



## ChatGPT as a Tool for Developing Paraphrasing Skills Among ESL Learners

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### ABSTRACT

Paraphrasing is a fundamental skill in academic writing, yet it is often considered challenging to master, particularly for second language learners. To address this issue, various tools have been developed to assist students in learning how to paraphrase effectively including generative artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots like ChatGPT. This article reports the findings of a study to assess the potential of ChatGPT as a virtual paraphrase tutor and analyze actual paraphrase samples from diploma students. Employing document mining and thematic analysis in a small-scale study, ChatGPT's capabilities were evaluated in three key aspects: (1) delivering clear explanations, (2) offering examples of both successful and unsuccessful paraphrases, and (3) enhancing students' initial paraphrased content through a series of prompts. The findings suggest that ChatGPT can be a useful resource providing examples and instant feedback on student paraphrases. However, students should be aware of its limitations such as generating improved paraphrases that constitute patchwriting and making mistakes in its explanations. It is important to use this AI-powered tool responsibly and ethically to avoid potential plagiarism risks and it should be viewed as a supplement rather than a replacement for human guidance.

**Keywords:** academic writing; ChatGPT; paraphrasing; patchwriting; plagiarism; teaching and learning



## INTRODUCTION

English academic writing courses often teach students how to incorporate sources using three techniques: quoting, summarizing, and paraphrasing. However, learning to paraphrase can be a difficult task, particularly for non-native English speakers due to its requirement to convey information in their words while retaining the original meaning (Chen et al., 2015; Rogerson & McCarthy, 2017; Shi, 2012). According to Purdue Online Writing Lab (2022), a paraphrase involves presenting crucial information in a fresh and accurate manner. This task can seem insurmountable for English as a second language (ESL) students with limited language proficiency and vocabulary.

Studies have shown that paraphrasing is a skill that demands time and effort to develop (Hirvela & Du, 2013; Walsh Marr, 2019; Wette, 2017). Keck (2010) found that paraphrasing is an “incredibly complex skill that requires a high level of grammatical and lexical knowledge” (p. 216). Walsh Marr (2019) emphasizes the importance of conveying the author’s meaning and point of view without relying on similar words or sentence structures from the original source.

Student writers often struggle with paraphrasing and may resort to producing instances of patchwriting, a term coined by Howard (1993) which refers to instances where learners copy from a source text and make minor changes such as replacing words or altering sentence structure. In a project headed by Professors Howard and Jamieson, the definition was later expanded to include “restating a phrase, clause, or one or more sentences while staying close to the language or syntax of the source” (The Citation Project, n.d.). Novice writers often produce patchwriting paraphrases as they learn to master the skill of paraphrasing (Howard, 1995).

Patchwriting, even if unintentional, can lead to plagiarism, which can have serious consequences for students. Bowen and Nanni (2021) found that some of their study participants produced paraphrases that could be considered plagiarized due to difficulties with paraphrasing. Keck (2006; 2010) categorized paraphrases into four types: near copy, minimal revision, moderate revision, and substantial revision. According to Keck, non-native English speakers tend to produce near copy paraphrases more frequently. Therefore, it is crucial for students to understand the distinction between paraphrasing and patchwriting and to acquire the necessary skills for effective paraphrasing.

In recent years, automated paraphrasing tools have become increasingly prevalent but studies have shown that they often produce ineffective paraphrases. Rogerson and McCarthy (2017) reported that the paraphraser generated patchwriting that were considered minimal revision based on Keck’s (2006) typology of paraphrases. They also found some paraphrases contained word salad, that is, long strings of words which were unintelligible. Similarly, Prentice and Kinden (2018) found that machine-generated paraphrases often contain unidiomatic language because of simple synonym substitution and minimal syntactic changes. They noted that these paraphrases can be “unidiomatic at best, incomprehensible at worst” (p. 6). As a result, students may try to revise these unclear paraphrases before using them in their work. However, Roe and Perkins (2022) argue that revising such paraphrases may still amount to paraphrasing plagiarism and academic dishonesty.



In a more recent research, Wahle et al. (2023) also reported that paraphrasers produced unsuccessful paraphrases which Keck (2010) would consider as close paraphrasing. Relying on machine paraphrases can lead to facilitated plagiarism (Rogerson & McCarthy, 2017) and potential charges of plagiarism even with source attribution (Dong & Shi, 2021). Rogerson and McCarthy (2017) emphasise that “the capacity of students ... to rephrase, frame and restate the ideas and intentions of original authors themselves with appropriate acknowledgements of sources is fundamental to the principles of academic integrity and personal development” (p.12). This means that students should be able to understand, interpret, and convey information from original sources in their own words while giving credit to those sources. This skill is not only about adhering to academic rules but also about fostering personal growth and understanding.

Previous studies have found that plagiarism detection software often fails to identify machine-generated paraphrases, which poses a threat to academic integrity (Prentice & Kinden, 2018; Roe & Perkins, 2022; Rogerson & McCarthy, 2017). However, a recent study by Wahle et al. (2023) suggests that newer tools like Longformer may be more effective at detecting paraphrasing plagiarism.

