The Perspectives of Post-graduates Majoring in English Regarding the Usage of QuillBot to Enhance Paraphrasing Skills

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ABSTRACT

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Paraphrasing is considered an important skill for postgraduates in their journey toward pursuing an academic degree. This skill helps postgraduates avoid plagiarism and showcases their ability to analyze, research, and perform academic writing tasks. Although numerous studies have determined the importance of this skill, most postgraduates still frequently need help in achieving paraphrasing proficiency. The emergence of QuillBot, an AI-powered paraphrasing tool, is a potential solution for these frequent challenges in learning paraphrasing skills. The overall benefits of QuillBot on the academic writing skills of English learners have been recognized and proven in various studies. However, only some studies have delved into how QuillBot assists postgraduates who took part in improving their paraphrasing skills, serving the academic genre of writing. Therefore, this study recruited twenty English-majored postgraduates to investigate.

Introduction

Academic writing is a writing style used in academic contexts. This genre enables writers to exhibit their knowledge, proficiency, and critical thought formally (Irvin, 2010). Additionally, academic writing not only focuses on the topic but also conveys the writers' insights and opinions about it (Hyland, 2020). Therefore, academic writing is considered a crucial skill for postgraduates (Storch & Tapper, 2009) who must conduct many types of research during their course.

Scholarly support is considered an important component in academic writing. Irvin (2010) stated that if an academic writing is an argument, scholarly support will serve as evidence to strengthen the writer's opinions. Scholarly support helps writers enhance the credibility of their academic work, demonstrate their thorough research, and contextualize the study.

Paraphrasing is an essential skill that helps writers integrate scholarly support into his/ her writing without committing plagiarism (Stander, 2020; Mariani, Rahayu, & Nor, 2021). It refers to the ability to rephrase the ideas borrowed from others using the writer's language and understanding without changing the original text's meaning (Dung, 2010). However, those who need more experience, techniques, and language proficiency for paraphrasing might frequently need help with this skill (Harshbarger, 2012). With the emerging AI tools today to support language teaching and learning, some teachers made use of AI tools such as ChatGPT or Quillbot in their classrooms to support students' learning academic writing (Nguyen, 2024) because AI-generated tools are seen as effective tools for language learning (Pham & Le, 2024; Ho, 2024).

QuillBot, an AI-powered paraphrasing tool, has emerged as a potential solution for these cases. This cutting-edge tool can assist users in paraphrasing any original text. According to Xuyen (2023), QuillBot is renowned for its diverse vocabulary resources in paraphrased suggestions. QuillBot can be used in web browsers or downloaded as an app. This paraphrasing mechanism is extremely simple and requires users to carry only two steps to use: writing or pasting the texts needed to be paraphrased and then pressing the paraphrase button to receive the paraphrased text (Kinga & Gupta, 2021). QuillBot offers ten modes that allow users to choose the one that suits their needs for the style of paraphrased text.

Literature review

English Learners' Perspectives on Using Paraphrasing Tools in The Writing Process

Miranda (2022) examined students' views on employing AI-powered paraphrasing tools and their impacts on students' writing process. It should be noted that QuillBot is one of three paraphrasing tools assessed in this study. Five students who have experience in using AI-powered paraphrasing tools in writing left their opinions in this study. The results demonstrated those as useful tools, assisting students in saving time in writing and expanding their academic vocabulary.

Alammari and Abdel-Reheem Amin (2023) investigated EFL learners' perspectives on employing Al paraphrasing tools to support their writing process. This study recruited 25 female learners taking the English Language Research Methods and Projects course at Zulfi College of Education under Majmaah University. The results indicated students' positive attitude toward using AI paraphrasing tools, which was evident in students' reports as useful tools in helping them indirectly acquire new vocabulary and grammar. However, students also stated that paraphrased text generated by AI should not be used directly in students' writings.

Ginting, Batubara, and Hasnah (2023) examined EFL learners' perspectives on using paraphrasing tools as AI-powered assistants for their final projects. It is noted that QuillBot was one of the two paraphrasing tools mentioned in this study. Fifty fourth-year students from state and independent colleges in North Sumatra, Indonesia, participated in this study. The findings indicated students' favorable attitude toward QuillBot, which was evident in their reports of it as a useful tool in the writing process. Additionally, QuillBot was recognized for aiding the participants in producing quality final projects that meet their expectations.

