

Libyan EFL Undergraduate Students' Paraphrasing Skills:

An Analysis of Their Overall Paraphrasing Ability; the Most Frequently Implemented Paraphrasing Techniques, Their Strengths and Their Weaknesses

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Abstract:

This research paper is a case study conducted in Zuwarah faculty of Education, Zawia University. It involved twenty Libyan EFL students enrolled in English Department. They were in their 5th semester. The participants struggled with paraphrasing English texts in spite of attending intensive paraphrasing classes during the semester. These students encounter a difficulty in paraphrasing English texts regarding applying the techniques correctly in addition to lacking diversity when applying paraphrasing techniques. The study aims to investigate the participants' strengths, their weaknesses and the reasons caused the difficulties they encounter in paraphrasing in order to determine their general ability to paraphrase English texts and to prepare a relevant and effective teaching plan to overcome their weaknesses and difficulties. This study implemented quantitative instruments for data collection. They included a paraphrasing written test and a student's questionnaire distributed directly after the test. Results obtained from data collected indicated that despite students implemented successfully a number of paraphrasing techniques, there is still a need to provide pedagogical and psychological support to students especially those with low achievement and who struggle in applying a number of techniques.

Key words: Paraphrasing Techniques, Paraphrasing difficulties, Teaching paraphrasing, Paraphrasing ability.

مهارات إعادة الصياغة لدى طلاب المرحلة الجامعية الليبية الذين يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

تحليل لقدراتهم الإجمالية على إعادة الصياغة؛ أكثر تقنيات إعادة الصياغة استخدامًا،
ونقاط قوتها ونقاط ضعفها

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مستخلص :

هذه الورقة البحثية هي دراسة حالة أجريت في كلية التربية زوارة، جامعة الزاوية. وقد شارك فيها عشرين طالبًا ليبيًا من طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية مسجلين في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في الفصل الدراسي الخامس. واجه المشاركون صعوبة في إعادة صياغة النصوص الإنجليزية على الرغم من حضورهم دروسًا مكثفة في إعادة الصياغة خلال الفصل الدراسي. يواجه هؤلاء الطلاب صعوبة في إعادة صياغة النصوص الإنجليزية فيما يتعلق بتطبيق التقنيات بشكل صحيح بالإضافة إلى الافتقار إلى التنوع عند تطبيق تقنيات إعادة الصياغة. تهدف الدراسة إلى التعرف على نقاط القوة والضعف لدى المشاركين والأسباب التي أدت إلى الصعوبات التي يواجهونها من أجل تحديد قدرتهم العامة على إعادة صياغة النصوص الإنجليزية وإعداد خطة تعليمية مناسبة وفعالة للتغلب على نقاط الضعف والصعوبات لديهم. نفذت هذه الدراسة باستخدام وسائل تتبع المنهج الكمي لجمع البيانات. وقد تضمنت اختبارًا كتابيًا لإعادة الصياغة واستبيانًا للطلاب تم توزيعه مباشرة بعد الاختبار. أشارت النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها من البيانات التي تم جمعها إلى أنه على الرغم من نجاح الطلاب في تنفيذ عدد من تقنيات إعادة الصياغة، إلا أنه لا تزال هناك حاجة لتوفير الدعم التربوي والنفسي للطلاب وخاصة ذوي التحصيل المنخفض والذين يعانون في تطبيق عدد من التقنيات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تقنيات إعادة الصياغة، صعوبات إعادة الصياغة، تعليم إعادة الصياغة، القدرة على إعادة الصياغة.

1. Introduction:

To paraphrase is to rewrite others' writings. This skill, under certain conditions, protects us from committing literary theft, and therefore it is one of the most important skills of academic writing. Paraphrasing involves implementing different techniques and requires mastering language proficiency as a start to the extent that facilitates utilizing these techniques. EFL students in Libya struggle with paraphrasing as one of academic writing skills due to different reasons including, according to Alkarkhi (2020), "... students' poor proficiency level, insufficient time available for practice, low self-efficacy level, and high writing anxiety level." (p. 42). Consequently, these students are expected to share certain common weaknesses in paraphrasing and are expected to adopt certain paraphrasing techniques more than other techniques. This study reviews the previous studies conducted by EFL teachers to illuminate the issue of poor production of paraphrasing. In fact, various case studies have been conducted on this issue (Abdul Azis, Suryanti and Sutisna, 2019; Choy, Lee & Sedhu, 2014; Clarin et al, 2023) and they have examined EFL students' paraphrasing ability in different contexts to investigate their weaknesses and reasons behind them. Additionally, this study is conducted to investigate EFL students ability in Libyan context and to find out the reasons that cause their inadequate performance. It is significant in that it determines Libyan EFL paraphrasing ability, and therefore it might enable the researcher and other teachers to understand their students' needs and therefore to implement effective strategies of teaching paraphrasing.

