

# Supporting Non-Native-English Speaking Graduate Students with Academic Writing Skills: A Case Study of the Explicit Instructional Use of Paraphrasing Guidelines

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**Abstract:** In this study, we examined how the explicit instructional use of paraphrasing guidelines can help international graduate students who are non-native English speakers to paraphrase information in text sources. This case study involved 14 graduate students enrolled in an academic writing class at a university in the northwest United States. Data were collected through seven sources: a background questionnaire, video of instruction, pretest, posttest, student task documents, stimulated recall interviews, and teacher interviews, which together addressed the three research questions. The data show that the participants' perceptions of using the guidelines were positive and that their paraphrases in the posttest had improved according to the guidelines. The study concludes that the use of the guidelines should be accompanied by meaningful support through explicit instruction and sufficient practice over time. The implications of this study include recommendations for paraphrasing instruction and future research.

**Keywords:** paraphrasing, guidelines, explicit instruction, academic writing, NNES, graduate students



Yahia, I., & Egbert, J.L. (2023). Supporting NNES graduate students with academic writing skills: Explicit instructional use of paraphrasing guidelines. *Journal of Writing Research*, 14(3), 305-343. DOI: 10.17239/jowr-2023.14.03.01

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Paraphrasing skills are essential for non-native English speakers (NNEs) to have. (In this case, “non-native English speaker” means international students who grew up speaking a non-English language at home and learned English as part of their schooling in their home countries.) This is because these skills can enhance reading comprehension (Fisk & Hurst, 2003), develop critical thinking skills (Yamada, 2003), improve writing skills (McCarthy et al., 2009; Sedhu et al., 2013), and help to avoid plagiarism (Cortez-Vera et al., 2017; McInnis, 2009). However, learning and using paraphrasing skills can be problematic for NNEs (Abdulakareem, 2013; Chen, et al., 2015; Neumann et al, 2020; Shi, 2012).

Although scholars have explored NNEs’ ability to paraphrase, and some studies have focused on instruction and providing paraphrasing guidelines (e.g., Madhavi, 2013; Oda & Yamamoto, 2007), they did not provide a useable definition, detailed paraphrasing guidelines, or self-evaluation criteria that might help learners to understand and perform acceptable paraphrasing. In other words, there is still a dire need to find ways to help NNEs to improve their paraphrasing skills and learn how to construct acceptable paraphrases (Walsh Marr, 2019). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the instructional use of paraphrasing guidelines from Yahia’s (2020) pilot study. These explicit guidelines, when used with supportive instruction, have the potential to help NNEs to understand the complex process of paraphrasing and learn how to produce acceptable paraphrases within their own disciplinary writing. In addition, guideline use may help NNEs to recognize their challenges with paraphrasing and be able to use the proposed criteria to evaluate their own paraphrasing in context. To explore these possibilities, this case study first presents the literature on paraphrasing and paraphrasing instruction, followed by the theoretical framework and study methodology. Then, it explains study findings and interpretations, and finally presents conclusions and implications for teaching and future research.

## **1. Literature Review**

This literature review includes three sections; 1) literature on NNEs challenges with paraphrasing; 2) studies on teaching paraphrasing, and; 3) the evidence-based guidelines used in this study. This literature provides background for the study and explains the guidelines used as the framework for this study.

### **1.1 NNEs’ Challenges with Paraphrasing**

The amount of research on NNE paraphrasing is gradually increasing, and it reveals how NNEs paraphrase and what their challenges are. Overall, this literature provides evidence that many NNEs encounter difficulty creating acceptable paraphrases, and that the challenges that NNEs’ experience with paraphrasing are both linguistic and non-linguistic (Aleshinskaya & Kurnayev,

2021; Wette, 2010). The main linguistic challenges involve vocabulary and grammar usage; for example, vocabulary can be an obstacle for NNEs in terms of finding appropriate synonyms and using them correctly in the paraphrased text (Choy & Lee, 2012; Davis, 2013). This can be a serious issue for NNEs who come from cultures where there is heavy emphasis on memorization and copying (Ismail & Maasum, 2009), because they might memorize words from the original texts and present them as they are in their paraphrases (Liao & Tseng, 2010). Similarly, NNEs can face difficulty with making substantial changes to the grammatical structures in the original text (Choy & Lee, 2012; Liao & Tseng, 2010; Loh, 2013). For instance, they may find it difficult to change from passive to active voice or create a different sentence structure; they change only the words and keep the same structure (Ji, 2012). In addition, lack of sufficient language proficiency could also be a serious contributor to NNEs' challenges with vocabulary and grammar knowledge and usage (Johns & Mayes, 1990; Keck, 2014) and therefore in paraphrasing. However, Ferris and Eckstein (2020) note that any type of writing requires mastery of complex language usage and the ability to use it effectively. Therefore, NNEs need support to master these skills to be able to produce effective paraphrases.

One example of a non-linguistic challenge in paraphrasing is keeping the length of the original text in the paraphrase. Although the current literature on paraphrasing did not include studies about the length of paraphrases in particular, scholars such as Harshbarger (2012) note that keeping close to the length of the original text in the paraphrase is a critical non-linguistic challenge. This is because some NNEs may not differentiate between paraphrasing and summarizing, a more commonly taught skill. Because summaries tend to be shorter, students may condense the main ideas of the original text to paraphrase, but a paraphrase should be approximately the same length as or close to the original text (see, e.g., Purdue Online Writing Lab, 2022). Another non-linguistic challenge that NNEs may encounter is giving credit to the original authors (Davis, 2013; Liao & Tseng, 2010), especially since many definitions of paraphrasing do not address the importance of citing (Yahia, 2020). Any or all of the issues might create a challenge for NNEs when they try to paraphrase.