English Learners' Perspectives of Using QuillBot to Support Their Academic Writing Process.

Numerous studies have examined English learners' perspectives on using QuiiBot in their writing process. The results of those studies indicated both commonalities and differences, which might be attributed to the variation in research subjects, locations, or methodologies.

When it comes to the similarities, most studies indicated QuillBot as an effective paraphrasing tool that supports students in their learning paraphrasing process.

Kurniati and Fithriani (2022) explored how postgraduates perceived QuillBot as a digital tool, aiding their process of learning academic writing. This study recruited twenty English-major postgraduates who had experienced using QuillBot. The findings indicated an agreement among learners regarding the efficacy of QuillBot in helping them enhance their writing quality. This study concluded that QuillBot brought three advantages to postgraduates, including boosting learners' motivation while writing and aiding learners' development of linguistic abilities.

Xuyen (2023) investigated the students' perspectives on using QuillBot in their paraphrasing process while conducting academic writing. 220 English-majored sophomores at a Vietnamese public university took part in this study. This study suggested learners' positive attitudes toward using QuillBot for paraphrasing, indirectly contributing to their linguistic competence and writing skills.

Syahnaz and Fithriani (2023) examined how EFL learners perceive the integration of QuillBot in their academic writing course. This study involved 20 English-majored undergraduates. The results indicated positive attitudes towards the utilization of QuillBot in the writing process. Besides, QuillBot is recognized as an effective solution that helps students overcome the difficulties in paraphrasing, thereby boosting their confidence. Moreover, QuillBot also helps learners overcome negative psychological barriers while writing.

The Impact of QuillBot on English Learners' Feelings While Conducting Academic Writing

Besides being recognized as a useful tool that assists users in paraphrasing, QuillBot was also reported as effective in lessening students' negative feelings towards paraphrasing and promoting their confidence when conducting this skill. Amyatun and Kholis (2023) investigated how QuillBot assists students in creating hortatory exposition texts, which belong to the genre of persuasive writing. Twenty English-majored students at Nahdlatul Ulama Yogyakarta University, Indonesia. The results indicated significant improvement in students' writing skills in creating a specific genre of writing. Moreover, the findings also revealed the role of QuillBot in promoting students' self-assurance while writing.

Nurmayanti and Suryadi (2023) examined how QuillBot assists students in proposing error-free academic writing without committing plagiarism. This study included 30 undergraduates at Riau University. The findings indicated that QuillBot is an effective tool that helps reduce plagiarism cases in students' writing. Additionally, QuillBot was considered a time-saving tool that simplifies students' writing process, enhancing their interest in writing.

Mohammad et al. (2024) aimed to explore the students' acknowledgment of using QuillBot to improve paraphrasing skills. This study involved 31 students at the pre-stage of higher education. The findings covered two main points: (1) participants' favorable attitude towards using QuillBot to deal with challenges while paraphrasing and (2) participants' improvement in paraphrasing skills. Consequently, the study suggested that QuillBot should be introduced in writing courses, especially for students who have negative feelings toward paraphrasing.

Asmara and Kastuhandani (2024) investigated students' experiences with using QuillBot to paraphrase in academic writing. This study involved 6 students at Sanata Dharma University. The results indicated that QuillBot is a useful paraphrasing tool that assists students in their writing process. However, the participants also expressed their concerns that over-reliance on QuillBot might weaken their own paraphrasing skills.

The Quality of QuillBot's Paraphrased Texts

Fitria (2021) examined the paraphrased content from QuillBot to identify which aspects of writing QuillBot has a significant impact on. This study used a qualitative method to analyze the QuillBot-paraphrased version of an abstract excerpted from an English journal. The findings covered two main points: (1) QuillBot-paraphrased text varied in vocabulary and grammatical structures; (2) QuillBot-paraphrased text suggests more ideas for users to paraphrase themselves.

