

INTEGRATING AI-BASED PARAPHRASING INTO ACADEMIC WRITING PEDAGOGY: A REFLECTIVE STUDY ON QUILLBOT IN PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

Integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into education has transformed traditional approaches to teaching and learning, particularly in academic writing instruction. This study investigates the pedagogical impact of using QuillBot, an AI-based paraphrasing tool, on students' academic writing performance and their perceptions of its use. Motivated by the increasing complexity of academic writing and the need for instructional innovation, this mixed-methods research examines learning outcomes and student experiences. Forty-fourth-semester students, consisting of 13 male and 27 female students, enrolled in an Academic Writing course, participated in the study. An explanatory sequential design was employed, starting with pre- and post-tests measuring writing performance, followed by semi-structured interviews to explore students' reflections. The results revealed a significant improvement in students' writing scores, with the mean increasing from 49.25 (pre-test) to 74.00 (post-test), indicating enhanced ability in paraphrasing and producing coherent academic texts. Students also reported that QuillBot helped them internalize academic language structures, improved their awareness of sentence patterns, and supported autonomous learning by providing immediate, accessible feedback. Moreover, they acknowledged the importance of ethical usage and viewed the tool as a guide rather than a shortcut. These insights highlight the dual role of AI tools as both linguistic support systems and pedagogical aids when thoughtfully integrated into instruction. Future research should consider broader and more diverse populations to deepen understanding of how AI-assisted writing tools shape student learning across different educational contexts.

Keywords: Academic writing, Paraphrasing, Artificial intelligence, Quillbot

INTRODUCTION

AI has become much more prevalent in educational settings recently, therefore changing conventional methods of instruction and learning. Among these developments, AI-

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based writing tools have attracted much interest since they help students write, revise, and polish academic works (Krajka & Olszak, 2024; Marzuki et al., 2023). QuillBot, a commonly used AI paraphrasing tool, best shows this change with real-time linguistic suggestions, rewording capabilities, and writing improvements (Mohammad et al., 2024). Since academic writing is still a fundamental part of higher education, knowing how such tools interact with students' writing processes becomes even more important.

The growing adoption of AI paraphrasing tools reflects a larger urgency in education to balance innovation (Selvakumar & Manjunath, 2025) with academic integrity and instructional efficacy. By enhancing clarity and coherence, systems like QuillBot can help non-native English speakers and struggling authors on the one hand (Khabib, 2022; Kim et al., 2024). Conversely, its employment could risk encouraging either passive learning or too much dependence. Teachers must deal with the twin difficulty of using technology to help learning and promote the critical thinking and writing abilities fundamental to academic growth. Thus, establishing informed teaching strategies requires investigating the pedagogical consequences of artificial intelligence-assisted paraphrasing.

Despite its increasing popularity, a limited corpus of empirical research critically evaluates the pedagogical effects of incorporating AI-based paraphrasing tools into academic writing. Current research mainly emphasizes the technical effectiveness of these technologies rather than their instructional influence or students' personal experiences. Moreover, the reflective aspect, how students interact with and derive insights from utilizing AI technologies for paraphrasing, remains little examined. This establishes a considerable research void in comprehending the qualitative impacts on writing quality and the perceptions influencing students' utilization of such technologies.

In line with the highlight of this study, academic writing in the modern day is becoming increasingly complicated, impacted by diverse student populations, changing genre conventions, and the ubiquitous influence of digital technologies. Today's students must grasp not only formal writing conventions but also critical thinking, source synthesis, and ethical information use. In response to these demands, writing instruction has gradually changed from product-oriented models to process- and genre-based approaches emphasizing student agency, scaffolding, and contextual knowledge (Cheung, 2012; Herda et al., 2024; Lina, 2021; Wijaya, 2018; Yu et al., 2022). Within this pedagogical setting, AI tools such as QuillBot are emerging as viable supports for improving important writing abilities, particularly paraphrasing, which is critical for avoiding plagiarism and displaying comprehension (Ardelia & Tiyas, 2019; Asnas et al., 2022; Putri, 2020).