2. Research Problem :

Because paraphrasing is a skill, it requires studying and practicing it adequately to be well-achieved. This skill follows certain rules; therefore, students should be taught practicing it carefully and patiently. Most of Libyan EFL undergraduate students understand that to paraphrase is to 'change'. However, they feel confused regarding what to change and how to change it adequately. Moreover, these students rely mostly on implementing certain techniques more frequently than others instead of utilizing a variety of techniques due

to several reasons. This leads the students to encounter future problems in writing the literature review when they start their postgraduate studies. Therefore, paying attention to this problem at earlier stages will lead to preparing them well for future advanced writing tasks.

3. Research Questions :

This study attempts to finding out answers to the following questions:

1. What are the paraphrasing techniques that these students utilize most frequently?
2. What are the paraphrasing techniques that they have a good command of?
3. What are their most common weaknesses of paraphrasing?
4. To what extent are Libyan EFL undergraduate students who study at Zuwarah College of Education – Zawia University able to paraphrase English texts adequately?
5. What is their perspective with regard to the reasons behind the problems they encounter while applying paraphrasing techniques?

4. Objectives of the Study :

This study aims at exploring the paraphrasing techniques that Libyan EFL undergraduate students in Zuwarah College of Education – Zawia University mostly rely on. It, moreover, aims at finding out the techniques they implement more adequately in addition to their most common paraphrasing weaknesses. Add to that, it aims at exploring the overall achievement of these students in paraphrasing English texts. Finally, this study highlights these students' perspectives about the factors affecting their ability to accomplish a paraphrasing task.

5. Significance of the Study :

Examining the Libyan EFL undergraduate students' achievement in restating English texts is significant in that the teachers can evaluate the teaching process during the course and the effectiveness of the strategies they have implemented. In addition, determining the most frequently used techniques of paraphrasing enables EFL teachers

to understand students' preferences regarding the methods of paraphrasing and, therefore, to encourage them to use the other ignored techniques. Furthermore, finding out the most common mistakes committed when paraphrasing English texts enables the teachers to focus on students' weaknesses in order to overcome them. Finally, considering the students' perspectives about the reasons behind their paraphrasing weaknesses will enable the researcher to suggest some solutions and recommendations that might help EFL teachers to enhance students' paraphrasing skills and their appropriate implementation of its techniques.

6. Scope and Limitations :

This study is conducted in Zuwarah Faculty of Education at Zawia University. Twenty students of 5th semester at English Language Department were involved in this study. Because of the course curriculum, the researcher encountered a difficulty in training the students to paraphrase in that a class of two hours a week was insufficient for explaining the techniques and then practicing them. Therefore, the researcher decided to manage extra classes when possible to provide students with extra work time. However, this problem affected students' achievement in the sense that they need more practice.

7. Literature Review :

7.1. What is Paraphrasing?

According to The Oxford Companion to the English Language, the word '*paraphrase*' comes from the Latin word '*paraphrasis*' from Greek '*parâphrasis*' which means 'speaking alongside', i.e. "saying the same in other words." (p. 749). In academic writing, it refers to rewriting a text so that the writer, on the one hand, maintains that the restated text is different from the original text and retains the meaning on the other hand. (Hafidz, 2018) Similarly, according to Bailey (2011, p. 50), paraphrasing is also considered as "... rewriting a text so that the language is significantly different while the content stays the same.". Moreover, Oshima & Hogue (1998) describe the act of paraphrasing as rewriting information extracted from its source in your own words while the meaning is not changed. In addition, it is

seen by Harshbarger (2012) as a complex process of restating information for which advanced grammar skills and a large vocabulary stock are vital to accomplish a successful restating of information. More specifically, to paraphrase is to modify sentences and to maintain "... creating a combination of original language and grammatical structures from the source text with some new words and grammatical structures." (Hirvela and Du, 2013, p. 88). In addition to a good command of grammar and vocabulary, the writer's reading and writing skills should be at an appropriate level; hence, this leads us to say that paraphrasing a text is a complex task and entails implementing a variety of sub-processes.

7.2. The importance of paraphrasing skill in academic writing

Because paraphrasing is a complex process, it works on utilizing different skills. These skills include 'reading comprehension' in addition to 'writing skills'. In the field of language learning and teaching, according to Hirvela and Du (2013), paraphrasing is one of learning forms in that it increases students' opportunity to enhance their reading and writing skills because it starts with comprehension and ends up with expressing what they understand in the written form. On the other hand, it enables the teachers to determine their students level at these skills. Likewise, Ramadhani (2019) states that when students restate the complex text with their own words, their comprehension of that text will be increased. Hans (2017) also suggests that reading the text for implementing paraphrasing strategy increases the reading comprehension achievement. In addition, conducting effective paraphrasing when providing your work with ideas of other writers "... will demonstrate your understanding of a text to your teachers." (Bailey, 2011, p.33).

Furthermore, avoiding plagiarism is an essential aim of paraphrasing. Teaching paraphrasing is viewed as a process of enhancing an essential academic skill which will help in reducing the problem of utilizing a direct copying of source texts. It is also considered that implementing the appropriate paraphrasing techniques results in producing original written content confidently without getting

involved in ethical issues. Bailey (2011), Tran & Nguyen (2022) and Linnea (2023).