NNEs may also struggle with paraphrasing because there is no agreed-upon definition of an "acceptable paraphrase" (Mori, 2018; Schwabl et al, 2013), and this can result in a lack of standard paraphrasing evaluation criteria (Kim, 2018). Further, scholars have different views on the number of words in a string that can be used directly from the original passage in the paraphrased text (e.g., Howard, 1995; Keck, 2006; Shi, 2004). Their suggestions range between two and five words. To add to the confusion, teachers may post their own guidelines on the Internet, and academic institutions often provide students with different guidelines for

paraphrasing (Yamada, 2003). In addition, writing style guides and publication manuals may offer yet other sets of guidelines (see, e.g., Purdue Online Writing Lab, 2022). This inconsistency in paraphrasing guidelines could create confusion among NNEs about which guidelines they should follow and how they should use them.

Consequently, NNEs may find rephrasing text information a daunting task and rely only on strategies such as adding, deleting, replacing, or substituting words (Choy & Lee, 2012; Ruslan et al, 2020; Liao & Tseng, 2010). These strategies do not generally result in acceptable paraphrases and might lead to unintentional plagiarism (McInnis, 2009; Shi et al., 2018; Wette, 2010). Therefore, NNEs, especially those who prefer to learn inductively (rules first), may need detailed paraphrasing guidelines and direct, explicit instruction on how to paraphrase.

## 1.2 Studies of Teaching Paraphrasing Skills to NNEs

As noted above, previous studies have provided evidence that NNEs struggle to produce acceptable paraphrases (see, e.g., Aleshinskaya & Kurnayev, 2021; Hirvela & Du, 2013; Keck, 2014; Wette, 2010). While some academic writing books address paraphrasing as a separate, reading and writing skill, most lump it in with instruction on summary (such as Swales & Feak, 2004) or do not treat it explicitly or with the detail that NNEs may need (such as Efron & Ravid, 2019). To help NNEs to develop their paraphrasing skills, Keck (2006), Liao and Tseng (2010), Odean (1987), and Wette (2010) suggested teaching paraphrasing directly. Focusing on the overall ideas of paraphrasing across groups and disciplines might help NNEs to understand paraphrasing in both a broader and deeper sense. However, detailed research on teaching paraphrasing to NNEs is still scarce; few studies have explored the influence of paraphrasing instruction on students' paraphrasing, and even most recent studies analyze student products with little to no details on any instruction (e.g., Mariani et al., 2021). For example, McDonough et al. (2014) examined three sets of summaries written by 46 undergraduate Thai students majoring in different disciplines and studying English as a foreign language (EFL). The teacher presented four paraphrasing strategies: two strategies for implementing lexical changes (e.g., "changing the part of speech or using synonyms" [p.23]) and two strategies for changing syntax (e.g., "moving phrases, dividing or combining sentences" [p.23]). The teacher also used follow-up activities such as selecting the most adequate paraphrase. The participants took a pretest, received explicit instruction, and then took an immediate posttest and a delayed posttest. The results revealed that explicit instruction helped the participants to include citations in their paraphrases and to copy fewer words in strings, and they became more aware of changing the vocabulary in the original text. However, no information was provided on how the instructor presented these strategies, what examples the instructor used, or how the participants

received explicit instruction on paraphrasing; this information may be vital for other instructors wanting to teach paraphrasing effectively.

Another study with NNEs examined their perceptions of paraphrasing instruction. Choy and Lee (2012) conducted a pretest/posttest study to elicit the perceptions of 22 Malaysian participants enrolled in a two-year diploma program about their learning of summary skills, including paraphrasing, and their ability to use those skills in their writing. The participants had 10 weeks of instruction on paraphrasing and summary skills, after which a posttest was administered. The results showed that only 36% of the participants found paraphrasing instruction helpful. However, no description of the instructional context was provided to show how the instruction was implemented.

Further, Liao and Tseng (2010) investigated the perceptions and paraphrasing skills of 57 undergraduate students majoring in English and 38 graduate students in an English teaching program in Taiwan. Participants carefully read a passage and then selected two paragraphs to paraphrase (the meaning of difficult words was included at the bottom of the reading passage). After the participants completed the paraphrasing task, they answered a questionnaire to express their perceptions and their understanding of paraphrasing and plagiarism. The authors attributed the participants' deficiencies in paraphrasing to the lack of explicit instruction on paraphrasing and citation.

Some scholars, (see, for example, Eckstein et al., 2018), provide additional evidence that teaching writing to NNEs necessitates explicit teaching of language aspects and offering scaffolding. Unfortunately, as noted above, there are only a few studies that focus on teaching paraphrasing directly, and many only include students' products or perceptions of paraphrasing (see, for example, Aleshinskaya & Kurnayev, 2021; Zhang, 2020); the results of these studies are varied. In addition, in these studies, paraphrasing instruction was integrated with summary skills. Mastering two difficult skills at the same time might be more challenging for NNEs. However, these studies have revealed that explicit teaching of paraphrasing can be effective, and it may even be necessary to help students to produce acceptable paraphrases (Academic Skills Office, 2021; Harshbarger, 2012).

## **2. Paraphrasing Guidelines**

Overall, it appears that NNEs need clear, thorough guidelines and supportive instruction to overcome their paraphrasing challenges. One recent pilot study by Yahia (2020) explored this assertion by developing comprehensive and specific paraphrasing guidelines from the existing literature (e.g., Madhavi, 2013; Purdue Online Writing Lab, 2022) and describing and exemplifying them based on both expert and student input. Because these guidelines integrate ideas from across the

literature, they provide a useful foundation for research on paraphrasing. Figure 1 proposes three stages for instruction on paraphrasing that include a clear definition, explicit guidelines, and questions for evaluation. These are described below.

