in paraphrasing. These issues were attributed to their poor reading comprehension skills, shortage of vocabulary, and inefficient use of referencing skills. In terms of paraphrasing techniques, the students used different synonyms, changed clauses to phrases, and altered sentence structure in their texts. The findings of Rezkilaturahmi & Mukhsin (2021) showed that the majority of the research participants faced two main challenges: a) limited vocabulary and b) insufficient grammar knowledge. Moreover, the synonym-changing technique was commonly employed by the students. In Maiyoritsa & Wahyuni (2021), students encountered numerous problems in paraphrasing. The study also found that students used the synonym-changing technique, breaking lengthy sentences and omitting sentences in their paraphrases.

The study of Alaofi (2020) explored the difficulties that Saudi graduate students face while summarizing and paraphrasing texts. The challenges comprised insufficient language proficiency, a lack of reading comprehension skills, and

problems related to students' writing style. Additionally, Ismail et al. (2020) looked into the hindrances that Indonesian college students encountered in paraphrasing. All the obstacles were due to the students' limited vocabulary, lack of practice, and poor knowledge of paraphrasing techniques. The research also revealed that the synonym-changing technique was frequently used by the participants. The research also found that all students were incompetent to yield proper paraphrasing texts due to their insufficient understanding of the criteria of proper paraphrasing, such as failing to cite references. Moreover, a study on students' challenges in paraphrasing and summarizing texts was carried out by Abdul Azis et al. (2019). The findings of the study showed that the students of the fifth semester in the English Education Study Program faced several challenges. These difficulties were ascribed to students' inability to understand paraphrasing techniques and to their limited vocabulary. Furthermore, Ramayani (2018) examined the challenges that students of the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training at Ar-Raniry State Islamic University faced in paraphrasing. The difficulties encompassed limited vocabulary, changing the foremost ideas of the original text, and inadequate understanding of paraphrasing techniques.

Adi Badiozaman (2014) investigated the difficulties that Malaysian EFL students confronted in paraphrasing English academic texts. The results demonstrated a number of obstacles, such as lacking text comprehension, limited L2 proficiency, and problems with referencing. Also, Khairunnisa et al. (2014) found that students who took English Language Teaching (ELT) classes at Tanjungpura University had a variety of difficulties when it came to paraphrasing. These problems covered their inability to understand the requirements for proper paraphrasing and their insufficient vocabulary. Finally, in Hayuningrum & Yulia (2012), it was revealed that students of the Education Study Program at the Sanata Dharma University lacked the ability to paraphrase

effectively. In fact, the students intended to copy information directly without paraphrasing. Accordingly, the most identified problem in the study was word-for-word plagiarism.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Participants**

The study involved 30 Libyan EFL MA students. There were 24 females and 6 males, ranging in age from 25 to 40 years. The students, who are currently in the stage of writing their dissertation, are all studying in the Department of English of the Faculty of Languages (formerly)<sup>1</sup> at the University of Tripoli.

### **Instruments**

A closed-ended questionnaire was employed to assess the students' perceptions of paraphrasing and to obtain deeper knowledge about the challenges they may face. The questionnaire, which was disseminated using Google Form, consisted of two sections. The first section included demographic details about the participants, such as their gender and age. The second section comprised 20 statements drawn from studies by Rezkilaturahmi & Mukhsin (2021), Rahmayani (2018), and Liao & Tseng (2010). The statements were presented in the form of a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. In addition to the questionnaire, six students participated in a paraphrasing test. The test contained a written passage that was taken from *'Writing Academic English'* fourth edition, a text book written by Alice Oshima and Ann Hogue. The aim of the test is to gather information on the students' paraphrasing abilities. Additionally, the test is used to examine the paraphrasing techniques frequently employed by Libyan EFL MA students. The

---

<sup>1</sup> The Faculty of Arts and Languages is the new name for the faculty. All of the participants, however, are still studying in accordance with the Faculty of Languages' academic system.



six participants were given twenty-five minutes to complete the test.