In a review on source-based writing, Cumming et al. (2016) suggest that writing instructors teach paraphrasing skills and provide sufficient practice to help students produce legitimate paraphrases. Keck (2006) also supports this idea, as her research shows that non-native English writers can improve their paraphrasing abilities if they are taught how to do so. However, there may be limitations in terms of class time to ensure that students learn to paraphrase effectively.

To address this challenge, generative artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots have been developed to assist students in learning how to paraphrase effectively. The recent emergence of ChatGPT, a conversational chatbot, has presented a promising opportunity for students to enhance their academic writing skills. However, there are concerns about potential misuse of this technology in academia (Rudolph et al., 2023), as some of the current anti-plagiarism software may not be able to detect text generated by ChatGPT (Gao et al., 2022; Qadir, 2022; Ventayen, 2023), which may result in academic dishonesty.

Fortunately, Turnitin, a widely used text-matching software, has developed cutting-edge technology capable of distinguishing between AI-generated work by ChatGPT and other similar tools (<https://www.turnitin.com/solutions/ai-writing>). Furthermore, OpenAI, the creator and owner of ChatGPT, has released its own detector, AI Text Classifier, which can distinguish between work written by humans and those generated by AI tools (<https://platform.openai.com/ai-text-classifier>), providing a potential solution to this issue. Nonetheless, scholars such as McMurtrie (2022), Sharples (2022), and Rudolph et al. (2023) have emphasized the importance of teaching students how to use AI tools ethically and responsibly to avoid any potential plagiarism accusations, while also encouraging critical thinking and original work.

In a recent research study conducted by Ho (2023), the paraphrasing capabilities of ChatGPT were compared to those of Quillbot, a paraphrasing tool that her institution subscribes to. The findings revealed that ChatGPT consistently outperformed Quillbot in generating more



effective paraphrases. This success raises the question: can ChatGPT not only excel in paraphrasing but also serve as an effective educational tool for teaching essential paraphrasing skills? Motivated by this question, the author explored ChatGPT's potential as a valuable educational resource for instructing Year 2 diploma students in the art of paraphrasing. Specifically, the author aimed to assess the chatbot's ability to: (1) offer clear explanations, (2) give examples of successful and unsuccessful paraphrases, and (3) provide constructive feedback to improve students' original paraphrases.

## ASSESSING CHATGPT AS A PARAPHRASE TUTOR

The purpose of this small scale study was to assess ChatGPT's suitability as a virtual intelligent tutor for ESL students enrolled in a compulsory integrated English language course with an emphasis on writing. The research employed a qualitative design, utilizing document mining techniques and subsequent thematic analysis for data processing. The interaction with ChatGPT and presentation of specific prompts occurred between February 24 and March 4, 2023. The study involved the author presenting a defined set of prompts to ChatGPT to gauge its capacity in providing constructive feedback on paraphrasing. The prompts, highlighted in bold, and the generated responses, indicated in italics, were directly copied and pasted, with only adjustments made for line spacing, font style and size.

### *Assessing Clarity in Explanations*

Prior to recommending ChatGPT as a virtual paraphrasing tutor for her students, the author needed to ensure that the chatbot could effectively explain the concept of paraphrasing. Crucially, the explanation provided by ChatGPT had to closely align with the teachings from the author's lectures. The response to the prompt, **“Explain what a paraphrase is to an ESL student.”** is displayed below:

*Sure, I'd be happy to help! A paraphrase is when you take a piece of writing that someone else has written, and you say the same thing in your own words, but keeping the same meaning. For example, if someone wrote "The cat is on the mat," you might paraphrase it by saying "The feline animal is situated on the floor covering."*

*Paraphrasing is a useful tool because it can help you to understand difficult passages or express complex ideas in simpler language. It is also important in academic writing because it allows you to demonstrate your understanding of a text without copying it exactly. When you paraphrase, you still need to give credit to the original author, but you are using your own words to express their ideas.*

*By practicing paraphrasing, you can improve your reading, writing, and research skills, and become a better communicator in English. If you have any questions or need more clarification, please don't hesitate to ask!*

Upon analysis of the above response, it was evident that ChatGPT offered an explanation that aligned with the teachings provided during lectures. The response generated by ChatGPT indicated its ability to provide a coherent and contextually relevant response that was divided into three paragraphs for easier comprehension by ESL students. Additionally, ChatGPT highlighted the importance of source attribution in paraphrasing, a crucial point that is often



overlooked by ESL students in their source-based writing, as Shi (2004) has found in prior research. Furthermore, ChatGPT encouraged learners to seek further clarification if needed, which is an essential trait of a good tutor.