UNDERSTANDING STAGE	PRODUCTION STAGE	EVALUATION STAGE
Definition	Steps	Checklist
<p>An acceptable paraphrase is a new version of a text based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understanding the original text,</li> <li>▪ Making relevant and sufficient changes to the commonly used key words,</li> <li>▪ Fitting the new words into correct grammatical structures and organization, while keeping the meaning and author's attitude from the original text.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Read the original text several times. Use what you already know about the topic and any available resources to understand the meaning of the original text. (e.g., use dictionary, YouTube, search Google to know the meaning of the vocabulary and become familiar with the topic of the original text).</li> <li>▪ Include all the main points from the original text that you are paraphrasing. (e.g., ideas or thoughts)</li> <li>▪ Use appropriate synonyms for the author's commonly used key words in order to keep the author's view or opinion or attitude. (e.g., He is a hard-working student can be paraphrased as he is known as a diligent student.)</li> <li>▪ Change the grammar of the original text by using a different structure and make the necessary changes that the new structure requires. (e.g., He likes playing football can be paraphrased as Playing Football is a favorite sport for him).</li> <li>▪ Avoid having 3-4 words from the original text unchanged because it is considered plagiarism.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Did I understand the original text? Was the text familiar to me?</li> <li>▪ Did I include all the main points from the original text?</li> <li>▪ Did I use the appropriate synonyms of the author's commonly used key words? Did I keep the view or opinion or attitude of the author?</li> <li>▪ Did I change the grammar of the original passage?</li> <li>▪ Did I avoid having 3-4 unchanged words?</li> <li>▪ Did I use quotations for the words I want to keep from the original text?</li> <li>▪ Did I use the same technical words from the original text because they cannot</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use quotation marks for the author's words if there is a necessity to keep them in the paraphrased text.</li> <li>▪ Use technical terms from the original passage that are context-specific and cannot be changed or have a synonym.</li> <li>▪ Your paraphrase should be about as long as the original passage.</li> <li>▪ Cite your paraphrased text according to the reference style you are required to use.</li> </ul>	<p>be changed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Did I keep the length of my paraphrase as long as the original text?</li> <li>▪ Did I cite the paraphrased text according to the reference style I am required to use?</li> </ul>
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Figure 1. Paraphrasing Guidelines (Yahia, 2020).

**Stage 1: Understanding.** The first stage of the paraphrasing guidelines in Figure 1 presents a procedural definition of paraphrasing synthesized from the literature. This definition uses accessible, common language to help NNESs to understand that paraphrasing is a complex process that involves a number of alterations to make a paraphrase acceptable. This definition is practical because it indicates both what paraphrasing is and the general steps for doing it effectively.

**Stage 2: Production.** Some instructors provide students with specific formulas for paraphrasing (Loh, 2013), such as changing numbers (e.g., “there were 90 students in the class” is paraphrased to “there were fewer than 100 students in the class”) or years (e.g., “the accident happened in 2010” is paraphrased to “the accident happened before 2011”) or active to passive (“they ate the cookies” is paraphrased to “the cookies were eaten by them”). However, every text can be paraphrased in many acceptable ways, and every original text is unique in its own structure, vocabulary, and meaning (Coxhead & Byrd, 2007). To help NNESs to paraphrase effectively, it may be more useful for them to follow steps that can be used across texts. In the second stage in Figure 1, the guidelines provide steps that break down the complexity of paraphrasing and explain to writers how the linguistic components of paraphrasing work together. While following these steps, NNESs can use their knowledge about vocabulary, grammar, and semantics, along with their writing skills, to paraphrase. During the process, NNESs can report what kind of challenges they face and what kind of scaffolding they perceive that they need based on the guidelines. Further, if learners have the chance to work with peers on guideline use, this may help to point out where additional work is needed.

**Stage 3: Evaluation.** There are many different paraphrasing evaluation criteria suggested by teachers and researchers (see, for example, Chen et al., 2015; Kim, 2018). However, there is no agreement on standard criteria accepted among these researchers and instructors (Kim, 2018). Therefore, the guidelines in Figure 1 include evaluation criteria based on the understanding and production stages of the paraphrasing guidelines. Following the evaluation questions helped Yahia's (2020) participants to self-evaluate their paraphrasing. Additionally, these guidelines can help teachers to provide feedback on their students' paraphrases.

### 3. Research Questions

To fill the gaps in the literature mentioned previously and understand more about the outcomes of paraphrasing instruction, the paraphrasing guidelines described above are used as a framework for this study, which asks:

1. How does graduate NNEs' paraphrasing change after explicit instruction on using paraphrasing guidelines?
2. What challenges do graduate NNEs perceive that they face with written paraphrasing after being instructed on the use of paraphrasing guidelines?
3. After explicit instruction, how do the instructor and graduate NNEs perceive the guideline instruction and use?

### 4. Methodology

This research took the form of a small-scale case study, because as Yin (2012) states, case studies can provide rich descriptions of the participants involved and therefore involve deep understanding. The boundary of this case was an academic writing class in the College of Education at a university in the northwest United States. In this research, the use of case study allowed for in-depth analysis of each participant's experience with paraphrasing instruction and guideline use. It also supported uncovering patterns across the data, which helped both to describe themes and establish construct validity (Trochim, 2022).

#### 4.1 Participants

Nine male and five female international student NNEs participated in the study. (Caveat: the student from Puerto Rico is legally an American; however, the student's first/home language is Spanish).