Wahab, Iqbal, Ullah, Nawab, and Ubaid (2023) delved into lexical elements in QuillBot's paraphrased text. The study collected data by comparing, analyzing, and assessing the commonalities and differences between the input text and the paraphrased output. The findings covered two main points: (1) The level of vocabulary in QuillBot's paraphrased texts is aligned with those in the input material; (2) QuillBot frequently paraphrased the input material by suggesting synonyms or modifying forms of vocabulary in the input material.

Nour El Houda, Zerhouni, and Naili (2023) examined how students improve their paraphrasing skills by analyzing QuillBot-paraphrased text. This study recruited 34 postgraduates majoring in English at Jijel University. The findings indicated that QuillBot aids students in enhancing their paraphrasing skills by providing them with paraphrasing techniques demonstrated in its paraphrased texts.

Research Gaps

Numerous studies have investigated QuillBot's impact on the writing learning process; few, however, have delved into how this AI-powered tool assists English learners in mastering a specific writing skill called paraphrasing. Therefore, this study aimed to focus on QuillBot's impact on this aspect from the perspective of Van Lang postgraduates majoring in English.

Research Questions

To fulfill the purpose of the study, the survey was seeking to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent does QuillBot help postgraduates enhance their paraphrasing skills in academic writing?

2. How do postgraduates perceive QuillBot as a support tool during the paraphrasing process?

Methods

This study recruited 20 participants who are doing Master of Arts in English Language Studies. Twenty participants were required to complete a survey published on Google Forms. These postgraduates have finished their research writing course. The survey included three parts to investigate Van Lang postgraduates' perspectives on employing QuillBot to paraphrase in academic writing. The three main parts of the survey were the usage of QuillBot, QuillBot's impact on postgraduates' paraphrasing skills, and postgraduates' perspectives on QuillBot.

Findings

Twenty postgraduates' English proficiency was ranked from Intermediate (B1, B2) to Proficient (C1, C2) according to the CEFR scale.

1.2 How would you rate your proficiency in English according to CEFR scale?
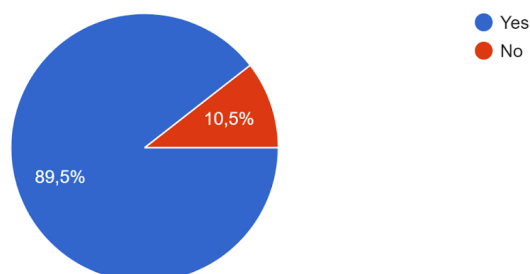20 câu trả lời
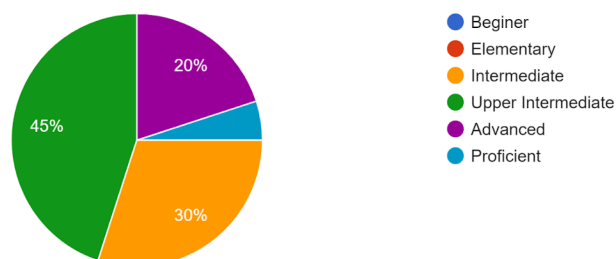
The Usage of QuillBot

89.5% of postgraduates had experience using QuillBot to paraphrase academic content, while 10.5% had not used It. Two postgraduates who had not used QuillBot withdrew from the survey after this question.

2.1 Have you employed QuillBot to paraphrase academic content?
19 câu trả lời

Among 18 participants who have used QuillBot to paraphrase academic content, 44. 4% reported that they occasionally employ QuillBot for paraphrasing, while 11.1 stated that they always use It for this purpose. Otherwise, the percentage of participants who reported that they occasionally use QuillBot for paraphrasing was 44.4%, while 27.8% stated that they rarely use it.

2.2 How frequently do you use QuillBot for paraphrasing?
18 câu trả lời
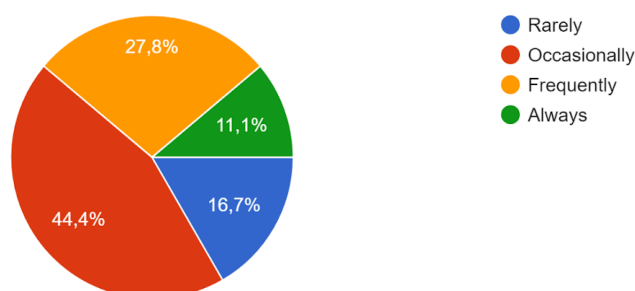
Despite the gaps in participants' frequency of QuillBot use, most regarded It as a useful tool for generating paraphrased texts. Their perspectives are evidenced by the fact that up to 83.3% of participants reported that QuillBot was very or moderately helpful in generating paraphrased content.