When responding to the subsequent prompt, **“tell me why i need to learn paraphrase.”**, the capacity of ChatGPT to deliver explicit and coherent explanations was again evident as shown beneath:

*Learning how to paraphrase is important for several reasons, especially if you are a student or a professional who engages in academic or research writing. Here are a few reasons why it is important to learn how to paraphrase:*

- 1. Avoiding plagiarism: When you use information or ideas from a source in your writing, it's important to give credit to the original author by citing the source. However, if you copy and paste text from a source without changing it, you may be guilty of plagiarism. Paraphrasing allows you to express the same ideas in your own words while still giving credit to the original author.*
- 2. Demonstrating understanding: Paraphrasing requires you to analyze and understand the meaning of a text before expressing it in your own words. This can help you to deepen your understanding of a topic and demonstrate to your readers that you have a clear grasp of the material.*
- 3. Simplifying complex language: Sometimes, academic or research writing can be difficult to understand due to complex language or technical jargon. Paraphrasing can help you to simplify the language and communicate complex ideas in a way that is easier for your readers to understand.*
- 4. Developing your writing skills: Paraphrasing is a useful skill for improving your writing. It can help you to develop your vocabulary, sentence structure, and critical thinking skills.*

*Overall, learning how to paraphrase is an important skill for anyone who wants to engage in academic or research writing, as it can help you to avoid plagiarism, demonstrate understanding, simplify language, and develop your writing skills.*

ChatGPT's response is suitable as it provides a clear and concise explanation of why learning how to paraphrase is important, along with specific examples and benefits. The response is written in simple language that is easy to understand and avoids using technical jargon, which can be challenging for ESL students. Moreover, the response highlights how paraphrasing can help students improve their writing skills, develop vocabulary, and critical thinking skills, which are all essential for academic success.

In response to the prompt **“List the benefits of learning to paraphrase with you”**, ChatGPT produced a clear, point-by-point explanation as demonstrated below.

*There are several benefits of learning to paraphrase with me as an AI language model:*

- 1. Immediate feedback: I can provide immediate feedback on the quality of a paraphrase, which can help students improve their paraphrasing skills more efficiently.*



2. *Examples: I can generate multiple examples of a text to be paraphrased, which can help students better understand how to paraphrase a particular text or idea.*
3. *Accessibility: As an AI language model, I am available 24/7 and can be accessed from anywhere with an internet connection, making it easier for students to practice their paraphrasing skills on their own schedule.*
4. *Non-judgmental: I do not judge students' writing or ability, which can help create a more comfortable and low-pressure learning environment.*
5. *Vocabulary expansion: Through the process of paraphrasing, students can expand their vocabulary and become more familiar with academic language and terminology.*
6. *Plagiarism prevention: By learning effective paraphrasing techniques, students can avoid unintentional plagiarism and develop good academic writing habits.*

*Overall, learning to paraphrase with me can help students become more confident and proficient writers, which can be beneficial for their academic and professional success.*

The advantages outlined above illustrate how ChatGPT has the potential to serve as a valuable tutor for students seeking to improve their paraphrasing skills. Its non-judgmental nature would be particularly beneficial for struggling students who may feel hesitant or embarrassed to seek help from human tutors (Baidoo-Anu & Owusu Ansah, 2023; Mahlow, 2023).

While at times ChatGPT's explanations can be lengthy, the language employed consistently remains simple, clear, and easily understandable, as illustrated in the following examples.

Example 1:

**Prompt: Give some paraphrasing practices for ESL diploma level students.**

*ChatGPT: Here are some paraphrasing practices that can help ESL diploma level students improve their paraphrasing skills:*

1. *Read the text thoroughly: Before attempting to paraphrase, it's important to read the text carefully to understand its main ideas and key points. Students should make note of any technical terms, idioms or phrasal verbs that might be difficult to rephrase.*
2. *Use synonyms and different sentence structures: To avoid patchwriting, students should use synonyms and different sentence structures to convey the same meaning as the original text. They can use online thesauruses to find synonyms for key words in the text.*
3. *Change the word form: Students can change the word form of words in the original text, such as changing a noun to a verb, or an adjective to an adverb. This can help to avoid repeating the same words in the paraphrase.*
4. *Summarize the main ideas: Rather than trying to paraphrase the entire text, students can focus on summarizing the main ideas in their own words. This can help to simplify the language and make it easier to rephrase.*
5. *Practice paraphrasing regularly: Paraphrasing is a skill that requires practice, so students should make an effort to practice regularly. They can start with short paragraphs and gradually work up to longer texts.*



*Get feedback: Students can ask their teachers or peers to review their paraphrases and provide feedback on how to improve. This can help to identify areas where they need to work on and provide suggestions for improvement.*

The response above includes valuable reminders regarding the significance of regular paraphrasing practice and seeking feedback, both of which are indeed crucial for enhancing students' paraphrasing skills.

In the preceding response, the emphasis on crediting the original source is highlighted, underscoring a critical aspect of effective paraphrasing (Shi, 2004). It is also worth noting that this AI tool highlights the importance of preserving the tone and style of the original text—a tip often overlooked in online writing resources, including the widely acclaimed Purdue Online Writing Lab. However, this particular reminder can be found in the online writing guide of the University of New South Wales (<https://www.student.unsw.edu.au/paraphrasing-summarising-and-quoting>).

The following are two additional instances that exemplify ChatGPT's proficiency in offering clear and easily comprehensible explanations, complete with pertinent examples to illustrate key points.