Students were not required to participate in the study and did not suffer any penalties if they chose not to. Of 15 NNEs in the class, one male student chose not to participate for reasons unknown. The participants were from different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds: China (2), Indonesia (1), Iran (1), Malaysia (1), Mexico (1), Puerto Rico (1), Saudi Arabia (6), Thailand (1). Participants spoke



Chinese, Indonesian, Farsi, Malaysian, Spanish, Arabic, and Thai as their first languages. The class was offered in the College of Education, although it was open to any graduate student at the university because it was not based on any specific disciplinary content and students worked with their own topics. The participants were all doctoral students. 12 participants were studying in the College, while the two from outside of the College of Education majored in Anthropology and Business.

The participants were enrolled in a required 3-credit course, held face-to-face in Spring 2020 for three hours per week, that was designed to support graduate students in the College of Education with their academic writing skills, including paraphrasing. The students were selected for this research because they were studying written paraphrasing skills as a component of the class. The only difference in instruction for non-education participants was the citation system that they used (i.e., Chicago Style).

The instructor (second author) was a full professor in the College of Education whose expertise was in English language learning. She had taught paraphrasing skills to NNES graduate students in the same course for several years and prior to that in English language writing courses for many years. She was familiar with student requirements and their needs and abilities, having worked with some of the participants previously. She explained to the participants the confidentiality of their data, provided study information to avoid any confusion or misunderstanding and also obtained student consent. The instructor of the writing class also participated in implementing and evaluating the guidelines and students' paraphrases before and after instruction.

#### **4.2 Data Sources and Analysis**

The researcher and the instructor had several meetings to develop instructional ideas to use the guidelines before they were introduced in the face-to-face class. The final instructional plan was to conduct a pretest at the end of the Week 7 class session, practice using the guidelines during the three-hour Week 8 class, and conduct the posttest at the end of the Week 9 class. One class session was the regularly allotted time for addressing paraphrasing directly during the 16-week course.

Data were collected over two and a half class periods from seven sources: a background questionnaire, video record of instruction, pretest and posttest, student task documents, stimulated recall student interviews, and teacher interviews, which together addressed the three research questions. These data sources are described below in the order in which the data were collected.

### ***Background questionnaire***

The instructor distributed a background questionnaire to the participants through the course's online platform before paraphrasing instruction started. Along with collecting demographic information, this questionnaire asked six open-ended questions about the participants' backgrounds in learning paraphrasing, including their understanding, strategies, and evaluation of paraphrasing. The researcher (first author) analyzed these data using thematic analysis (Peel, 2020; Roberts et al., 2019). She read and organized each participant's background data individually and then compared the data for similarities and differences across participants.

The data showed that nine participants had studied English for ten years or less, while five had more than ten years of English learning. While two participants reported that they learned paraphrasing in their native language, two were not sure if they had learned about it. The rest of the participants confirmed that they had never learned paraphrasing in their native language, and they learned it only when they started their education in the U.S. In addition, the background data revealed the paraphrasing strategies the participants said they used to paraphrase a text; all of them said they did not follow certain steps or have a checklist. The participants also did not realize that they used strategies, but they differed on how they said they paraphrased. For example, one student mentioned that he did not know how to paraphrase; another student stated clearly that he summarizes and rewrites the text. Still another participant said that he translates the text into his native language first and then paraphrases it. Although the rest of the participants mentioned different strategies such as reading the passage, changing the words, and identifying the grammatical parts of the passage, their answers underscore that they had not received explicit instruction on paraphrasing and did not have clear paraphrasing steps to follow or criteria to evaluate their paraphrase.

### ***Pretest and Posttest***

The participants took the pretest in Week 7 before they received explicit instruction in Week 8. The participants paraphrased three passages selected by the instructor and the researcher from the class textbook, Egbert and Sanden (2015; see Appendix A for the test questions). These passages were similar in writing style and content to what the students were studying in their class, but they were taken from chapters that they had not seen yet. The instructor and researcher individually read the participants' paraphrases and evaluated them according to the evaluation criteria in column three of Figure 1. Each paraphrase was assigned "Acceptable" or "Not Acceptable" on each of the criteria. Then, the researcher and the instructor met to compare their ratings, calculate interrater reliability, and reconcile to agreement. Their initial interrater reliability on the participants' 42 paraphrases was 85%. After thorough discussion, the ratings of all of the data were reconciled to 100%.

In the posttest immediately after the end of the class sessions under study (Week 9), the participants paraphrased the same three passages as in the pretest in order to provide data on whether and how the participants' paraphrasing changed after instruction. In order to minimize the effects of using a repeated measure, the students completed the paraphrases by hand rather than digitally and the participants had no access to their pretest products after their completion. Further, the tasks and time intervening between pretest and posttest helped to lessen the chance that participants had memorized the passages. The posttest paraphrases were evaluated in the same way as the pretest. The initial interrater reliability on the participants' 42 paraphrases was 81%. After thorough discussion, the ratings of all of the data were reconciled to 100%. The data from the evaluation of both the pretest and posttest were then organized according to each criterion. The researcher and instructor compared the answers for each criterion found on the pretest and posttest to see trends in whether and how the students' performance changed. In complement to individual student data, these patterns provided support for more general interpretations that can be evaluated across different contexts in future research.

#### ***Video record of instruction***

All instruction was recorded through Zoom (Zoom Video Communications, 2011) as a regular part of the class. These data were collected in this study to capture details in the natural setting of the class (Jewitt, 2012) that might otherwise be missed or misremembered with simple observation or field notes. The researcher watched the recordings and made notes as needed to verify how the paraphrasing guidelines were implemented, the class interaction around paraphrasing, and how the students used the guidelines to paraphrase.

#### ***Student task documents***

In addition to their regular writing tasks, the students practiced paraphrasing five passages during Weeks 8 and 9 of the course. The five different passages were taken from a variety of websites addressing a range of topics with which all of the students would be familiar. These different passages were selected to ensure that the students could paraphrase outside of the textbook and to give them something closer to their fields of study. The instructor hoped to avoid the problem that Bouma's (2020) NNES students had of not completely understanding the original source. The researcher collected the students' documents of the second and fifth passages to note the process students were using.