Moreover, conducting paraphrasing enhances language fluency, as Linnea (2023) suggests. It enables the writers to gradually overcome their struggle with finding proper equivalents to express others' ideas according to academic standards. In addition, Shi, Fazel & Kowkabi (2018) and Hirvela & Du (2013) agree on that because writers convey their own interpretations of the source text when restating it, paraphrasing is viewed as a form of knowledge transformation and knowledge telling.

7.3. Difficulties of paraphrasing:

Students' difficulties of paraphrasing English texts vary according to learning context and student's level and are proved by many studies. Abdul Azis, Suryanti and Sutisna (2019), conclude in their study that some students face a difficulty in developing the idea when paraphrasing in addition to not defining the text well. They relate these difficulties to the fact that students do not understand the nature of paraphrasing and that it requires implementing different techniques to change the text while keeping its original meaning. This source of difficulty is also assured by Du (2013) who states that one of the reasons behind student's poor production in paraphrasing is not understanding paraphrasing values and purposes. Clarin *et al* (2023), find out that students encounter a difficulty in choosing appropriate synonyms because of lacking vocabulary skills. They also find it difficult to implement paraphrasing tools accurately which "... leads to problems understanding the paraphrased texts produced by the tools." (p. 502). Add to that, they find out that having poor reading comprehension skills is one of the important difficulties of paraphrasing as it affects their understanding of the original text's ideas. Moreover, the difficulty of understanding the criteria of a good paraphrasing is another difficulty stated by Khairunnisa, Sutapa & Surmiyati (2014). They discover that students were unaware of the criteria of an adequate paraphrasing and used wrong procedures when restating a text.

In addition to the previously mentioned challenges of paraphrasing, Rahmayani (2018) adds culture as a source of complication faced by student in the production of paraphrasing. Sapir (1921) as cited in Sheikh (2014, p. 174) states that “Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols.”. In other words, language is a method of communicating culture. Accordingly, in order to interpret and paraphrase a text in the foreign language, the text should be interesting to students and this will be easy when the student understands the culture of that language. (Choy, Lee & Sedhu, 2014) Important difficulties as Badiozaman (2014) and Azkar (2021) conclude entail the lack of English proficiency and lack of linguistic competence which are in turn affect their ability to paraphrase texts by making it difficult “...to find out the appropriate synonym...to understand the unfamiliar term... to restructure the sentence in new style” (Ismail et al., 2020, P. 295). Furthermore, the lack of exposure to the target language and the lack of restating texts experience hinder student’s ability to comprehend the original text and to paraphrase it, as Mira & Fatimah (2020) assure.

8. Methodology :

Because this study is based on analyzing paraphrasing linguistic strategies used by Libyan EFL learners in addition to the factors affecting their ability, two quantitative techniques are used in conducting it, which are a written test and a questionnaire. The researcher used SPSS software to calculate and analyze data obtained from data collection techniques.

8.1. The Participants

The participants involved in this study were twenty EFL undergraduate students who study in English Language Department at Zuwarah Faculty of Education, Zawia University in Libya. They were fifth semester students who study Academic Writing.

8.2. Research Instruments

8.2.1. Paraphrasing written test

One of the research instruments that were implemented in conducting this study is a paraphrasing written test. It is a summative assessment. Hughes (2003) defines summative assessments as a test that "... is used at ... the end of the term, semester, or year in order to measure what has been achieved both by groups and by individuals." (p. 5). This written test was conducted at the end of the course. Students were asked to paraphrase a paragraph consisted of 13 sentences (149 words). They were asked to use as many techniques as possible. It took about 45 minutes to 1 hour to finish the test. The test aimed at finding out students' achievement at restating texts, their strengths and their weaknesses in addition to the paraphrasing techniques that they frequently use.

8.2.2. Student's questionnaire

Close-ended questionnaires, as Dörnyei (2010) states, provide the respondents with "... ready-made response options to choose from" (p.26), and they do not need to write their responses. Accordingly, this type of questions is effective in that "... their coding and tabulation is straightforward and leaves no room for rater subjectivity." (Dörnyei, p. 26). In this study, students' questionnaire consists of 9 items. It investigates students' view towards the factors affecting their paraphrasing ability. A four-point Likert response scale was used in this questionnaire to determine the participant's degree of agreement and disagreement regarding the effect of each of these factors.

9. Data Collection Procedures :

Learning paraphrasing strategies was a part of Academic Writing course's syllabus which the 5th semester students study. The participants were twenty students. They all studied how to paraphrase texts in a period of 8 weeks for about 2-3 hours a week. At the end of the 8th week, the paraphrasing test was conducted. Their answers were analyzed according to the type of paraphrasing technique that each student used in each attempt. In addition, their attempts were classified according to whether each one was correct or wrong. Moreover, a questionnaire was distributed after conducting the test in

order investigate students' perspectives regarding the reasons behind their paraphrasing weaknesses.