Example 2:

**Prompt: Explain the techniques for paraphrasing.**

ChatGPT: *Sure! Here are some techniques you can use for paraphrasing:*

1. *Synonym substitution: Replace words in the original text with synonyms that convey the same meaning. Be careful to choose words that have similar meanings and are appropriate for the context.*
2. *Sentence restructuring: Rearrange the sentence structure of the original text while keeping the same meaning. For example, you could change an active sentence to a passive one, or vice versa.*
3. *Changing word forms: Change the form of words in the original text, such as from a noun to a verb or from an adjective to an adverb.*
4. *Using paraphrasing tools: You can also use online tools to help with paraphrasing. However, be careful to proofread the resulting text, as the tool may not always provide accurate paraphrasing.*
5. *Summarizing: If the original text is too long or complex, you can summarize it by extracting the main ideas and rephrasing them in your own words.*

*Remember that when paraphrasing, it's important to maintain the original meaning of the text while expressing it in your own words. Also, be sure to avoid using the same phrases or sentences as the original text, as this can be considered plagiarism.*

The response above offers an intriguing suggestion regarding the use of paraphrasing tools, coupled with a warning to check for accuracy. This demonstrates ChatGPT's awareness of the usefulness of such tools while acknowledging the potential inaccuracies highlighted by past research (Prentice & Kinden, 2018; Rogerson & McCarthy, 2017; Wahle et al., 2023).



Example 3:

Prompt: **Provide examples for each technique.**

ChatGPT: *Sure! Here are some examples of each paraphrasing technique:*

1. *Synonym substitution:*  
*Original text: "The dog barked loudly."*  
*Paraphrased text: "The canine made a loud noise."*
2. *Sentence restructuring:*  
*Original text: "The car hit the tree."*  
*Paraphrased text: "The tree was hit by the car."*
3. *Changing word forms:*  
*Original text: "The performance was excellent."*  
*Paraphrased text: "The performers did an excellent job."*
4. *Using paraphrasing tools:*  
*Original text: "The weather is going to be nice this weekend."*  
*Paraphrased text: "The weather is predicted to be pleasant during the upcoming weekend."*
5. *Summarizing:*  
*Original text: "The article discusses the causes of climate change and the impact it has on the environment."*  
*Paraphrased text: "The article explores climate change and its environmental effects."*

*Remember to practice using these techniques to improve your paraphrasing skills. Also, be sure to check your work for accuracy and originality.*

The examples provided for each technique were clear and helpful for students to understand how to paraphrase effectively, while also emphasizing the importance of checking their work.

### Understanding Inadequately Constructed Prompts

The author acknowledges the importance of precisely crafted prompts, as they directly influence the quality of responses (Qadir, 2022). Is ChatGPT capable of offering clear explanations when prompts display shortcomings in writing mechanics such as poor grammar, misspelled words, missing punctuation, and faulty capitalization?

To assess ChatGPT's ability to comprehend poorly constructed questions, a prompt (**I student Malay. teach me paraphrase.**) which featured grammatical and capitalization errors was presented. The subsequent response from the AI tool is provided below:

*Sure, I can teach you how to paraphrase! Paraphrasing is when you take a piece of text that someone else has written and express the same meaning in your own words. Here are some steps you can follow to paraphrase:*

1. *Read the original text carefully to make sure you understand its meaning.*
2. *Identify the main ideas and concepts in the text that you want to paraphrase.*
3. *Put the original text aside and try to express those ideas and concepts in your own words.*
4. *Use synonyms, rephrase sentences, or change the sentence structure to create a new version of the text that conveys the same meaning.*





5. *Compare your paraphrase to the original text to make sure you haven't accidentally copied any phrases or sentences.*
6. *Cite the original source to give credit to the original author.*

*Here is an example of paraphrasing:*

*Original text: "John is a skilled basketball player with a lot of experience on the court."*

*Paraphrased text: "John is an experienced basketball player who possesses advanced skills on the court."*

*Remember that paraphrasing is a skill that takes practice to develop. Don't worry if your first attempts are not perfect, keep practicing and you will improve over time.*

ChatGPT demonstrated its capability to comprehend and respond appropriately, despite the use of poor English in the prompt. Its ability to engage with students is comparable to that of a human tutor. In addition, ChatGPT uses informal language, including contractions like "haven't" and "don't," which is useful for building rapport with students. The response generated sound like students are actually interacting with a human (Azaria, 2022). Furthermore, the suggested steps are presented in a clear and concise manner, making them easy for students to understand. It should be noted that the chatbot's response concludes with encouraging words, emphasizing the need for continuous practice, which is essential for developing proficiency in paraphrasing (Hirvela & Du, 2013; Walsh Marr, 2019; Wette, 2017). By acknowledging the time and effort required to improve one's paraphrasing skills, ChatGPT provides an additional layer of support to students.