However, integrating such tools into writing instruction necessitates careful attention. Teachers must balance the benefits of AI-assisted paraphrasing and the importance of developing independent academic literacy. Implementing AI-assisted paraphrasing tools is often referred to as a way to lose students' authorial voice (Ou et al., 2024; Putri, 2020). While QuillBot can serve as a learning scaffold, showing students real-time examples of language rephrasing and structural variety, it also has the potential to become a shortcut if not carefully integrated into instructional design. As a result, teaching tactics must change to embrace AI tools and critically engage students with them, encouraging metacognitive awareness, ethical use, and a greater knowledge of writing skills (Amani & Bisriyah, 2025; Herda et al., 2024). This project fits into this growing educational context, attempting to investigate how AI integration, notably through QuillBot, can accord with and improve the goals of academic writing teaching.

Despite the increasing use of AI-driven paraphrase tools such as QuillBot, there is a paucity of empirical studies examining their pedagogical effects on students' academic writing advancement and learning methodologies. Consequently, current research frequently emphasizes the technical capabilities of these tools, resulting in a notable deficiency in comprehending students' reflective participation, authorial identity, and ethical utilization in academic writing pedagogy. This study addresses this gap by examining how using QuillBot for paraphrasing affects students' academic writing and how students perceive its integration into the learning process. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following research questions: (1)

How does using QuillBot for paraphrasing impact academic writing? (2) What are the students' perceptions regarding using QuillBot for paraphrasing in academic writing?

METHODS

The researchers used a mixed-methods strategy integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to give a more complete knowledge of the events under examination and adequately address the research challenges (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; Gay et al., 2012). This method was used to take advantage of the benefits of both approaches: while qualitative data gives depth, context, and the complexity of participants' experiences, quantitative data offers measurable, generally applicable insights into trends and patterns. This study used an explanatory sequential design, in which the qualitative phase comes first, followed by the quantitative phase (Gay et al., 2012). Forty participants, consisting of 13 male and 27 female students from a state university in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, were involved in this study, majoring in the English Language Education study program in the fourth semester and taking the Academic Writing course. The researchers chose them purposefully, considering their writing level, for their intermediate-level academic writing abilities, which aligned with the study's emphasis on paraphrasing skills and critical engagement with AI writing tools. At this point in their program, students had learned the fundamentals of academic writing conventions, such as paragraph structure, thesis development, and source integration. However, they still worked on more advanced skills like paraphrasing, synthesis, and maintaining authorial voice. This makes them an ideal sample to investigate how AI-powered tools such as QuillBot affect the writing process and learning results.

The instruments used by the researchers to complete this mixed-method study were pre-and post-tests for writing paragraphs and semi-structured interviews. This design's justification is its ability first to generate broad conclusions from pre-and post-test data collection and then probe those conclusions further using semi-structured interviews to grasp participants' perspectives better. A total of six participants were selected from the larger sample using purposive sampling, representing a range of writing abilities and engagement levels with the AI tool. The interviews were performed individually in a pleasant and relaxing environment on campus to promote authentic and contemplative responses. Each session lasts roughly 20 to 30 minutes and adheres to a semi-structured pattern directed by a series of open-ended inquiries. The questions concentrated on participants' experiences with QuillBot, perceived advantages and disadvantages, its impact on their writing progress, and their opinions regarding incorporating AI tools into writing teaching.

The interview guide offered a framework, although the format facilitated follow-up inquiries and adaptable discourse to investigate emerging ideas more thoroughly. All interviews were taped, with participants' consent, and subsequently transcribed for theme analysis. To analyze the quantitative data (tests), the researchers used descriptive statistics using SPSS version 25 by emphasizing the mean and mode of scores. Meanwhile, the qualitative data (semi-structured interview) was analyzed using thematic analysis, preceded by a verbatim technique.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This part presents the study's findings relevant to the two research questions: (1) How does using QuillBot for paraphrasing impact academic writing? (2) What are the students' perceptions regarding using QuillBot for paraphrasing in academic writing? Then, after all, the discussion is as follows.