10. Results :

10.1. Paraphrasing techniques used most frequently:

Figure (1) shows that the technique of "using **synonyms**" ranks highest in terms of usage, with 213 attempts out of 589 which represent 36.16% of the whole paraphrasing attempts. This shows the students' significant reliance on this technique, reflecting their understanding of the importance of improving vocabulary to enhance writing quality.

Changing the "**part of speech**" technique comes in second place, achieving 85 attempts (i.e. 14.43%). This usage is attributed to the importance of understanding the different parts of speech in forming correct and more expressive sentences. While changing the "**word order**" technique recorded 19 attempts and represent 7.47% of all paraphrasing attempts, indicating that students recognize the importance of word order in improving the clarity of meaning in their sentences. Additionally, changing **clause order** attempts were 34 and formed 5.77% of the total paraphrasing attempts followed by 23 **negation** attempts, 21 **chunking** attempts and 19 changing **word order** attempts which represented respectively 3.90%, 3.56% and 3.22%.

On the other hand, we find that techniques recorded low numbers (i.e. less than 20) and formed less than 3% of other techniques such as changing **simple to complex**, changing **complex to simple**, changing **simple to compound**, changing **active to passive**, changing **phrase to word**, changing **phrase to clause**, changing **clause to phrase**, using **antonyms**, changing **passive to active** and **compound to simple**. This indicates that these strategies may not be well-known enough, necessitating the need to enhance their understanding.

Add to that, some common incorrect grammatical mistakes were detected such **agreement** mistakes which were committed 22 times and formed 3.73%, incorrect change from **singular to plural** which was committed 4 times and formed 0.67% and **tense form** mistakes which also were committed 4 times and represented 0.67% of all

paraphrasing attempts. The data also shows that the number of attempts in some techniques, such as "ignoring segments" and "adding new ideas" was moderate, with 44 (i.e. 7.47%) and 14 (i.e. 2.37%) attempts recorded respectively. This indicates that students may face difficulties in these areas, which requires special attention from teachers to improve the associated skills.

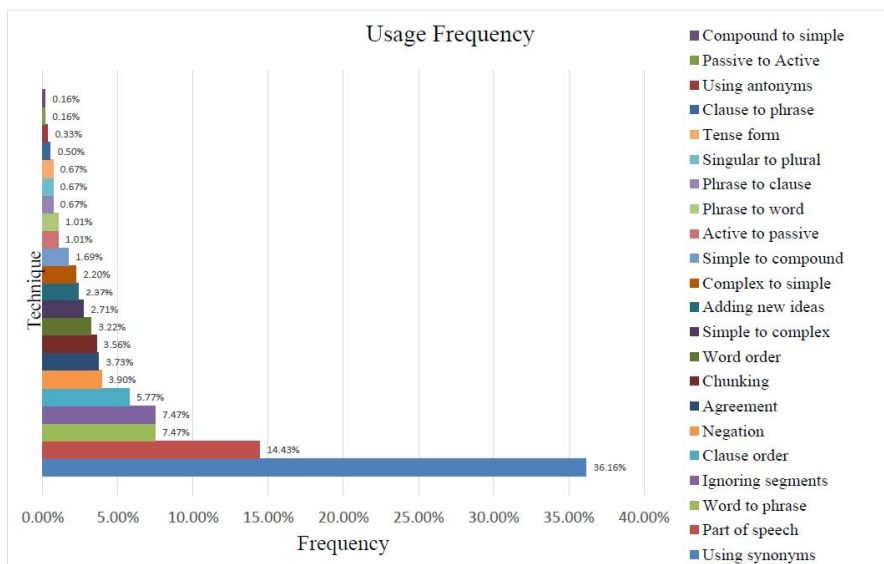


Figure (1) The Most Frequent Used Techniques

10.2. Paraphrasing techniques participants are good at:

Figure (2) illustrates the results related to vocabulary, grammar, word order, and simplification techniques, showing students' strengths in applying them as follows:

The participants recorded 347 correct attempts out of 589 which is the total number of their paraphrasing attempts, and hence they represented 58.91% of the them. Considering **vocabulary** modification techniques, out of 347 correct attempts, we found that the use of synonyms represented the most successful technique, as students achieved 133 correct attempts (i.e. 38.32%), indicating that

they have a good familiarity with this technique. Regarding the techniques of changing grammar, changing order and simplification, the results were varied. The students achieved a good success rate in certain techniques, such as **changing parts of speech**, where the correct attempts were 63 (i.e. 18.15%), and **changing word to phrase** which recorded 39 correct attempts (i.e. 11.23%).

A number of techniques recorded lower success rate such as **changing clause order** with 24 correct attempts (i.e. 6.91%), **negation** with 18 correct attempts (i.e. 5.18%), **chunking** with 17 correct attempts (i.e. 4.89%), **changing word order** which recorded 15 correct attempts (i.e. 4.32%), and **changing simple to complex** with 13 correct attempts (i.e. 3.47%). This indicate that participants are to some extent familiar with these techniques; however, they need more practice to be enhanced.