#### Providing Insufficient Explanations

Upon the author's observation that ChatGPT did not recommend employing a combination of techniques to create effective paraphrases, a prompt, **"A good paraphrase should use a combination of techniques. Why have you not mentioned this?"** was directed towards the chatbot, resulting in the following response:

*You're absolutely right, a good paraphrase should use a combination of techniques. I apologize for not mentioning this in my previous response.*

*Using a combination of techniques can help you to produce a more effective paraphrase. By using a variety of methods, you can ensure that your paraphrase is accurate, clear, and appropriate for the context.*

*For example, you might use synonym substitution to replace specific words in the original text, sentence restructuring to change the order of ideas in the text, and summarizing to condense the text into a shorter version. By using these techniques in combination, you can create a paraphrase that is both original and faithful to the original text.*

*Again, I apologize for not mentioning this earlier, and I hope this clarification helps.*

The above response highlights ChatGPT's self-awareness in acknowledging its inadequate explanation by omitting to mention the need for a combination of techniques in producing effective paraphrases. By only suggesting one technique, students may assume that it is sufficient, which can lead to inadequate paraphrasing. The academic integrity handbook for students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology emphasizes that "a good paraphrase combines a number of strategies: the goal is to rephrase the information so that it appears in your



words, not those of the author” (Brennecke, 2020, p.17). Furthermore, it is imperative for ChatGPT to prompt students to include proper citations, a fundamental aspect of academic writing.

### Generating Inaccurate Explanations

While ChatGPT possesses the capability to offer clear explanations, there are instances where it may inadvertently provide erroneous information. The following example illustrates such inaccuracies:

**Prompt: can give more exercise?**

ChatGPT: *Sure! Here's another exercise:*

*Original text: "Education is the key to unlocking a world of opportunities."*

*Paraphrased text: Try to paraphrase the original text in your own words, while maintaining the same meaning.*

*Here's an example of how you might paraphrase the text:*

*Paraphrased text: "Access to education can open up a world of possibilities and opportunities."*

*And here's another exercise:*

*Original text: "The company's profits have declined significantly over the past year."*

*Paraphrased text: Try to paraphrase the original text in your own words, while maintaining the same meaning.*

*Here's an example of how you might paraphrase the text:*

*Paraphrased text: "The company's earnings have experienced a significant drop in the last year."*

*Remember to practice regularly, and feel free to ask for feedback or clarification if needed!*

Drawing from the previous response, it seems ChatGPT has an ongoing issue wherein it offers advice instead of generating an actual paraphrased rendition of the text. To enhance clarity for students, ChatGPT should substitute "Paraphrased text" with "Advice" or "Tip" to reduce potential confusion as the actual paraphrased text is presented in the subsequent line.

### *Assessing Successful and Unsuccessful Paraphrase Examples*

The generated response for the prompt **"Provide examples of both successful and unsuccessful paraphrases suitable for diploma level ESL students."** with the additional instruction to **"Present your response in a table."** is outlined below:

Table 1

ChatGPT-generated table for examples of successful and unsuccessful paraphrases with explanations.

Paraphrase Type	Original Text	Paraphrase	Explanation
<b>Successful</b>	"The government is planning to introduce new legislation to address the issue of climate change."	"New laws are being proposed by the government to tackle the problem of climate change."	This paraphrase maintains the same meaning while simplifying the language and sentence structure. The use of "laws" and "proposed" instead of "legislation" and "introduce" respectively may make the sentence easier to understand for diploma level ESL students.



Paraphrase Type	Original Text	Paraphrase	Explanation
<b>Unsuccessful</b>	"The professor's lecture was full of esoteric jargon."	"The instructor's talk was filled with specialized terminology."	This paraphrase uses more complex vocabulary than the original text, which may be difficult for ESL students to understand. It also changes "lecture" to "talk", which does not convey the same level of formality.
<b>Successful</b>	"The company's profits have been steadily increasing over the past year."	"The business has seen a steady rise in profits in the last year."	This paraphrase uses simpler vocabulary and sentence structure while maintaining the same meaning as the original text. The use of "business" instead of "company" may also make the sentence easier to understand.

The above table highlights ChatGPT's ability to provide clear and concise explanations for successful and unsuccessful paraphrases using sample texts. As paraphrasing is a complex skill that takes time to develop (Walsh Marr, 2019; Wette, 2017), this feature can be particularly beneficial for students who struggle with understanding the nuances of paraphrasing.

#### *Assessing Feedback on Students' Paraphrases*

Up to this point, this AI tool has demonstrated its capability to assist students in acquiring effective paraphrasing through clear explanations, practical exercises, valuable tips and advice, and illustrative examples of both successful and unsuccessful paraphrases. To gauge its effectiveness in providing constructive feedback to enhance students' paraphrasing abilities, actual student attempts were employed for assessment.

Below are the original text and five student paraphrases which were utilized to assess ChatGPT's efficacy in this regard. The original sentence was extracted from a common reading test administered in a prior semester.

#### Providing Feedback: Student 1

The prompt and ChatGPT's subsequent response are as follows:

**Prompt: The following is a question on paraphrase and a student's answer.  
Teach the student to improve on the paraphrase.**

**Paraphrase the following statement:  
It is unrealistic to expect perfection in ourselves as well as in others.**

**Student 1: It is not true that we must look forward about excellence in ourself and others.**

ChatGPT: *The student's paraphrase is not completely accurate and could be improved. Here are some suggestions to help the student improve their paraphrase:*

*Original statement: "It is unrealistic to expect perfection in ourselves as well as in others."*

*Improved paraphrase: "The statement suggests that expecting perfection from ourselves and others is not realistic."*