### ***Teacher interviews***

The researcher recorded and took notes during 13 meetings with the instructor, which addressed both content and process (decision-making) aspects of the guidelines and their implementation. The duration of these interviews was between five and 26 minutes. The researcher transcribed the interviews and categorized them. Based on thematic analysis, these categories included “students’ actual paraphrasing” and “current and future modification of paraphrasing guidelines.” The data from the instructor’s interviews demonstrate how the instructor perceived the process and the outcomes of the instruction. In addition, they showed how the instructor played a vital role in evaluating and refining the guidelines.

### ***Stimulated recall interviews***

Polio et al. (2006) state that stimulated recall interviews can be conducted by using a stimulus or showing students a video or a text to trigger their thinking about the task. After the posttest, the researcher used stimulated recall to interview 13 participants over the next three days. Only one student was not willing to participate in the interview, although he performed all the other study-related requirements. Each interview lasted for approximately 30 minutes and used students’ posttest products to help the participants to recall how they approached paraphrasing. The researcher asked open-ended questions based on their practices in the class and the posttest products, such as “What were your challenges when you were paraphrasing these passages?” (see Appendix B for the interview protocol). The researcher listened to each interview multiple times and coded participant responses based on the research questions and the paraphrasing guidelines. The researcher used thematic analysis to organize the codes under categories such as “using paraphrasing guidelines,” “paraphrasing strategies,” and “linguistic challenges.” After coding all of the data, the researcher and instructor reviewed and collated the data across the participants to identify trends and patterns in student performance that helped interpret the data in more general ways and suggest trends that inform the study implications.

## **5. Findings and Interpretations**

In this section we describe the instructional context and process of the paraphrasing instruction, and then we present the study findings in the order of the research questions. Because the paraphrasing definition and guidelines used in this study are a summary of the existing research, the findings are interpreted based on this framework and the literature upon which it is based.

### 5.1 Paraphrasing Instruction

Understanding the instructional context helps to explain in part the outcomes of this study. Over the three class sessions, students participated in 6.5 hours of face-to-face work with paraphrasing. Outside of class they also had several readings to complete. During classes, the instructor provided the students with instruction in paraphrasing as an explicit skill and presented the paraphrasing guidelines in detail. After the participants took the pretest at the end of class in Week 7, the instructor assigned them to read several brief online texts about paraphrasing and plagiarism.

In Week 8, the instructor and students spent the three-hour class session addressing paraphrasing in several ways. First, they discussed the concept of paraphrasing. The instructor asked questions to establish the students' current knowledge of paraphrasing: "What is paraphrasing?" "Why do we paraphrase?" and "How do we paraphrase?" The data from the video recordings showed that some of the students answered the instructor's questions and asked their own. Student answers included "to avoid plagiarism/ showing understanding," "to explain common knowledge," and "to condense." The instructor wrote all the students' definitions of paraphrasing on a small white board, including "using your own words, restatement/ rewriting/ integrating others' ideas/ digest the idea." After the definitional discussion, the instructor had the students help her to explain the introduction and four statements in the definition of paraphrasing to ensure that the students understood the concepts involved. Then, she handed out copies of the guidelines and went through them, explaining every step thoroughly and providing examples for each step. When she completed explaining all the steps, the instructor asked the class to paraphrase a passage about the Coronavirus (Covid-19) together. In this practice, the instructor and the whole class found synonyms and changed the structure of the original passage and discussed the appropriateness of the synonyms. Then, the instructor asked the students to work on the second practice passage about agriculture in pairs for about ten minutes. Each pair looked through the guidelines and discussed how to apply them to paraphrase the passage. The instructor and class discussed the students' answers according to the guidelines in the production stage of Figure 1 and created a "group" paraphrase from those that the students had done.

At the end of the Week 8 class, the instructor felt that the students had not yet met the objectives for understanding and creating paraphrases effectively and decided that more time was needed (even though other topics were already planned for future class sessions). Therefore, she assigned three more short readings for students based on the questions that they had asked. After teaching the paraphrasing guidelines during this class session, the instructor also noticed the need for more specificity in some of them, so she worked with the researcher to make minor revisions to the guidelines (discussed further below and presented

in Appendix C) and handed out the more detailed guidelines during the Week 9 class.

In the three hours of the Week 9 class, the instructor started by explaining the differences between paraphrasing and summarizing, because some students asked her to give them more information about the differences. For the rest of the class session, instruction included direct instruction, modeling, group practice, pair practice, and individual practice. For example, regarding grammar changes, the instructor explained to the students the different types of English sentence structures, including simple, compound, and complex, and she gave an example for each type. Then, she showed them how to change the structure in multiple examples. When discussing synonyms, she explained in detail how to figure out a correct synonym for the words in the original text. During the explanations, participants were asking and answering questions and taking notes on their guideline handouts, as the instructor recommended. Subsequently, they started to practice with another three passages; these passages were not specific to the field of writing, with topics such as autism employed to provide a wider range of experience for the participants. Participants practiced paraphrasing two of these passages as a whole class; Then, the instructor asked them to paraphrase another passage in pairs and then to peer review each other's work using the paraphrasing criteria included in the guidelines. The posttest was conducted at the end of this class session.

Overall, despite the relatively short time spent implementing these guidelines, the video data show that the students were processing the guidelines through asking questions, writing notes on their handouts, asking even more questions, and offering solutions, especially during group practice. No data about the depth of processing were collected, but this might be a useful focus for future research.