### Analysis and Results

Table (1) displays the results pertaining to the students' perceptions of paraphrasing

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1-Paraphrasing means rewriting information in my own words without changing the meaning.	75.9%	20.7%	3.4%	0	0
2-I am aware of all the paraphrasing techniques.	24.1%	31%	24.1%	20.7%	0
3-I have learned paraphrasing techniques through academic writing courses.	20.7%	17.2%	24.6%	27.6%	6.9%
4-I am aware of the difference between summarizing and paraphrasing.	86.2%	10.3%	3.4%	0	0
5-I am aware of the difference between quotation and paraphrasing.	75.9%	20.7%	0	3.4%	0
6-I know that inappropriate paraphrasing will lead to plagiarism.	58.6%	31%	6.9%	3.4%	0
7-I lack the criteria of proper paraphrasing.	3.4%	3.4%	37.9%	44.8%	10.3%
8-Although I know the right way to paraphrase, I am not sure whether my paraphrasing is appropriate or not.	3.4%	41.4%	31%	20.7%	3.4%
9-I might forget to include the reference after paraphrasing.	6.9%	17.2%	20.7%	27.6%	27.6%
10-I have copied ideas or sentences from online materials without paraphrasing.	0	0	3.4%	44.8%	51.7%

Based on results depicted in Table (1), 75.9% of the respondents agreed with the definition of paraphrasing shown in statement (1), that is, "rewriting information in my own words without

changing its meaning". Moreover, the students seemed to have an adequate awareness of all the paraphrasing techniques. The highest percentages were between agree and strongly agree, 31% and 24.1%, respectively. On the contrary, 27.6% tended to disagree that they have learned paraphrasing techniques in academic writing courses. Also, 86.2% of the participants knew the difference between summarizing and paraphrasing. Also, 75.9% of the participants were able to differentiate between the use of quotations and paraphrasing strategies. Additionally, 58.6% of the respondents were strongly aware that inappropriate paraphrasing leads to plagiarism. In statement (7), 44.8% disagreed that they lacked the criteria of proper paraphrasing, but 37.9% were neutral. Also, 41.4% agreed that they were not always certain if they had produced an accurate paraphrase. Finally, 27.6% of the participants strongly disagreed that they had forgotten to credit the original source after paraphrasing. Also, 51.7% strongly disagreed with statement (10) i.e., they had copied ideas or sentences from the internet without paraphrasing.

*Table (2) presents the results regarding the challenges students face when paraphrasing*

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1- I might paraphrase incorrectly due to my English writing deficiency.	6.9%	10.3%	20.7%	30%	31%
2- I might paraphrase incorrectly because I am not familiar with the subject matter of the text.	3.4%	27.6%	24.6%	24.6%	13.8%
3- I have difficulty changing words when I paraphrase an English text.	0	6.9%	17.2%	44.8%	31%

4- I might change the main ideas of the original text.	0	34.5%	17.2%	24.5%	13.8%
5-I have difficulty with grammar when I paraphrase an English text.	0	3.4%	17.2%	14.4%	37.9%
6- I have difficulty changing the word order when I paraphrase an English text.	3.4%	6.9%	13.8%	48.3%	27.6%
7-I have difficulty changing sentence structure when I paraphrase an English text.	0	3.4%	20.7%	41.4%	34.5%
8- I might not be familiar with the vocabulary of the text.	0	34.5%	13.8%	31%	20.7%
9- I have a problem finding my own writing style.	3.4%	17.2%	24.1%	31%	24.1%
10- I have difficulty paraphrasing due to my low English language proficiency.	3.4%	0	24.1%	37.9%	34.5%

In Table (2), the majority of the respondents intended to disagree that they had any writing issues. The highest percentages were between disagree and strongly disagree, 30% and 31%, respectively. However, 27.6% of the participants reported that their unfamiliarity with the text's subject matter could constitute a problem for adequate paraphrasing. Also, 44.8% of the students appeared to have no problem changing synonyms when paraphrasing, but 34.5% appeared to be undetermined to alter the core ideas of the original text. Also, 37.9% of the participants strongly disagreed that grammar could be a barrier in paraphrasing, 48.3% disagreed that they had any difficulty in changing word order, and 41.4% disagreed that changing sentence structure was a challenge in paraphrasing. Nonetheless, 34.5% concurred that the unfamiliarity of certain vocabulary may pose difficulties when paraphrasing. Finally, 31% disagreed that they had a problem finding their writing style, and 37.9%

disagreed that their English language proficiency could hinder them from paraphrasing appropriately.

### **Students' Preferences on Paraphrasing Techniques**

In order to find information about the most often used paraphrasing techniques, an English text was paraphrased by six Libyan MA students (see below). As a whole, the students made an effort to maintain the text's original idea and tried to convey the meaning of the source authentically. However, not all students followed the criteria and the procedures of proper paraphrasing (**see Appendix**). The text, which was produced by student (4), appeared more like a summary than a paraphrase. It was shorter than the original text, and all the supporting ideas were omitted. Also, both students' (3) and (4) texts did not retain the same length as the original passage. Finally, unlike students (4), (5), and (6), students (1), (2), and (3) did not document the source of the text, which would be considered a form of plagiarism.