*Explanation of improvement:*

1. *The original statement emphasizes the unrealistic nature of expecting perfection, while the student's paraphrase doesn't explicitly state this point. Therefore, the improved paraphrase starts by using the word "unrealistic" to convey the same idea.*
2. *The student's paraphrase uses the phrase "not true" instead of "unrealistic". While this phrase is not incorrect, it doesn't accurately convey the intended meaning of the original statement.*
3. *The student's paraphrase also changes the phrase "look forward about excellence" to "expect excellence", which is not an accurate representation of the original statement. The improved paraphrase uses the original phrase "expect perfection" to maintain the original meaning.*

*Overall, it is important to pay close attention to the original statement and convey its intended meaning accurately when paraphrasing.*

Upon meticulous examination of the provided explanation, it became apparent that ChatGPT erroneously asserted the inclusion of the terms "unrealistic" and "expect perfection" in the improved paraphrase, although these words were absent from its revised version. Additionally, explanation No.3 was entirely inaccurate, as the student had not substituted the phrase "look forward about excellence" with "expect excellence." In fact, the phrase "look forward about excellence" was the student's original expression. Consequently, it was evident that ChatGPT did not provide a satisfactory explanation for its suggested improvement. This serves as evidence that the chatbot can indeed make errors, as noted by Ortiz (2022) and Tung (2022).

Providing Feedback: Student 2

The next prompt and corresponding response are displayed beneath:

**Prompt: This is the paraphrase by Student 2:**

**It is idealistic to look forward for perfection in ourselves and others because all of us still make mistakes and face other difficulties.**

*ChatGPT: Student 2's paraphrase is somewhat accurate, but it changes the meaning of the original statement slightly. Here are some suggestions to help the student improve their paraphrase:*

*Original statement: "It is unrealistic to expect perfection in ourselves as well as in others."*

*Improved paraphrase: "The statement suggests that it's not practical or reasonable to expect people to be perfect, including ourselves."*

*Explanation of improvement:*

1. *The original statement uses the word "unrealistic" to describe the idea of expecting perfection, whereas the student's paraphrase uses the word "idealistic". While these two words are similar, "unrealistic" is a more accurate choice in this context because it conveys the idea that expecting perfection is not grounded in reality.*
2. *The student's paraphrase suggests that everyone makes mistakes and faces difficulties, which is true, but it also implies that perfection is an ideal that cannot be achieved. However, the original statement simply states that expecting perfection is not realistic, without implying that it is an unattainable ideal. Therefore, the improved paraphrase removes the phrase "because all of us still make mistakes and face other difficulties" to maintain the original meaning.*



*Overall, it's important to pay close attention to the original statement and convey its intended meaning accurately when paraphrasing.*

A careful analysis of the above response revealed that the improved paraphrase generated for Student 2 differed from the one produced for Student 1.

Student 1's improved paraphrase:

*The statement suggests that expecting perfection from ourselves and others is not realistic.*

Student 2's improved paraphrase:

*The statement suggests that it's not practical or reasonable to expect people to be perfect, including ourselves.*

ChatGPT's ability to generate different paraphrases for the same text proves valuable for students, learning in a group. By comparing the distinct improved paraphrases provided by ChatGPT, they can grasp the concept that there exist multiple ways to paraphrase a text.

### Providing Feedback: Student 3

The third prompt provided by the author and the response of the AI tool are presented below:

Prompt:

**Student 3: It is illogical for us to think that ourselves and others are always perfect.**

ChatGPT: *Student 3's paraphrase is somewhat accurate, but it changes the meaning of the original statement slightly. Here are some suggestions to help the student improve their paraphrase:*

*Original statement: "It is unrealistic to expect perfection in ourselves as well as in others."*

*Improved paraphrase: "The statement suggests that it's not reasonable to expect people to be perfect, including ourselves."*

*Explanation of improvement:*

- 1. The original statement uses the word "unrealistic" to describe the idea of expecting perfection, whereas the student's paraphrase uses the word "illogical". While these two words are similar, "unrealistic" is a more accurate choice in this context because it conveys the idea that expecting perfection is not grounded in reality.*
- 2. The student's paraphrase says that it's illogical for us to think that ourselves and others are always perfect, but the original statement doesn't say anything about "always" being perfect. Therefore, the improved paraphrase removes the word "always" to maintain the original meaning.*

*Overall, it's important to pay close attention to the original statement and convey its intended meaning accurately when paraphrasing.*

When asked to simplify the explanation above, the chatbot's reply was:

*Sure, here's a simplified explanation for Student 3:*



*Student 3's paraphrase is generally accurate. The author is saying that it's not logical to expect people, including ourselves, to always be perfect. However, the word "illogical" in the paraphrase is slightly stronger than "unrealistic" in the original statement, which simply means "not practical or realistic." Therefore, to improve the paraphrase, it's important to use the word "unrealistic" to more accurately reflect the original statement.*

Just like the error in explaining the improved paraphrase for Student 1, the AI tool acknowledged its mistake and subsequently rectified the explanation following the author's clarification. The author's prompt and ChatGPT's response are shown below:

**Prompt: You contradict yourself as you did NOT use the word "unrealistic" in your suggestion to improve the answer.**

**Your improved paraphrase: "The statement suggests that it's not reasonable to expect people to be perfect, including ourselves."**

*ChatGPT: You are correct, I apologize for the confusion in my previous response. Thank you for pointing out the mistake.*

*Here is a simplified explanation for Student 3's paraphrase:*

*Student 3's paraphrase is mostly correct. The author is saying that it's not practical or realistic to expect people, including ourselves, to be perfect. However, the word "illogical" in the paraphrase is a bit stronger than "unrealistic" in the original statement. A better paraphrase would use the word "unrealistic" instead of "illogical" to match the original statement more closely. An improved paraphrase would be: "The statement suggests that it's not realistic to expect people, including ourselves, to be perfect."*

The above response demonstrates ChatGPT's willingness to acknowledge its errors and promptly rectify them, displaying its friendly disposition as a friendly virtual tutor (Qadir, 2022).