Impact of Using QuillBot for Paraphrasing in Academic Writing

The findings in this first RQ were collected through pre-test and post-test. The students' scores in writing the introduction paragraph of a research paper are counted here statistically. In this case, the teacher gave a pre-test for students writing the introduction paragraph without assistance from technology. They produced writing manually in a paper-based handwriting format. In the post-test, they were allowed to use QuillBot as an AI-based paraphrasing tool while writing the introduction paragraphs.

Table 1. Pre-test Frequency

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	40	10	25.0	25.0
	50	24	60.0	85.0
	60	5	12.5	97.5
	70	1	2.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table 2. Post-test Frequency

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	60	3	7.5	7.5
	70	19	47.5	55.0
	80	17	42.5	97.5
	90	1	2.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Tables 1 and 2 show pre-test and post-test frequencies based on the students' scores in writing introduction paragraphs. The lowest score on the pre-test was 40, and the highest was 70. On the other hand, the lowest score on the post-test was 60, and the highest was 90. Thus, it can be concluded that the student's score or achievement improved. The descriptive statistics of its findings are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre_test	40	40	70	49.25	6.938
Post_test	40	60	90	74.00	6.718

Table 3 represents some descriptive aspects of the minimum and maximum scores, mean, and standard deviation. The results of the pre-test and post-test scores indicate a significant improvement in students' academic writing performance after using QuillBot as a paraphrasing tool. The mean score increased from 49.25 in the pre-test to 74.00 in the post-test, reflecting a notable gain of 24.75 points. Additionally, while the pre-test scores ranged from 40 to 70, the post-test scores ranged from 60 to 90, suggesting an upward shift in the minimum and maximum performance levels. The standard deviations of 6.938 for the pre-test and 6.718 for the post-test indicate relatively consistent performance across both

assessments, with slightly less variability in the post-test. These findings suggest that integrating QuillBot impacted the quality of students' academic writing.

Following the intervention, the significant rise in the mean score from 49.25 to 74.00 showcases a clear improvement in writing skills. This rise of 24.75 points indicates more than just a surface improvement; it also shows that students could probably generate academically appropriate, clearer, more coherent texts and more successful paraphrases. The increasing change in the minimum and maximum scores also indicates that the tool helped writers from lower-achieving to higher-achieving levels all over the performance range. In line with the findings, students may have been able to internalize academic traditions more quickly with QuillBot's real-time exposure to appropriate paraphrase structures and language choices, which may explain this improvement. Coming up with fresh paraphrased content can be intimidating for many students, particularly those struggling with English proficiency or maintaining a formal academic tone.

This result shows even further how AI-based technologies like QuillBot may equal resources in educational environments, enabling students to succeed with demanding content regardless of their background or degree of aptitude. The continuous increase in the pre-test and post-test results indicates that the instrument gave significant help not just to high-achieving students but also to those who might usually struggle with academic writing. QuillBot leveled the playing field by providing readily available, real-time paraphrase aid (Mohammad et al., 2024; Safrida & Puspitasari, 2024), enabling all students to participate more boldly with academic texts and generate work compliant with educational standards.

Students may have benefited from QuillBot's role as a model for syntactic diversity and academic style because of its instant linguistic possibilities. The constructivist pedagogical approach is consistent, in which students gain information via meaningful tool engagement and directed practice (Honebein et al., 1993; Mascolo, 2009; Solvie & Kloek, 2007). Further evidence that the improvement was not concentrated in a small number of students but relatively evenly across the population is provided by the constant standard deviations between the pre-and post-tests (6.938 and 6.718). QuillBot's impact was accessible to many students, independent of their beginning skills. This discovery further supports the idea that academic writing education can benefit from AI-based tools like QuillBot, particularly with a structured and reflective learning approach. This finding further demonstrates how these technologies can help all students succeed in challenging academic material regardless of their background or ability level.