While the instructor continued to address paraphrasing in participants' individual written work as needed after the study period, no further data were collected. After the Week 9 class, the instructor reflected that it might have been more helpful if the students had had more time to practice using the guidelines to see how their performance changed over time, but that the course curriculum would not allow more whole group time. Both the instructor and the researcher reflected that it might have been informative if the students had an additional paraphrasing task and were allowed to use resources as they naturally might. The instructor said she might change this the next time the course was offered.

## **5.2 Changes in Participant Paraphrasing after Explicit Instruction**

Results in answer to the first research question are presented in this section. First, a participant pretest and posttest example is included for each criterion, provided verbatim; the original passages can be found in Appendix A. The example is followed by a frequency table with changes from pretest to posttest with an

explanation. The tables are used to show the findings for all of the paraphrasing criteria from Figure 1 except for *Criterion 1* (“Read the original text several times”), which is not observable from students’ paraphrases. Each table includes the number of participants performing the criterion in either all three of their paraphrases, only two paraphrases, one paraphrase, or none of them. All of the participants’ products were single drafts, and each criterion was assessed separately from the other criteria to provide an in-depth picture of the outcomes. Overall, the participants showed some improvement in the posttest, as would logically be expected as a result of instruction.

***Criterion 2: Included all the main points from the original text.***

The following example shows Student 12’s performance in including all the main points from the original text for pretest passage 1:

Pretest paraphrase:

Egbert & Sanden (2015) emphasize the importance of checking a target journal submission requirement.

Posttest paraphrase:

When submitting articles for publication, Egbert & Sanden (2015) highly recommend checking the intended journal submission specifications to ensure all requirements are met, particularly since many publishers have calculated word limits for article submissions. Abstracts are usually one paragraph long (150-300 words) and have five to ten sentences, although these figures may vary.

In the posttest, this participant included all of the ideas in the three passages, whereas he did not in the pretest; however, some of what he added was copied and pasted. During the interview, he said was summarizing in the pretest rather than paraphrasing. After instruction with the guidelines and additional instruction on the differences between paraphrasing and summarizing, he said that he became aware that all of the ideas should be included in the paraphrase. Keck (2006, 2014) also noted the distinctions between paraphrasing and summary, indicating that this student’s confusion was not unique and that paraphrasing instruction should address the differences.

The following table presents the participants’ overall performance in terms of including the main points in their paraphrases.

Table 1. Participant outcomes

	Included all the ideas in all three paraphrases	Included all the ideas in two paraphrases	Included all the ideas in only one paraphrase	Did not include all the ideas in any paraphrase
Pretest	2	3	4	5
Posttest	3	4	3	4

Table 1 shows that the participants' performance improved slightly in the posttest according to the evaluation. The numbers in the table show that there is a slight improvement in each category in terms of including all the ideas of the original passage. During the interviews, four participants said that they had a problem differentiating between paraphrasing and summarizing in the pretest, and this may have caused them to not include all of the main points there. One student claimed that in her first language there was not a word for paraphrasing, and that is where her confusion arose initially. This supports providing students with instruction on the differences between summary and paraphrase instead of conflating them as some of the research does (e.g., Choy & Lee, 2012), because otherwise instruction does not address the resulting challenge of this criterion on student paraphrasing outcomes.

***Criterion 3, Part 1: Used appropriate synonyms for the author's commonly used key words.***

The following example demonstrates how one participant used synonyms in passage 3 of the pre and posttest. The underlined words indicate similar words in the original and the paraphrase in the pretest.

Pretest paraphrase:

We have a chance to improve our title after manuscript is written. It is important to know that the judgement will be based on your concise and clear title. In addition, author should get the attention of his audience by great title.

Posttest paraphrase:

In spite of the fact that the title is found in the starting of the manuscript, we can improve it after the manuscript was written. Moreover, the title should be **short, interesting, and meaningful**.

In the pretest, this participant did not change the words "concise and clear." However, in the posttest, he replaced "concise" with "short," "inviting" with



“interesting,” and “clear” with “meaningful,” even without the use of extra resources. Table 2 demonstrates how the participants changed in their use of appropriate synonyms overall.

According to Table 2, there is an increase in the participants’ use of appropriate synonyms. Only three participants in the posttest, compared with 11 in the pretest, did not include appropriate synonyms in all three paraphrases. Even though the participants did not use any additional resources, they did better in the posttest. According to the interview data, 13 participants said that they became aware of changing all the words in the original text after the explicit instruction. Although Arizena & Mayasari (2021) and other researchers show that word choice/vocabulary is one of NNES’s main paraphrasing challenges, like in Madhavi (2013), explicit instruction appeared to influence student awareness and, in turn, their paraphrases.

Table 2. Participant outcomes

	Included appropriate synonyms in all three paraphrases	Included appropriate synonyms in two paraphrases	Included appropriate synonyms in only one paraphrase	Did not include appropriate synonyms in any paraphrase
Pretest	1	0	2	11
Posttest	5	3	3	3

***Criterion 3, Part 2: Kept the view or opinion or attitude of the author.***

The following example shows the participant performance in keeping the view of the original author in passage 3.

Pretest paraphrase:

Title should really explain the topic of manuscript which has to be specific, attractive, and able to read.

Posttest paraphrase:

Title should grab reader attention and summarize the manuscript ideas clearly and comprehensively. So that title mostly created or improved after writing the manuscript which located above that paper. It is sensitive because readers can decide when they read it if they want to continue reading or not.

In the pretest, this participant did not keep the meaning of the author because he missed other information and ideas from the text. Despite a number of continuing

problems with the paraphrase, after the use of and practice with the guidelines, this participant was able to include more information from the original text in the posttest.

Table 3 presents the pretest and posttest findings for how often the participants kept the author's view in the paraphrases. It shows that there was a minimal increase in keeping the view of the original author in the posttest. For instance, there was no participant who missed the view of the author in all of the passages. In other words, the participants appeared to be familiar with this aspect of paraphrasing; this implies that this may not need as much focus during direct instruction and practice.