### **The Original text**

*Language is the main means of communication between people. But so many different languages have developed that language has often been a barrier rather an aid to understanding among people. For many years, people have dreamed of setting up an international universal language which all people could speak and understand. The arguments in favor of a universal language are simple and obvious. If all people spoke the same tongue, cultural and economic ties might be much closer, and good will might increase between countries (Kispert, 2004). (84 words)*

In terms of paraphrasing techniques, the most common technique used by the participants was the synonym-changing technique. That is basically changing the words of the original text with their synonyms (Zohar et al., 2022). In fact, all the participants relied heavily on changing words without making any changes in

sentence structure, as shown in the text of student (6). However, three other techniques were also employed by the participants, namely, merging sentences (students 3 and 5), changing word order (student 6), and changing word forms (student 3). Here are some paraphrasing samples of each technique.

### **Changing Synonyms:**

Replacing synonyms is the most frequently employed technique by the six students. Here are some instances of sentences that have been paraphrased and compared to the original source.

*Source text version:* Language is the main means of communication between people.

*Student (1):* Language is the key element for people's communication.

*Source text version:* The arguments in favor of a universal language are simple and obvious.

*Student (2):* The reasons for having a universal language are clear and straightforward

*Student (6):* The arguments in support of a universal language are straightforward and evident.

*Source text version:* For many years, people have dreamed of setting up an international universal language which all people could speak and understand.

*Student (1):* Since time immemorial, humans have always wished for a single worldwide language that everyone could easily recognize.

*Student (5):* Through the time, people envisioned the establishment of a one universal language that all people can use to communicate with each other.

*Source text version:* If all people spoke the same tongue....

*Student (6):* If all people shared a common tongue...

**Merging sentences:**

Combining sentences means condensing the information into a smaller number of clear and adequate sentences. The opposite can occur as well, i.e., breaking up long sentences (Zohar et al. 2022).

*Source text version:* Language is the main means of communication between people. But so many different languages have developed that language has often been a barrier rather an aid to understanding among people.

*Student (3)* Language serves as a means of communication but can also pose barriers.

*Source text version:* For many years, people have dreamed of setting up an international universal language which all people could speak and understand. The arguments in favor of a universal language are simple and obvious. If all people spoke the same tongue, cultural and economic ties might be much closer, and good will might increase between countries.

*Student (3):* Throughout history, there has been a dream of a universal language that could facilitate better understanding and communication among people, bridging cultures, fostering economic ties, and more.

*Source text version:* The arguments in favor of a universal language are simple and obvious. If all people spoke the same tongue, cultural and economic ties might be much closer, and good will might increase between countries

*Student (5):* The supports of this notion are vivid and simple, in

that if all people spoke the same language, both cultural and economic ties would be closer as well as to improve the goodwill between countries.

### **Changing word order**

Changing word order means rearranging or moving words, or sometimes sentences, to different positions.

*Source text version:* Language is the main means of communication between people.

*Student (6):* The primary means of communication between individuals is Language.

### **Changing word form**

Changing word form means converting one word form to another, i.e., changing nouns to verbs or vice versa.

*Source text version:* For many years, people have dreamed of setting up an international universal language which all people could speak and understand.

*Student (3):* Throughout history, there has been a dream of a universal language that could facilitate better understanding...

### **Discussion**

Based on the results of the questionnaire, the students appeared to understand the concept of paraphrasing. They were also aware that improper paraphrasing will lead to plagiarism. This finding was also evidenced in Al-Shredi & Harb (2022), where Libyan MA students have shown high-levels of awareness towards plagiarism.

Additionally, three main challenges were addressed by the students in this study. That is, failing to comprehend the text's subject matter, changing the primary ideas of the original text, and not knowing the meaning of specific vocabulary. Similar

findings were found in Aprianto et al. (2024), Pratama & Prawesti (2022), Regala-Flores & Lopez (2019), Khairunnisa et al. (2014), and Hayuningrum & Yulia (2012). According to the studies, the students' limited vocabulary and their inability to understand the text's content were the main causes for their inability to paraphrase appropriately. The writers implied that these challenges stemmed from students' lack of understanding of the criteria and the procedures of a proper paraphrase.