#### Providing Feedback: Student 4

The response of ChatGPT to the prompt, **"Student 4: It is impossible if we assume that we and the others have a perfection in life."** is as follows:

*Student 4's paraphrase is close, but it changes the meaning of the original statement slightly. Here are some suggestions to help the student improve their paraphrase:*

*Original statement: "It is unrealistic to expect perfection in ourselves as well as in others."*

*Improved paraphrase: "The statement suggests that it's not practical or realistic to expect people to be perfect, including ourselves."*

*Explanation of improvement:*

- 1. The original statement uses the word "unrealistic" to describe the idea of expecting perfection, whereas the student's paraphrase uses the word "impossible". While these two words are related, "unrealistic" is a more accurate choice in this context because it conveys the idea that expecting perfection is not grounded in reality.*
- 2. The student's paraphrase implies that perfection is an assumption, but the original statement does not suggest this. Rather, it simply says that expecting perfection is not realistic. Therefore, the*



*improved paraphrase removes the phrase "if we assume that we and the others have perfection in life" to maintain the original meaning.*

*Overall, it's important to pay close attention to the original statement and convey its intended meaning accurately when paraphrasing.*

ChatGPT's ability to provide feedback on the accuracy, clarity, and originality of the paraphrase by Student 4 as well as to suggest ways for improvement are clearly demonstrated in its response. Getting feedback within a few seconds makes this AI tool a valuable 24/7 virtual tutor (Rudolph et al., 2023).

### Providing Feedback: Student 5

The last prompt, **“Student 5: Expecting perfection from ourselves and others is unnecessary.”** produced the following response:

*Student 5's paraphrase is close to the original statement and is generally accurate. However, there is a small difference in meaning between the two statements. Here are some suggestions to help the student improve their paraphrase:*

*Original statement: "It is unrealistic to expect perfection in ourselves as well as in others."*

*Improved paraphrase: "The statement suggests that it's not necessary to expect people to be perfect, including ourselves."*

*Explanation of improvement:*

- 1. The original statement uses the word "unrealistic" to describe the idea of expecting perfection, whereas the student's paraphrase uses the word "unnecessary". While these two words are related, "unrealistic" is a more accurate choice in this context because it conveys the idea that expecting perfection is not grounded in reality.*
- 2. The student's paraphrase accurately captures the idea that expecting perfection is unnecessary, but it doesn't fully capture the idea that expecting perfection is also not practical or realistic. Therefore, the improved paraphrase adds the word "realistic" to maintain the original meaning.*

*Overall, the student's paraphrase is on the right track, and with a minor adjustment, it can accurately convey the meaning of the original statement.*

ChatGPT repeated the same error in its explanation, falsely claiming the inclusion of the word 'realistic' in the improved version when it was absent. Upon the author's intervention and clarification of this mistake (**You again incorrectly stated that the word "realistic" was used in the improved version.**), the chatbot produced an alternative improved version, as demonstrated below:

*I apologize for the mistake in my previous response. You are correct that the word "realistic" was used in the original statement, not in the improved paraphrase. Here is an updated response:*

*Student 5's paraphrase is generally accurate, but there is a slight difference in meaning between the two statements. The original statement suggests that it's not realistic to expect perfection from ourselves and others, while the student's paraphrase focuses on the idea that it's unnecessary to expect perfection.*



*To improve the paraphrase, the student could incorporate the idea of it being unrealistic to expect perfection. Here is one possible improved version: "The statement implies that it's not realistic to expect perfection from ourselves or others, and that it's important to recognize that we all make mistakes and face challenges."*

Upon meticulous evaluation, it is evident that both improved paraphrases are unsatisfactory.

The original sentence:

It is unrealistic to expect perfection in ourselves as well as in others.

Improved paraphrase - initial version:

The statement suggests that it's not necessary to expect people to be perfect, including ourselves.

Improved paraphrase - subsequent version:

The statement implies that it's not realistic to expect perfection from ourselves or others, and that it's important to recognize that we all make mistakes and face challenges.

In the initial version, the word "unrealistic" was inaccurately substituted with 'not necessary,' conveying a different meaning. In the subsequent version, the initial portion of the sentence closely mirrored the original text, potentially constituting patchwriting (Howard, 1995).