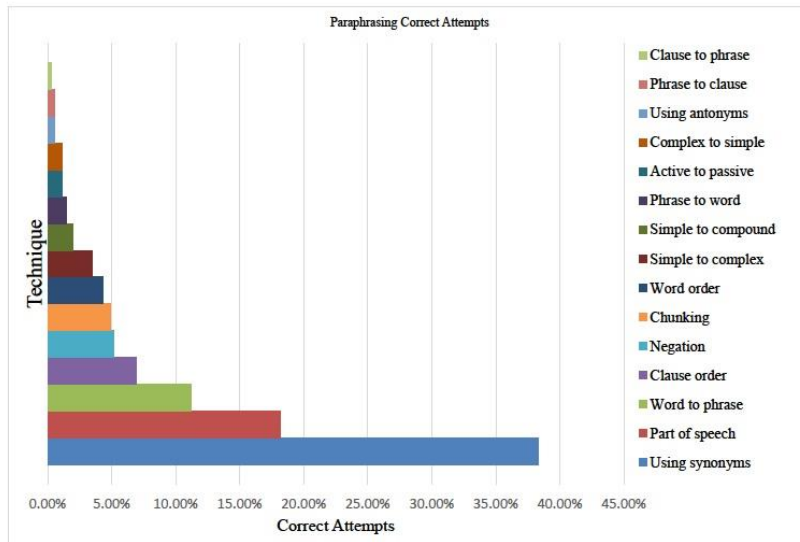


Figure (2) Participants' Paraphrasing Strengths

The participants also showed a weak performance in applying other techniques for that they recorded a success rate in changing **simple to compound** at 7 (i.e. 2.01%), changing **phrase to word** at 5 (i.e.

1.44%), in changing **active to passive** at 4 (i.e. 1.15%), in changing **complex to simple** at 4 (i.e. 1.15%), in both using **antonyms** and changing **phrase to clause** at 2 (i.e. 0.57%), and in changing clause to phrase at 1 (i.e. 0.28%). Finally, Techniques including changing **passive to active** and **compound to simple** did not record any success point.

10.3. Most common weaknesses of paraphrasing:

Figure (3) shows the average percentages of incorrect attempts for each paraphrasing technique. It is evident that there is a significant variation in performance between the different techniques, and the main results can be summarized as follows:

Out of 242 incorrect attempts, using **synonyms** were 80 attempts which formed 33.05% of the total number of paraphrasing mistakes. **Ignoring segments** recorded 44 incorrect attempts which represented 18.18% of their total number. Then, changing **part of speech** recorded 22 incorrect attempts (i.e. 9.09%). **Agreement** mistakes were also 22 and formed 9.09% of all incorrect attempts. In addition, **adding new ideas** was recorded 14 times and formed 5.78% of paraphrasing mistakes. Changing **clause order** recorded 10 mistakes and formed 4.13%, while changing from **complex to simple** recorded 9 mistakes (i.e. 3.71%).

Other techniques recorded incorrect attempts as follows: changing **word to phrase** and **negation** 5 mistakes for each with a percentage of 2.06% for each technique. Add to that, changing **word order** and **singular to plural**, **chunking** and **tense form** each one recorded 4 incorrect attempts so that implementing each technique represented 1.65% of all paraphrasing mistakes. Moreover, changing **simple to compound** and **simple to complex** recorded 3 mistakes for each (i.e. 1.23%). In addition, changing **active to passive**, **phrase to clause** and **clause to phrase** recorded only 2 incorrect attempts for each (i.e. 0.82%). Finally, changing **passive to active**, **phrase to word** and **compound to simple** recorded only 1 incorrect attempts for each technique which represented 0.41%, while using **antonyms** did not record any incorrect attempt as it was of limited use.