2.3 To what extent do you find QuillBot helpful in generating paraphrased content?
18 câu trả lời
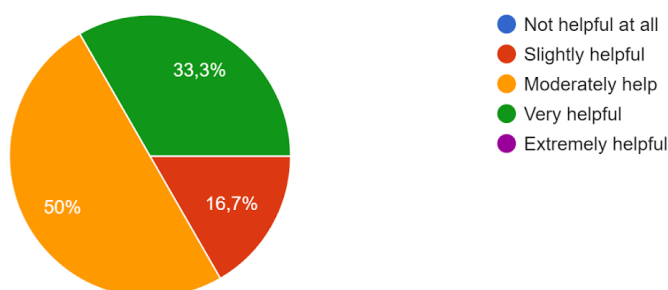
QuillBot's Impact on Paraphrasing Skills

Eighteen participants who have used QuillBot in the paraphrasing process share their valuable experiences on how QuillBot aids them in enhancing paraphrasing skills. The following responses are for the first question in part 3 of the survey: How has the employment of QuillBot impacted your paraphrasing skills in academic writing assignments?

> *Quillbot helps me save time while writing. Instead of having to look up synonyms in the dictionary as before, now all I have to do is insert the vocals in the paraphrase function of QuillBot. Immediately, it will suggest to me many choices. This helps me greatly expand my lexical source and learn new words. Because my genre of writing is academic writing, I use QuillBot in academic mode. After many years of using QuillBot, I became familiar with the formal words I rarely used before. Thanks to QuillBot, I find it easier to read academic materials, and when I want to paraphrase an idea in those materials, it's so easy for me to find the appropriate synonyms.*

This response indicated QuillBot as a replacement for the dictionary, which immediately suggested appropriate synonyms for paraphrasing. It can be understood that the improvement in this participant's paraphrasing skill was thanks to QuillBot's suggestions, along with her

process of learning and revising. QuillBot, in this case, works as a supporting tool that helps expand their lexical resources unconsciously.

> *QuillBot helps me improve my paraphrasing skills while writing by suggesting grammatical structures. I graduated from university three years ago, so I don't have many chances to write, especially in academic style. Therefore, it was quite hard for me when I was required to start writing in this genre again during the very first courses of my Master's degree. I read academic materials and had a lot of ideas, but when I started writing, they needed to align with my expectations. So I started learning how to write in academic style by entering sentences from the materials in the paraphraser function of QuillBot in academic mode, observing, and taking note of the structures QuillBot used to paraphrase. After a long time, I see improvements in my writing. When I read others' research, I know exactly what I want to write and how to write it academically.*

This response was similar to the first one, which indicated QuillBot as a supporting tool for paraphrasing, providing users with grammatical structures. QuillBot's impact on participants' paraphrasing skills was indirect in the two responses. Instead of directly copying and pasting paraphrased texts from QuillBot into the writings, both participants reported that their paraphrasing skills were enhanced by their process of learning from QuillBot's suggestions.

> *Firstly, I have observed a marked increase in efficiency. QuillBot's ability to swiftly generate alternative phrasings has reduced the time I spend on rewording complex sentences. This has allowed me to focus more on the content and analysis of my assignments rather than the mechanics of paraphrasing. Secondly, my clarity in writing has improved. QuillBot often suggests more concise and coherent ways to express ideas, which has helped me eliminate redundancy and ambiguity from my writing. This clarity improvement has made my work more readable and enhanced the overall quality of my academic papers.*

The above-mentioned response shares some similarities with the first two ones. This participant, however, reported some new impacts of QuillBot on his/ her paraphrasing skills. Some of the remarkable experiences in this response were that QuillBot helped him/her save time while paraphrasing, enhance the clarity of his/her paraphrased texts, and remain coherent in his/her paraphrasing.