### Generating Patchwriting

During a prompt instructing ChatGPT to paraphrase the same original sentence (**How would you paraphrase the original statement?**), the AI tool once again generated instances of patchwriting, observable in two out of the five versions as shown beneath:

*Here are a few possible paraphrases of the original statement "It is unrealistic to expect perfection in ourselves as well as in others":*

- *It's not reasonable to demand perfection from ourselves or others.*
- *We shouldn't expect ourselves or others to be perfect.*
- *Perfection is an unattainable goal for both ourselves and others.*
- *It's unrealistic to expect flawless performance from ourselves and those around us.*
- *Neither we nor others can realistically achieve perfection, so it's not fair to expect it.*

It is evident from the above response that ChatGPT is not infallible, and students who use this tool for paraphrasing may unknowingly engage in patchwriting. Current research supports the idea that ChatGPT can make mistakes or provide incorrect answers (Vincent, 2022). Therefore, students should carefully review and verify the generated responses for inaccuracies and seek clarification from the chatbot if necessary.

When queried about these unfair paraphrases (**Aren't the 1st and 4th paraphrases too close to the original text and considered patchwriting?**), ChatGPT generated another five versions of acceptable paraphrases as follows:





*You are correct that the first and fourth paraphrases I provided may be considered too close to the original statement and could be seen as patchwriting. While they are not identical to the original statement, they do share similar structures and phrasing.*

*To avoid patchwriting, it's important to rephrase the original statement using your own words and sentence structures. Here are some additional paraphrases of the original statement that might be less susceptible to patchwriting:*

- *Perfection is an unattainable ideal for both ourselves and others, so it's unfair to expect it.*
- *It's unrealistic to demand flawless performance from ourselves and those around us, since we all make mistakes.*
- *Neither we nor others can realistically achieve perfection, so we should strive for progress instead.*
- *Accepting imperfection in ourselves and others is a more realistic and healthy approach than expecting perfection.*

*Trying to attain perfection in ourselves and others is futile, so we should focus on doing our best instead.*

Overall, ChatGPT demonstrated its capability to provide meaningful and personalised feedback to students who are struggling with paraphrasing. Its ability to improve ineffective paraphrases and explain the changes made can be particularly beneficial for students who need guidance on how to improve their paraphrasing skills. ChatGPT also exhibited the quality of a good tutor by not only encouraging students to practise paraphrasing, but also by inviting them to seek further clarification if needed. This feature can be particularly beneficial for ESL learners, who may struggle with complex language and terminology.

While it appears that ChatGPT has the potential to be a virtual paraphrase tutor, it is crucial for students to prompt ChatGPT correctly in order to receive optimal assistance (Qadir, 2022). Additionally, it is worth noting that ChatGPT is not flawless and may make errors (Ortiz, 2022; Rudolph et al., 2023; Tung, 2022). Therefore, students should approach its responses with caution and apply critical thinking when utilizing the tool. In cases where further clarification is needed, students should not hesitate to seek it out.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main objective of this study was to evaluate ChatGPT's ability to function as a tutor for paraphrasing. To assess the effectiveness of ChatGPT's feedback, the author engaged with the AI model for several days, utilizing real paraphrased examples from diploma students.

Based on the results obtained, ChatGPT demonstrated that it is a convenient and user-friendly tool for improving paraphrasing, an essential skill in academic writing. The finding that it is helpful for academic writing is consistent with recent research (Jabotinsky & Sarel, 2022; Rudolph et al. 2023; Sharples, 2022). ChatGPT can be an effective tutor for students to enhance their paraphrasing skills as it provides coherent and useful responses instantly and is able to identify acceptable and unacceptable paraphrases, providing clear explanations with relevant



examples for its responses.

In light of the findings, it is recommended that educators and students consider using ChatGPT as a tool to teach and learn paraphrasing. However, as noted by Jabotinsky and Sarel (2022) in order to obtain the correct answers, students must be able to write the right prompts. Therefore, it is essential to provide clear instructions on how to effectively use the tool and how to interpret the feedback provided. This will ensure that students understand how to effectively use ChatGPT to improve their paraphrasing skills.

While ChatGPT is a helpful learning aid, it may occasionally generate incorrect information (Ortiz, 2022; Qadir, 2022; Tung, 2022; Vincent, 2022). Students must be aware of its limitations such as generating improved paraphrases that constitute patchwriting and making mistakes in its explanations. Therefore, it is crucial for students to study the responses carefully and not accept the answers at face value. However, its saving grace is that ChatGPT can apologize and correct mistakes if they are pointed out.

In addition to its usefulness as a supplementary aid for paraphrasing instruction, the interactive and human-like nature of ChatGPT makes it an appealing tool for learners. By encouraging learners to practise paraphrasing and seek further clarification when necessary, ChatGPT promotes an interactive and personalized learning experience that is essential for ESL students to improve their language skills. According to Jabotinsky and Sarel (2022), ChatGPT's personalized and engaging activities have the potential to increase learning and retention.

As a valuable resource, ChatGPT should be used in an ethical and responsible manner. It is able to provide assistance to students to practise and improve their paraphrasing skills at their own pace and schedule. However, it is important to remember that while ChatGPT can provide guidance and effective feedback, it should be used with caution and in conjunction with human instructors or tutors.

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The author wrote this paper and used ChatGPT to help refine the final draft.

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