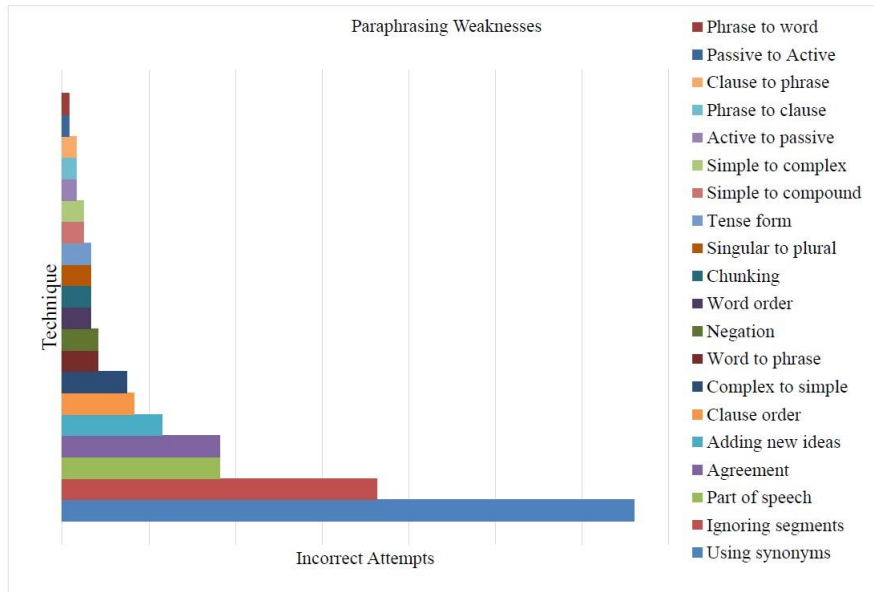


Figure (3) Paraphrasing Common Weaknesses

10.4. Participants' Overall Paraphrasing Ability

Table (6) shows that the average number of correct attempts is (15.77), indicating that although there are correct attempts, they are not significantly higher compared to the average number of incorrect attempts. (11.00). Furthermore, the standard deviation of correct attempts was (30.397), indicating a wide variation in student performance. In contrast, the standard deviation of incorrect attempts was (18.473). Also, the results show that the range between the minimum (0) and the maximum for correct attempts (133) indicates a significant achievement gap. On the other hand, the range between the minimum (0) and the maximum (80) for incorrect attempts indicates a considerable weaknesses gap.

Table No.1: Participants Paraphrasing Ability

	Correct attempts	Wrong attempts	Total attempts
Mean	15.77	11	26.77
Std. Deviation	30.397	18.473	46.045
Range	133	80	212
Minimum	0	0	1
Maximum	133	80	213

10.5. Causes of participants' paraphrasing problems

Table (7) presents the results of the questionnaire analysis aimed at identifying the factors that affect students' performance in language tasks. The results include nine main points evaluated in terms of the degree of agreement, with the calculation of percentages, the median, and the standard deviation.

The lack of practice ranks first in impact, as 70% of the participants agreed that insufficient practice negatively affects their performance. Which reflects the students' awareness of the importance of practice in improving language skills. The standard deviation (0.553) indicates greater consistency in opinions regarding this factor.

Vocabulary deficiency is considered one of the most influential factors, as 60% of the participants agreed and believed that this deficiency affects their performance. Which indicates that students tend to recognize the importance of vocabulary in improving the quality of their writing. The standard deviation (0.671) indicates a moderate variation in opinions, meaning there are some differences in perspectives regarding the impact of this factor.

Despite the importance of the lack of education, 55% of the participants expressed their disagreement that this is the influencing factor. Which indicates that students do not see the lack of education as the main problem. The standard deviation (0.686) reflects a variation in opinions regarding this factor.

The results of grammatical weakness indicate that 40% of the students believe this factor affects their performance, while 45% of them

oppose that. Indicating a divergence of opinions regarding the impact of grammar on writing.

Data on comprehension difficulties show that 55% of students face this problem, while 25% of them deny it. On a medium, reflecting the importance of improving reading comprehension skills as part of the learning process.

Insufficient time is considered a significant factor, as 40% of the students agreed with that. This indicates that some students do not see the lack of time as the main problem. The standard deviation (0.754) indicates a variation in opinions.

Data on anxiety indicate that 50% of students believe that anxiety affects their performance. Indicating the need to provide psychological support to students.

The results of the lack of self-confidence show that 55% of students believe this issue may affect their performance, indicating the importance of boosting students' self-confidence.

Data on negative attitudes towards the subject indicate that 45% of students suffer from this problem. Indicating the need to improve attitudes towards language learning.

Table No. 2: factors affecting participants' performance in paraphrasing

Degree of agreement			Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Strongly	Median	Std. Deviation	Rank	Direction
No.	Reasons									
1	Lack of Vocabulary	Frequency	1	12	6	1	2.00	0.671	3	Agree
		Percent	5	60	30	5				
2	Lack of practice	Frequency	2	14	4	0	2.00	0.553	1	Agree
		Percent	10	70	20	0				
3	Lack of instruction	Frequency	0	5	11	4	3.00	0.686	7	Do not agree
		Percent	0	25	55	20				
4	Grammatical Weaknesses	Frequency	2	8	9	1	2.00	0.733	4	Agree
		Percent	10	40	45	5				
5	Comprehension difficulties	Frequency	0	11	5	4	2.00	0.813	5	Agree
		Percent	0	55	25	20				

6	Insufficient time for the task	Frequency	1	8	9	2	3.00	0.754	8	Do not agree
		Percent	5	40	45	10				
7	Feel anxious	Frequency	2	10	8	0	2.00	0.657	2	Agree
		Percent	10	50	40	0				
8	Lack of self confidence	Frequency	0	9	9	2	3.00	0.671	6	Do not agree
		Percent	0	45	45	10				
9	Negative attitudes towards the subject	Frequency	1	7	9	3	3.00	0.801	9	Do not agree
		Percent	5	35	45	15				

11. Discussion of the Results :

11.1. Discussion of 1st research question's result:

Q1. What are the paraphrasing techniques that the participants utilize most frequently?