As accentuated by Rahmayani (2018), an appropriate paraphrase is dependent on two interrelated skills: reading and writing. Wolfersberger (2013) stated that the skills of reading and writing are individually very complex. Reading involves processes such as "word recognition, orthographic processing, phonological processing, semantic and syntactic processing" (Wolfersberger, 2013, p.50). Writing, on the other hand, involves spelling, grammar, and vocabulary. Thus, an adequate paraphrase can be achieved when students have sufficient proficiency in reading and writing skills. It was also confirmed by Rinjani & Ovia (2023) that there is a strong connection between students' reading comprehension and vocabulary learning with their paraphrasing skill. Both authors have indicated that "paraphrasing requires text comprehension and vocabulary knowledge so that the message or key points in the original text can be conveyed using different words while still paying attention to appropriate synonyms" (p.890). The researchers manifested that an increase in reading comprehension and vocabulary mastery will lead to an improvement in students' paraphrasing skills.

The aforesaid results pertaining to paraphrasing techniques revealed that synonym-changing technique was dominantly used by all students. This finding is in line with previous research, such as Zohra et al. (2023), Ovia et al. (2022), Pratama & Prawesti (2022), Maiyoritsa & Wahyunihe (2021), Rezkilaturahmi & Mukhsin (2021), Azkar (2021), and Ismail et al.



(2020), in which students regularly employed the synonym-changing technique. Additionally, Aprianto et al. (2024) found that female students were more likely to use the synonym-changing technique than male students. This finding coincides with the results of the current research since the students who took part in the paraphrasing test were all females.

According to most previous research, students seemed to find the synonym change technique to be the easiest and most effective one to implement. However, depending solely on one technique, will not enable students to produce a proper paraphrase (Harris, 2017). If the sentence structure is still maintained as the original, it would still be considered a plagiarized text. Thus, the way to properly paraphrase can be carried out by modifying sentence structure in a distinct writing style that does not resemble the original text.

Finally, there seems to be a disparity between the participants' perceptions (see table 1) and their performance in the test. The students have claimed that they were aware of the criteria and the techniques of paraphrasing. However, it was shown that not all students included the reference and changed the sentence structure in their texts (see Appendix). This finding was also revealed in Liao & Tseng (2010), where Chinese participants neither applied the paraphrasing criteria properly nor provided the references. The researchers suggested that poor paraphrasing resulted from the students' scarce knowledge of paraphrasing techniques and insufficient practice in English academic writing skills.

## **Conclusion**

The main aims of this research were to examine the challenges that Libyan EFL MA students face in paraphrasing English texts. Moreover, the study intended to explore the most frequent paraphrasing techniques utilized by students in their writing. The findings of this research revealed that the Libyan MA

students' academic writing experience is not always immune from challenges in paraphrasing. Based on the results of the questionnaire, students have reported that the unfamiliarity of the subject matter of the text, insufficient vocabulary, and changing the core ideas of the text can be all barriers to a proper paraphrase. In terms of techniques, the participants highly used the synonym- changing technique in their paraphrases.

It was also revealed that the students' perceptions of paraphrasing did not match their behavior in the paraphrasing test. The students did not always succeed in generating an acceptable paraphrasing text. One can imply that the participants did not learn the techniques and the criteria of proper paraphrasing correctly. Therefore, paraphrasing should be taught in academic writing courses through continuous exercises and practice. Also, instructors should draw the attention of students to the use of all the techniques and the criteria related to paraphrasing. Specifically, the criterion on citation in order to prevent the act of plagiarism. Lastly, research method courses should incorporate critical reading, summarizing, and paraphrasing strategies to provide students with the knowledge they need to combat the problem of plagiarism.

## References

- Abdul Azis, W., Suryanti, Y., & Sutisn, E. (2019). Students' difficulties to write paraphrasing text and summarizing text. *Pedagogia Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan*, 11(1), 84-87. DOI:10.55215/pedagogia.v11i1.7196
- Abdulkareem, M. N. (2013). An investigation study of academic writing problems faced by Arab postgraduate students at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 3 (9), 1552-1557.