This condition cannot be ignored, as technology in academic writing plays a crucial role. The enhancement in academic writing scores can be ascribed to students' improved capacity to internalize academic conventions via QuillBot's immediate exposure to suitable paraphrase structures and linguistic selections. Students likely cultivated a more profound comprehension of academic language and structure through regular engagement with exemplary formal and logical rephrasing models. This prompt feedback mechanism enabled them to observe how their initial wording could be converted into more academically appropriate alternatives, reinforcing learning practically and contextually. Consequently, students were more adept at generating writing that conforms to academic standards, resulting in notable improvements in their post-test performance.

There are several pedagogical advantages to using QuillBot to help students paraphrase their paragraphs, especially when encouraging independent study. One of the main benefits is that QuillBot gives students immediate feedback on their vocabulary (Mohammad et al., 2024), sentence construction (Latifah et al., 2024), and language use (Gürbüz, 2024; Latifah et al., 2024), enabling them to see many approaches to conveying the

same concept. Furthermore, this offers them the skills to make adjustments independently and increases their awareness of how language works in academic writing (Ellerton, 2023). Students gradually internalize academic principles without requiring teacher assistance as they engage with the tool and start to identify patterns in good paraphrasing. As students gain the confidence to edit their own writing and make well-informed linguistic decisions, this process fosters autonomy. Additionally, by utilizing QuillBot as a tool rather than a crutch, students are prompted to engage in greater metacognitive thought about their writing by critically analyzing its recommendations. In addition to improving their paraphrasing abilities, this helps them develop self-directed learning habits, which are critical for academic success and progress.

Students' Perception of Using QuillBot for Paraphrasing in Academic Writing

This section presents the findings of the second research question on students' perceptions of using QuillBot. The qualitative data presented here are from semi-structured interviews. To protect their identities, the researchers interviewed five students categorized as P1-P5. The following are the relevant excerpts from the interviews.

Excerpt 1

P1 : "I feel grateful to be introduced to QuillBot to help me paraphrase sentences. in practice, I try not to cheat, which is only a few things I do because I respect the rules of the writing code of ethics."

P2 : "There are many features introduced in this app. It makes me learn. When I'm not with my teacher, I'm helped and get quick responses. In addition, paraphrasing with QuillBot allows me to choose the style, such as humanist, creative, academic, and others, to adjust it to my needs."

P3 : "I am weak in sentence structure, but thanks to QuillBot, I have also become more sensitive to sentence patterns. Not only is the result good, but it is also a medium to examine my weaknesses."

P4 : "The style offered by QuillBot makes me understand that academic writing requires sensitivity to stringing words together. Even after getting the results, I have to re-read them to reduce things that are not quite right."

P5 : "My confidence in writing paragraphs is starting to build with QuillBot. I need it to guide me in making my paraphrasing better."

The findings from the second research question revealed that students generally had positive perceptions of using QuillBot as a paraphrasing tool, especially in the context of academic writing. The qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews suggest that students valued the tool's functionality and viewed it as an educational aid. For instance, participant P1 expressed gratitude for being introduced to QuillBot, emphasizing their personal integrity and adherence to academic writing ethics. This suggests that while students acknowledge the tool's utility, they are also mindful of using it responsibly, viewing it as a support rather than a shortcut. Using QuillBot ethically in writing means ensuring it is a tool for support rather than a substitute for original thought. Writers should use it to enhance clarity, check grammar, or rephrase content they have already created, not to generate entire works and claim them as their own. Maintaining academic integrity and authenticity is important, as well as citing sources and not adequately misrepresenting (Fielden & Joyce, 2008). QuillBot-

assisted content is entirely original. Ethical use promotes learning, creativity, and respect for intellectual property while avoiding plagiarism.