Results show that the technique of using "synonyms" ranks highest in terms of usage. This shows the students' significant reliance on this technique, reflecting their understanding of the importance of improving vocabulary to enhance writing quality. Changing the "part of speech" technique comes in second place. This usage is attributed to the importance of understanding the different parts of speech in forming correct and more expressive sentences.

While changing the "word to phrase" technique was the third commonly used technique, indicating that students are relatively able to express the meaning using a technique broader than utilizing synonyms. In addition, changing "clause order" was the fifth commonly used technique and this reflects their experience in utilizing it as they practiced it intensively during the semester.

"Negation", "chunking" and changing "word order" come as sixth, eighth and ninth commonly used techniques indicating that students are not familiar enough with applying them. Concerning dealing with complex linguistic forms, techniques such as changing "simple to complex", "complex to simple" and "simple to compound" come as the tenth, twelfth and thirteenth common techniques which indicates that students tend to avoid dealing with complex structure.

The results also show that students often avoid implementing techniques such as changing “**passive into active**” and “**active into passive**” reflecting that difficulty they encounter in applying such grammatical rules. They also tend to avoid techniques related to phrases including changing a “**phrase to word**”, a “**phrase to clause**” and a “**clause to phrase**” indicating that they are unfamiliar with restating such linguistic forms. It was also found that techniques such as using “**antonyms**” and changing simple “**compound sentences into simple**” recorded low numbers, with the antonyms technique achieving only 2 attempts. This indicates that these strategies may not be well-known enough as paraphrasing strategies, necessitating the need to enhance their understanding and importance.

The data also shows that the number of attempts in some inadequate techniques, such as “**ignoring segments**” and “**adding new ideas**” was moderate. This also includes committing mistakes related to “**grammatical agreement**”, changing “**singular to plural**” and “**tense form**”. This indicates that students may face difficulties in these areas, which requires special attention from teachers to improve the associated skills.

The result of this study is not in alignment with that of Ismail *et al.* (2020) which was conducted on EFL Indonesian college students, except for the frequency of using synonyms which was the most commonly used technique. In the study of Ismail *et al.*, using synonyms was followed respectively by changing transition, expanding phrases, changing word order, changing phrase to word, changing part of speech, changing active voice to passive voice (*vice versa*), changing positive into negative (*vice versa*), combining two sentence, and changing clause into phrase (*vice versa*). The diversity and usage frequency differences proved by the results of both studies reflect the differences between teaching priorities in Libyan and Indonesian contexts. In Libyan context, although the teacher organized an intensive paraphrasing course and trained the participants in applying as much techniques as they can, at the end of the course they were still trying to avoid restating some linguistic forms while in Indonesian context the participant did not avoid them to the same extent. This is due to the participant’s prior linguistic

knowledge which can later affect advanced writing skills, and in our context, the Libyan students did not study such linguistic forms adequately during their study journey.

11.2. Discussion of 2nd research question's result:

Q2. What are the paraphrasing techniques that the participants have a good command of?

Considering vocabulary modification techniques, we find that the use of "synonyms" represents the most successful technique indicating that they have a good familiarity with this technique. However, the use of "antonyms" was limited, with only two correct attempts recorded, reflecting a weakness in using this strategy. This performance disparity indicates that students prefer using synonyms as a means to facilitate expression, but they need to develop their skills in using antonyms more effectively.

Data related to the techniques utilized for changing grammar, the results were varied. The students achieved a good success rate in certain techniques, such as changing "part of speech". However, other techniques, such as changing "active to passive voice" and transforming "complex sentences to simple ones," were less effective, as no correct attempts were recorded in sentence transformation. This indicates that students may face challenges in understanding more complex grammatical structures, reflecting the need to enhance education in these areas.

Regarding the rearrangement techniques, the results showed good performance in some areas, such as changing "clause order". However, there were clear challenges in changing "clause order", indicating the need to enhance students' skills in organizing ideas logically.

The results of simplification techniques including changing "phrase to word", "complex to simple" and "clause to phrase" show that students faced significant difficulties, as most of them were unable to achieve any success in converting complex sentences to simple ones indicating a significant gap in this skill. However, in the case of "chunking", it was relatively implemented more successfully than the former simplification techniques.

Overall, the data reflect that students have a good level of proficiency in some paraphrasing techniques, but they face significant challenges in other areas, especially in simplification and grammatical comprehension. Enhancing education in the areas of vocabulary and grammar, along with focusing on developing simplification skills, will have a significant positive impact on students' ability to express themselves accurately and effectively in English. It is essential for educational institutions to adopt innovative teaching strategies to improve these skills, enabling students to achieve better results in the future.

11.3. Discussion of 3rd research question's result:

Q3. What are their most common weaknesses of paraphrasing?

Concerning changing vocabulary techniques, the results show that the technique of using "synonyms", despite achieving a large number of correct attempts, also witnessed a high rate of incorrect attempts, indicating that students may face difficulties in choosing the appropriate synonym in certain contexts.