In the following response, the indirect impact of QuillBot on participants' paraphrasing contents is emphasized.

> *I have a bad habit of writing, and I usually use complicated sentences while writing. Often, a sentence I write can be up to 50 words. I used to be given feedback too many times that my writing was too abstract, unclear, and difficult to understand, especially in academic writing. After that, I try to enter my text in QuillBot in academic mode. Then, I observed and learned how QuillBot breaks down my sentences to learn from them. After a short time, I can see the improvement in my writing. It can be said that I learned to paraphrase my own content before learning to paraphrase others' content. Now, no matter how complicated my ideas or the others' ideas are, I can clearly paraphrase them.*

The four aforementioned responses frame QuillBot's role as a supporting tool that suggests ideas for paraphrasing. These suggestions from QuillBot act as guidelines for those who struggle with paraphrasing skills. Therefore, it is observed that the development of learners significantly depends on other factors, such as students' initiative, regular revision, and self-discipline during the learning process.

Although most participants commented positively on using QuillBot, there are still challenges that participants reported encountering while using this tool. For example,

> *'If you enter an uncommon phrase, non-contextual words, or specialized vocabulary into QuillBot, you must check carefully to ensure that the paraphrased content aligns with the flow of your writing, guarantees accuracy, and adheres to the writing style'.*

In addition to participants' favorable attitudes toward QuillBot, they also reported some problems that they frequently encounter when using this tool.

> *'If you enter an uncommon phrase, non-contextual words, or specialized vocabulary into QuillBot, you must check carefully to ensure that the paraphrased content aligns with the flow of your writing, guarantees accuracy, and adheres to the writing style'.*

> *'Contextual Relevance: QuillBot sometimes struggles to understand the original text's specific context or nuanced meaning. This can result in paraphrased content that is technically correct but contextually inaccurate or off-topic. I often have to refine these sections to align them accurately with the intended message and context of my assignment.'*

These two responses have captured the most common problem in using QuillBot to paraphrase off-topic suggestions. These suggestions might appear if users input uncommon phrases or specialized terms. To avoid this problem, users might double-check QuillBot-paraphrased text before using or learning from it.

In addition to these problems, participants also mentioned other issues that they encounter when using QuillBot, such as limitations in the paraphrasing mode of free-version or concern about over-reliance on QuillBot for paraphrasing.

3.3. Have you noticed any improvement in the originality of your written work since using QuillBot?
18 câu trả lời
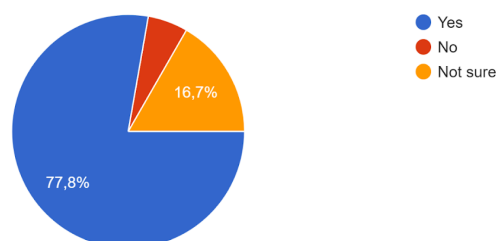
77.8% of participants noticed improvement in their written work, while 16.7% were uncertain about such improvement.

In conclusion, QuillBot is reported as a useful supporting tool that indirectly enhances participants' paraphrasing skills. Most of them agreed that there are three elements that QuillBot has indirectly assisted them in enhancing paraphrasing skills : (1) vocabulary, (2) grammar structures, and (3) clarity in writing. Besides, QuillBot was also used as a guideline that offered users techniques or feedback for self-assessment and modification of their language to align with the requirements of a certain genre of writing.

Perspectives on QuillBot

According to most participants, QuillBot's rich lexical resources are its most impressive strength. With simple operations, users would receive various versions of paraphrased texts that

satisfy their requirements. Consequently, QuillBot is described as a useful tool that helps users save time and effort in the paraphrasing process.

> *QuillBot is a supportive tool that enhances various aspects of writing, from vocabulary development to efficient content creation. Its ease of use and versatility make it a valuable resource for writers looking to improve their skills and streamline their writing process. QuillBot can save time and effort by quickly generating paraphrased content. This is especially helpful for writers who must produce large volumes of text or are working under tight deadlines.*

With QuillBot's assistance, participants reported feeling more confident in academic writing, especially in paraphrasing.