Table 3. Participant outcomes

	Kept the view of the original author in all three paraphrases	Kept the view of the original author in two paraphrases	Kept the view of the original author in one paraphrase	Did not keep the view of the original author in any paraphrase
Pretest	3	8	2	1
Posttest	4	6	4	0

***Criterion 4: Changed the sentence structure of the original passage.***

In the following example, the participant integrates many of the guidelines in the posttest, including changing sentence structures from passage 2.

Pretest paraphrase:

An appendix section is there to provide readers context and other additional information related to the research.

Posttest paraphrase:

According to Egbert and Sanden (2015), authors do not need to include appendices at the end of their manuscript, but they can add those texts if they want to provide more information related to the manuscript. For this reason, some authors do not provide sufficient details or add more details than needed.

This participant used one simple sentence in the pretest and changed to complex sentences in the posttest. According to the interview data, 13 participants said that, before the instruction, they were not aware that the structure of the

sentences in the original text should be changed substantially to avoid too much similarity to the construction of the original author. This appears to show that the guidelines and instruction raised their awareness and ability to use the guidelines.

Table 4 provides information on how often the participants sufficiently changed the text structure (e.g., from simple to complex, and so on). It shows that there is an increase in the number of participants' changing sentence structure. The number of the participants who did not change the structure in any paraphrase decreased from six in the pretest to four in the posttest. In addition, the number of participants who changed the structure in all the paraphrases increased to six, compared with three in the pretest. While Bouma's (2020) students had problems changing sentence structure, the video data from the current study show that, after the instructor addressed this issue specifically, the students felt that they had a better grasp of what to do. So, while performance changed slightly, awareness appears to have changed considerably. As confirmed in Arizena and Mayasari (2021), additional practice and feedback may help participants to use this and other guidelines more readily.

Table 4. Participant outcomes

	Changed the structures of all three paraphrases	Changed the structures in two paraphrases	Changed the structures in one paraphrase	Did not change the structures in any paraphrase
Pretest	3	3	2	6
Posttest	6	2	2	4

***Criterion 5: Avoided having 3-4 unchanged words in a row.***

The following example shows how Student 5 addressed this criterion in pre and posttest passage 3. Underlines show word strings copied from the original text.

Pretest paraphrase:

Title is often developed after the manuscript is written. In order to inform the reader of the content and get the reader involved, the title must be concise, clear, and inviting to the reader (Egbert & Sanden, 2015).

Posttest paraphrase:

Egbert and Sanden (2015) stated that title is the very beginning part that the audience often see as well as how they judge the manuscript at first sight. The title should be accurate, easy to understand, and attractive. The title plays the

role of attracting the readers and helping them understand the manuscript at the same time.

In the pretest, most of Student 5’s paraphrase was copied directly from the original. This has changed to no copied strings in the posttest. Table 5 presents the data on word strings across all of the participants. This table shows that the participants’ outcomes on this criterion improved in the posttest. Eleven participants in the posttest avoided having three to four unchanged words in all three paraphrases, compared with four participants in the pretest. According to the interview data, 12 participants said that before the instruction they were not aware that borrowing a string of three to four words from the original text could result in an unacceptable paraphrase and might be considered an act of plagiarism. This result reinforces the importance of guidelines for these participants and the positive effects that Choy and Lee (2012) also found with their students.

Table 5. Participant outcomes

	Avoided 3-4 words in a row in all three paraphrases	Avoided 3-4 words in a row in two paraphrases	Avoided 3-4 words in a row in one paraphrase	Did not avoid 3-4 words in a row in any paraphrase
Pretest	4	5	2	3
Posttest	11	1	1	1

**Criterion 6: Used quotation marks for words taken directly from the original text.**

This criterion evaluates whether the participant used quotation marks to signify borrowed text.

Although this aspect of paraphrasing seemed to be less of an issue than some of the others initially, improvement was still shown. For example, in the posttest, one participant wrote:

Egbert & Sanden (2015) recommended that manuscript narratives convey the author’s message without requiring the use of appendices. Appendices are primarily meant to provide further details after explanations already in the narrative. The authors pointed out the frequent lack of detail about data source and data process and the excessive use of appendices to show “the what and the why.”

This student did not quote the original text except in the last phrase, to which he attached quote marks. However, because the students were not allowed to use resources other than the guidelines, students could not include page numbers in their pre and post paraphrases – this was an instructional oversight. Table 6 presents the overall outcomes for this criterion. It shows that the number of participants who used quotation marks for words taken directly from the original text increased to 11 participants. In addition, there was only one participant who did not use quotation marks for copied words in the posttest, compared with three in the pretest. In other words, students became less likely to copy directly from the original text without using quotes. In addition, the instructor’s explanation of quotation use in paraphrasing appears to have helped the students to become more aware of borrowing words from the original text.

Table 6. Participant outcomes

	Used quotation marks for the words taken directly from the original text in all three paraphrases	Used quotations for the words taken directly from the original text in two paraphrases	Used quotation marks for the words taken directly from the original text in one paraphrase	Did not use quotation marks for the words taken directly from the original text in any paraphrase
Pretest	6	4	1	3
Posttest	11	1	1	1

***Criterion 7: Used the same technical words.***

The example below demonstrates the performance of Student 11, who did not keep the most important “technical” word (appendices) in passage 2 in the posttest. The underlined word shows the word in the pretest paraphrase, but it was missed in the posttest.

Pretest paraphrase:

Data sources are important in research papers, some researchers miss that importance by not including enough details from their data. Enough appendices to the paper are to support the provided text. As a part of supporting the research paper is adding the important appendices to it.