As for the field of grammatical changes, techniques such as changing "part of speech", converting from "passive to active voice", and transforming "complex sentences into simple" have shown high rates of errors. These results indicate that students need to strengthen their understanding of basic grammar rules, as these techniques appear more complex and require higher skills.

Regarding rearrangement techniques, the rate of incorrect attempts of changing "clause order" and "word order" was moderate, indicating that students have a reasonable understanding of word and sentence order, but it still needs improvement. These results are positive compared to some other techniques.

Data related to implementing incorrect techniques such as "ignoring segments", changing "singular to plural" and "adding new ideas" indicate the inadequate use of such techniques which reflects their misunderstanding of the nature of paraphrasing and this comes in line with the result of Abdul Azis, Suryanti & Sutisna (2019) and Khairunnisa, Sutapa & Surmiyati (2014). Regarding committing common errors such as "grammatical agreement", and "tense form"

errors, this indicates the inappropriate use of these linguistic forms which represents a clear weakness among students, as most of them recorded high rates of incorrect attempts. This reflects the urgent need to enhance education related to the concept of paraphrasing in addition to the areas of agreement, converting singular to plural, and dealing with tenses which contributes to improving overall linguistic proficiency.

This result is relatively in an alignment with the results of Ismail *et al.* (2020) who concluded that “The students are difficult to find out the appropriate synonym, confuse about how to rearrange the sentence structure in new style that keeps the full information appropriately, unfamiliar with many new terms and also confuse about how to paraphrase.” (P. 296).

11.4. Discussion of 4th research question’s result:

Q4. To what extent are the participants able to paraphrase English texts adequately?

The standard deviation of correct attempts shows that some students have achieved significant successes, while others are experiencing notable difficulties. In contrast, the standard deviation of incorrect attempts indicates that the errors were more homogeneous among the students. This variation highlights the need to tailor individual educational strategies to suit different student levels, as customized learning approaches can lead to overall performance improvement.

In addition, the range between the minimum and the maximum for correct attempts indicates that some students were unable to achieve any correct attempts. As for incorrect attempts, the range between the minimum and the maximum indicates that some students made a large number of mistakes, while others were able to significantly reduce their errors. This variation in results may be attributed to multiple factors, including the level of previous academic achievement, the learning strategies used, and the support available to students during the educational process.

11.5. Discussion of 5th research question's result:

Q5. What is the participants' perspective with regard to the reasons behind the problems they encounter while applying paraphrasing techniques?

The questionnaire results provide insights into the factors that affect students' performance in language tasks. The results indicate that a *lack of practice* and a *lack of vocabulary* are the most influential factors followed by *comprehension difficulties*, *feeling anxious* and *lack of self confidence*. These factors are followed by experiencing *grammatical weaknesses* and *insufficient time* for the task which equally affect their ability to paraphrase texts. Finally, *negative attitudes* towards the subject and a *lack of instruction* come at end of the factors' rank.

This result indicates that students consider that the grammatical difficulties do not affect their performance to the extent that lacking vocabulary do. Students' expectation is contrasted with their actual paraphrasing performance which revealed that the most successful technique they implemented was using synonyms and a successful limited use of antonyms. Also, the results indicate that students need more practice sessions in addition to enhancing their reading comprehension ability. This result is in alignment with that of Clarin *et al* (2023). Moreover, this study revealed that students need psychological support to overcome the issues of anxiety, self-confidence and negative attitudes towards paraphrasing tasks.

12. Conclusion :

The study concludes that students rely often on techniques such as using synonyms, changing part of speech, word to phrase and clause order in paraphrasing English texts. The students also succeed in achieving the highest number of correct attempts when implementing these same techniques, but there is still significant room for improvement. Moreover, the significant variation in results indicates the urgent need to provide support and guidance to students who are struggling especially in applying the techniques of changing grammar and simplification. Furthermore, the study found that some students were struggling as they committed a significant number of errors,

while other participants performed successfully. This created a significant achievement gap. Finally, This study concluded that the causes of students' paraphrasing difficulties were respectively lack of practice, lack of vocabulary, comprehension difficulties, feeling anxious, lack of self confidence, experiencing grammatical weaknesses, insufficient time for the task, negative attitudes towards the subject and a lack of instruction. Such conclusions are essential in the field of academic writing instruction as they shed the light on what teachers need to focus on and, therefore, to create an effective teaching plan.

13. Recommendations:

According to the results obtained from this study, it is essential that the teachers develop educational strategies that aim to comprehensively enhance linguistic proficiency, focusing on aspects that negatively impact performance and identifying common mistakes that students may encounter. Understanding these dynamics will help teachers design more effective educational programs that meet the needs of all students, thereby enhancing the quality of education and supporting their linguistic successes. Furthermore, the study reveals that it is essential for the teachers to enhance vocabulary and grammar and to provide opportunities for practical practice, in addition to supporting students psychologically to boost their self-confidence and improve their attitudes towards the subject.

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