> *'QuillBot helps me feel more confident when I have to do my academic writing assignment. After my academic vocabulary expanded with the suggestions of QuillBot, I felt more comfortable while paraphrasing; I even enjoyed the writing process and felt motivated, especially when I had to paraphrase an idea from others' researchers'*

Last but not least, most participants indicated a favorable attitude towards QuilBot, as evidenced by 66.7% of participants agreeing to integrate QuillBot into an academic writing course.

4.2. Do you think QuillBot should be integrated into the academic writing curriculum for English-majored postgraduates?

18 câu trả lời

Legend: Yes, No, Undecided
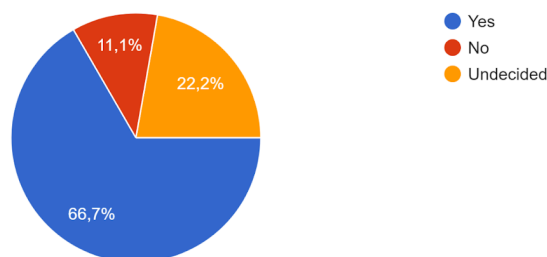
In brief, QuillBot is recognized as a useful paraphrasing tool. It aids users in expanding vocabulary, suggesting techniques for paraphrasing, enhancing clarity in writing, and saving time while writing. QuillBot's paraphrased texts, however, are encouraged to be used as reference materials for learning paraphrasing rather than a direct source to paste in the writing.

Discussion

In this study, QuillBot is a supporting tool that indirectly helps postgraduates expand their vocabularies and grammar structures, thereby enhancing their paraphrasing skills. Therefore, most postgraduates hold a favorable attitude toward QuilBot. This attitude is aligned with the results of previous research on the same topic. Additionally, the impact of QuillBot on postgraduates' paraphrasing skills in this study is indirect. Instead of directly using paraphrased texts from QuillBot in writings, postgraduates chose to learn from QuillBot paraphrased texts and reflect on what they observed in their own process of paraphrasing.

This study also had some limitations regarding QuillBot's mode. Due to the study's subjects being postgraduates, it mainly focuses on QuillBot's academic paraphrasing mode. Most participants have their own experience and understanding of QuillBot's use, which helps them know how to take advantage of it without over-reliance on it.

Additionally, technology provides students with new environments and experiences in the writing process that were impossible beforehand (Hartley & Tynjälä, 2001). This is true with QuillBot when it comes to how it provides students with new experiences in learning paraphrasing skills. From this perspective, QuillBot's suggestions might be considered feedback for writing. In the scope of this study, this type of feedback centered on how to produce high-quality paraphrasing products. However, the quality of QuillBot-feedback must have been further investigated, as mentioned in the research of Wahab, Iqbal, Ullah, Nawab, and Ubaid (2023).

Finally, in the age of technology, gaining insights on how to leverage technology for effective learning is essential. This is why the integration of QuillBot in academic classes should be considered. Further research on QuillBot and its contribution to the academic context is needed to actualize this. For example, this study remains vague about the negative influences of QuillBot on English learners' writing skills, and the stage of the writing process in which QuillBot should be integrated to support learners persists unclarified.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this study aligned with the previous studies on the same topic, indicating QuillBot as a valuable tool for helping students master paraphrasing skills. It concludes that three major benefits of QuillBot on students' paraphrasing skills include enriching postgraduates' vocabularies and grammatical structures, enhancing clarity in writing, and saving time for learning to paraphrase. Furthermore, QuillBot is a user-friendly tool that assists postgraduates in overcoming negative feelings towards paraphrasing skills and boosting their confidence while paraphrasing. Additionally, this study emphasized how QuillBot indirectly influenced postgraduates' learning paraphrasing process. Last but not least, this study also suggested further research into QuillBot's negative impact on English learners' writing skills or at which stage in the process of learning writing skills learners should start to find support from AI-paraphrasing tools.

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Biodata

Pham Ngoc Quynh Nhu is a post-graduates majoring in English at Van Lang University, Ho Chi Minh City. She is quite interested in investigating the role of AI in learning English. She believes that insights into how AI benefits the language learning process will set the stage for equal opportunities in learning languages for each individual regardless of their backgrounds and financial states. Her research interests include Artificail intelligence, AI Tools, and Language Teaching and learning.