- Adi Badiozaman, I. (2014). Paraphrasing challenges faced by Malaysian ESL students *Issues in Language Studies*, 3(1), 48-69.
- Alammar, A., & Amin, E.A. (2023). EFL students' perception of using AI paraphrasing tools in English language research projects. *Arab World English Journal*, 14 (3) 166-181. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol14no3.11>
- Alaofi, A. (2020). Difficulties of summarizing and paraphrasing in English as a Foreign Language (EFL): Saudi graduate students' Perspectives. *International Journal of English Language Education*, 8 (2), 193-211. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijele.v8i2.17788>
- Aldabbus, S. & Almansouri, E. (2022). Academic writing difficulties encountered by university EFL Learners. *British Journal of English Linguistics*, 10(3), 1-11.
- Al-Shredi, N. & Harb. F. (2022). Knowledge and attitudes of plagiarism among Libyan EFL MA students, faculty of languages, University of Tripoli. *Faculty of Languages Journal-tripoli-libya* 26 (1),
- Aprianoto, D., Sutarman, S., & Ofara, W. (2024). Analyzing the paraphrasing techniques in academic writing skills and the paraphrasing challenges across gender. *JOLLT Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, 12(1), 326-340.
- Ardelia, I., & Tiyas, Y. R. I. (2019). The acquisition of paraphrasing and its impact on teaching and learning quotations to avoid plagiarism. *Getsempera English Education Journal*, 6 (1), 159-171.
- Azkar, N. (2021). *Students' paraphrasing skills in academic writing difficulties and strategies*. [Published bachelor thesis, Ar-Raniry State Islamic University]. UIN-Ar-Raniry <https://repository.ar-raniry.ac.id/id/eprint/24304/>

- Clarín, A. Serohijos, S. Sumaylo, L. & Baluyos, G. (2023). The challenges in paraphrasing among English language students. *Journal of Education and Learning Innovation*, 3 (4), 494-503. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v%vi%i.9712>
- Dung, Tra Thi My. (2010). *An Investigation in Paraphrasing Experienced by Vietnamese Students of English in Academic Writing*. M.A Thesis. University of Danang
- Harris, R. A. (2017). *Using sources effectively: Strengthening your writing and avoiding plagiarism* (5<sup>th</sup>ed.). Routledge. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315267067>
- Hayuningrum, H. & Yulia, M.F. (2012). Students' problems in writing paraphrases in research paper writing class. *LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching*, 15(1), 133-147. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.v15i1.296>
- Hirvela, A., & Du, Q. (2013). "Why am I paraphrasing?": Undergraduate ESL writers' engagement with source-based academic writing and reading. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 12 (2), 87-98.
- Hyytinen, H., Löfström, E. & Lindblom-Ylänne, S. (2017). Challenges in argumentation and paraphrasing among beginning Students in educational sciences, *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 61(4), 411-429.
- Ismail, R., Abdul Haris, S. Ali, H. Nanning, H. & Andi, K. (2020). Paraphrasing technique to develop skill for English writing among Indonesian college students of English. *Sys Rev Pharm* (11), 291-297.
- Kashkur, M., Parshutin, S., & Borisov, A. (2010). Research into plagiarism cases and plagiarism detection methods. *Scientific Journal of Riga Technical University*, 42(1), 138-143. DOI:10.2478/v10143-010-0055-1

- Khairunnisa, W., Sutapa, Y. G., & Surmiyati. (2014). Students' Problems in Paraphrasing. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran*, 3, 1-9.
- Leonhard, B. (2002). *Discoveries in academic writing*. Singapore: Thomson Learning
- Liao M-T., & Tseng C-Y. (2010). Students' behaviors and views of paraphrasing and inappropriate textual borrowing in an EFL academic setting. *Journal of Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics*, 14(2), 187-211.
- Maiyoritsa, L., & Wahyuni, D. (2021). An analysis of students' techniques in paraphrasing at English department Universitas Negeri Padang. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 10(2), 264-271. DOI: 10.24036/jelt. v10i2.112479
- Mira, A. & Fatimah, M. (2020). Students' paraphrased texts and their perceptions of paraphrasing in academic writing. *Lingua Didaktika*, 14 (1), 55-69.
- Miranda, D. (2021). *The impact of paraphrasing tools on students' paraphrasing skills* [Doctoral dissertation, Ar-Raniry State Islamic University]. UIN - Ar Raniry Repository. <https://repository.ar-raniry.ac.id/id/eprint/20266>
- Oshima, A. & Hogue, A. (2006) *Writing academic English* (4th edition). Pearson Longman
- Ovilia, R., Addinna, A, Oktoviandry, R. (2022). Students' paraphrasing ability in academic writing; techniques and challenges. *Komposisi: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa, Sastra, dan Seni*, 23 (2), 141-151.
- Pratama, Y. & Prawesti, A. (2022). An analysis of students' writing skills in paraphrasing: A case study of 5th semester diploma students of English language and culture Department of Darma Persada University. *Getsempena English Education Journal*, 9(1), 13-28.