A common theme that emerged was the appreciation for the various features offered by QuillBot. P2 highlighted how the tool provided immediate assistance outside of class, bridging the gap when teacher support was unavailable. The availability of different writing styles was particularly beneficial, enabling students to tailor the output according to specific writing needs. This flexibility enhances the user experience and supports the development of genre awareness, a crucial aspect of academic literacy. Furthermore, the responses indicated that QuillBot is a reflective language learning tool (Tintero et al., 2024). Participant P3 noted an improvement in recognizing and understanding sentence structures, suggesting that using QuillBot helped raise their awareness of grammatical patterns. This insight points to the tool's potential role in facilitating metalinguistic awareness, where learners begin to analyze language use rather than passively accept it critically. Similarly, P4 remarked on the need to re-read and revise the paraphrased output, showing an active engagement with the content and an understanding that automated results still require human refinement.

Then, even using tools like QuillBot, human refinement remains essential to ensure the final writing reflects personal voice, intent, and clarity. While QuillBot can assist with grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure, it may not fully capture the nuances, emotions, or context that a human writer can provide (Gürbüz, 2024; Latifah et al., 2025; Ma et al., 2025; Mohammad et al., 2024). By reviewing, editing, and refining AI-generated suggestions, writers add depth and authenticity to their work (Dave & Russel, 2010), making it more meaningful and effective. In this way, human input elevates AI-assisted writing into a more polished and personalized piece. Lastly, the emotional and motivational impact of QuillBot was also evident in the interviews. P5 shared that their confidence in writing had increased due to using the tool. This suggests that, beyond technical support, QuillBot also plays a role in building students' self-efficacy in writing (Andriani et al., 2024; Gürbüz, 2024). The tool's guidance appears to empower learners to take more control over their writing process, indicating that intelligent writing aids can positively influence students' skills and attitudes toward academic writing. This study's findings provide a balanced perspective in response to existing research that emphasizes both the advantages and disadvantages of employing AI for writing.

Although previous research has warned that excessive dependence on AI tools may undermine critical thinking and individual expression, the present findings suggest that QuillBot can bolster students' writing confidence and self-efficacy. The discussion is enhanced by juxtaposing these findings with the current literature, providing a nuanced comprehension of AI's instructional function in academic writing. Thus, it can be very beneficial for students learning to convey complicated thoughts in English to use tools like QuillBot to improve writing clarity and increase vocabulary. These tools should be utilized carefully, though, as a way to develop and learn rather than as a way to get around creative thinking. QuillBot should be used to hone, not replace, students' voices while maintaining their moral compass. By viewing it as a learning tool rather than a crutch, students can embrace technology to help while maintaining a connection to the principles of academic integrity.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to address a notable gap in the literature by exploring the impact of using QuillBot for paraphrasing on students' academic writing and their perceptions of its integration into the learning process. Specifically, it examined how using QuillBot for paraphrasing influences the quality of academic writing and investigated students' perceptions of the tool's role in their writing development. Finally, students' paraphrasing abilities and writing performance improved when QuillBot was included in academic writing courses. The notable rise in post-test results shows how well the technology helped students create better academic work. Beyond improving their understanding of sentence structures and academic tone, students' reflections highlight other educational advantages of QuillBot, which also encouraged independent learning and confidence. Despite the lack of direct teacher

supervision, students admitted the tool was a helpful guide that improved their knowledge of academic writing standards. They also deliberately attempted to uphold academic integrity by applying the technology sensibly rather than as a shortcut. These realizations highlight the importance of framing AI tools like QuillBot in thoughtful, ethical teaching methods. Appropriate use can promote learner autonomy and skill development, enhancing academic writing experiences through more meaningful and self-directed outcomes. Teachers should help students use AI tools like QuillBot properly, not as shortcuts but as learning tools that promote the growth of paraphrasing and critical thinking abilities, to optimize their benefits. However, one limitation of this research is the relatively small sample size, with only 40 participants involved. This limited number may affect the generalizability of the findings to broader student populations with diverse academic backgrounds. Five students interviewed for qualitative findings also became a limitation since the total sample had not covered the ample saturation of the ideal analysis. Future studies should examine how the AI-based paraphrase tool QuillBot affects students' writing development across various writing skill levels. Increasing the study's sample size and diversity would improve the findings' generalizability and offer a more profound understanding of how different students use this technology.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researchers would like to express their deepest gratitude to all the students who participated in this study.