- Rahmayani, S. O. (2018). *Students' difficulties in paraphrasing English texts* [Unpublished bachelor's thesis, Ar-Raniry State Islamic University].<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/293472228.pdf>
- Regala-Flores, E., & Lopez, M. (2019). Self-reported summarizing and paraphrasing difficulties in L2 writing contexts: Some pedagogical interventions. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 9 (2), 286-296.
- Rezeki, Y. (2018). Analysis of EFL students' citation practices and problems in academic writing. *International Journal of Educational Best Practices (IJEBCP)*, 2 (1), 62-72.
- Rezkilaturahmi, H. & Mukhsin M. (2021). Students' Problems in Paraphrasing the text at Halu Oleo University, *Journal of Teaching of English*, 6 (3), 284-291.
- Rinjani, A. & Ovilia, R. (2023). The relationship between students' paraphrasing ability, reading comprehension, and vocabulary mastery. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 12(3),883-892: <https://doi.org/10.24036/jelt.v12i3.125092>
- Roe, J. and Perkins, M. (2022). What are automated paraphrasing tools and how do we address them? A review of a growing threat to academic integrity, *International Journal for Educational Integrity*, 18 (15),1-10.
- Sulistyaningruma, S. (2021). Utilizing online paraphrasing tools to overcome students' paraphrasing difficulties in literature reviews. *Journal of English Language Studies*, 6 (2), 229-243. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24036/jelt.v12i3.125092>
- Toba, R., Noor, W. N., & Sanu, L. O. (2019). The current issues of Indonesians EFL students' writing skills: Ability, problem, and reason in writing comparison and contrast essay. *Dinamika Ilmu*, 19 (1), 57-73.

- Tran, T. T. T., & Nguyen, H. B. (2022). The effects of paraphrasing on EFL students' academic writing. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 18(1), 976-987.
- Wolfersberger, M. (2013). Refining the construct of classroom-based writing-from reading assessment: The role of task representation. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 10, 49-72. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2012.750661>
- Yoshimura, F. (2018) Another possible reason for plagiarism: Task representations of summary writing. *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language*, 22 (3), 1-17.
- Zalfa, K. & Aqiilah, N. (2023). *Online paraphrasing tools in EFL academic writing: problems, affordances and students' feeling*. [Bachelor thesis, Satya Wacana Christian University].
- Zohra, M., Melani M, Roza V., Dewi, M. (2022). An analysis of paraphrasing techniques used by student at the fifth grade English Education Department of IAIN Bukittinggi academic year 2022/2023. *Journal of Educational Management and Strategy*, 1 (1), 1-13.

## **Appendix**

### *Student (1)*

Language is the key element for people's communication. However, it is also one of the main sources of confusion between them. Since time immemorial, humans have always wished for a single worldwide language that everyone could easily recognize. The need for a common multinational language is clear and easy to predict. Nations would be brought together if the world used the same language. (63 words)

### *Student (2)*

Language is the main communication tool between people. However, with the development of great number of languages, that they often become as a barrier rather than facilitators of communication. For many years, the establishment of an international global language that everyone could speak and understand has been a goal for many people. The reasons for having a universal language are clear and straightforward. Speaking the same language could lead to positive relations between nations as well as greater cultural and economic relations. (82 words)

*Student (3)*

Language serves as a means of communication but can also pose barriers. Throughout history, there has been a dream of a universal language that could facilitate better understanding and communication among people, bridging cultures, fostering economic ties, and more. (39)

*Student (4)*

The large number of languages globally can lead to confusion and miscommunication. Because of this, people wish for one common language to unite everyone and bring people together (Kispert, 2004). (28)

*Student (5)*

Language is a chief way of communication among people. However, the enhancements of the language systems have been affecting the ease of understanding rather than helping. Through the time, people envisioned the establishment of a one universal



language that all people can use to communicate with each other. The supports of this notion are vivid and simple, in that if all people spoke the same language, both cultural and economic ties would be closer as well as to improve the goodwill between countries (Kispert, 2004) (83)

*Student (6)*

The primary means of communication between individuals is Language. But many different languages have developed, and this has often been a barrier to understanding, rather than helping people understand each other. For a long time, people have dreamed to create an international language that everyone could speak and understand. The arguments in support of a universal language are straightforward and evident. If all people shared a common tongue, it could bring cultures and economies closer together, and increase goodwill between countries (Kispert, 2004) (78)