Posttest paraphrase:

Including a fair amount of data sources in your paper can be important for the readers so they can have more explanation about the article or paper. In other

way, the paper can be understandable alone without these additional resources.

While this student seemed to understand in the posttest that changing words and word strings is important, she did not mention the focal topic of the original text in the posttest. This appears to be an over-application of the guidelines and could be an issue for others reading her text. More explicit instruction in the definition and examples of this guideline might have been useful for this student; as Liao and Tseng (2010) note, and logic dictates, students who have not had instruction in paraphrasing have a much harder time paraphrasing. Table 7 shows how all participants dealt with technical words across both tests. It shows that the students' performances were about the same in both the pretest and posttest. Most of the participants kept the technical words in both tests. According to the interview data, all of the students said that they were familiar with technical words in the passages related to research and academic writing because they had been taking research classes. However, the video data show that the participants were confused about which technical words they should keep in passages in unfamiliar disciplines.

Table 7. Participant outcomes

	Kept the technical words in all three paraphrases	Kept the technical words in two paraphrases	Kept the technical words in only one paraphrase	Did not keep technical words in any paraphrase
Pretest	14	0	0	0
Posttest	13	1	0	0

For example, it was easy for students from the Special Education major to point out the technical words in a passage about autism, although students from other disciplines found even a general message about it difficult. This confirms Kletzien's (2009) assertion that students who know something about the topic already will find it easier to paraphrase information about it. This finding suggests that both broader and more specific examples might help students to paraphrase both in their own and in other fields; for students who are required to take standardized tests, this ability can be essential.

***Criterion 8: Kept the text length about as long as the original text.***

Most online resources on paraphrasing state that paraphrases should be "the same length" or "approximately the same length" or "close to the same length" of

the source text (Academic Skills Office, 2021). However, they did not provide any exact length requirement. Therefore, we chose to quantify the degree to which the length of the paraphrase could differ to allow for objective, repeatable comparisons and help students to visualize what the paraphrase length should be. For the purposes of instruction, we designated paraphrases as keeping the appropriate length if they were within 90% of the length (word count) of the original passages. Participants said that they were not aware before instruction that a paraphrase should be about the same length as the original text. One student example demonstrates a change in awareness of this guideline:

Pretest paraphrase:

Egbert & Sanden (2015) emphasize the importance of checking a target journals' submission requirements.

Posttest paraphrase:

When submitting articles for publication, Egbert & Sanden (2015) highly recommend checking the intended journal's submission specifications to insure all requirements are met, particularly since many publishers have instituted word limits for article submissions. Abstracts are usually one paragraph long (150-300 words) and have five to ten sentences, although these figures may vary.

In the example above, the participant did not include all the ideas of the original author in the pretest, and therefore the paraphrase was too short. However, in the posttest, the participant provided more information, and therefore he was able to keep the length of the original text. However, this participant still had some issues with copying directly from the passage. This shows how the guidelines are related and suggests that it might be a useful to help students understand this overlap. Table 8 presents length differences between pretest and posttests for all participants.

*Table 8.* Participant outcomes

	Kept the length in all three paraphrases	Kept the length in two paraphrases	Kept the length in only one paraphrase	Did not keep the length in any paraphrase
Pretest	5	4	2	3
Posttest	4	1	4	5

The numbers in Table 8 show that the participants' outcomes did not improve on this criterion in the posttest. The participants were not able to keep 90% of the length of the original text. Nevertheless, it was important to draw the attention of the participants to the idea that there is a length requirement for their paraphrases and that it should approximate the original text. These data imply that more instructional attention and practice with this guideline is necessary; as Relia et al. (2021) found, students need exposure and more practice in paraphrasing to write effective paraphrases.

***Criterion 9: Cited the original.***

Finally, Table 9 shows the differences in using citations between the pre and posttest. It shows that the participants improved in their citation of the original author. However, this may be due to how the pre and posttests were presented. According to the interview data, all participants said that they thought they did not need to include the citation in the pretest because it was already present in the instructions, and one added that she did not add it because of time-pressure during the test.

*Table 9. Participant outcomes*

	Kept citation in all three paraphrases	Kept citation in two paraphrases	Kept citation in only one paraphrase	Did not keep citation in any paraphrase
Pretest	2	0	0	12
Posttest	6	1	3	4

Another participant stated that he was in a hurry to finish the tasks, so he forgot to include the citation. These data suggest not only that this guideline may need more emphasis, but that students need time to process and learn to use the guidelines, and this concurs with Choy and Lee's (2012) findings. Alternatively, it may be, as Bouma (2020) found, that students are already skilled at quoting and citing because this it is a focus of their home-country English instruction.

### **5.3 Student Participants' Perceptions of Challenges with Paraphrasing**

In answer to the second research question, the interview data showed that the participants were aware of many of their challenges with paraphrasing after the paraphrasing instruction and practice. Based on the guidelines, ten participants perceived that vocabulary selection and correct grammar usage were the most difficult challenges they faced; this agrees with the perceptions of the student participants in Harshbarger (2020). They explained that they had difficulty deciding



which synonyms worked best in a paraphrase. Even though 12 participants said that when trying to select correct synonyms they generally use different resources, such as online dictionaries, *Grammarly* (Grammarly, 2017), or asking a native speaker, they still encountered challenges to use the right wording. In other words, this was an issue for them whether or not they were allowed to use digital resources to help them to paraphrase. Their written paraphrases supported participants' perceptions that they encountered challenges with grammar usage, showing in particular problems with changing sentence structure while keeping the original point of the passage.

Further, participants said that they encountered challenges while trying to use the guidelines for paraphrasing. Based on the interview data and the outcomes of both tests, it appears that about all participants found some steps easy to adopt and follow, such as citation and using technical words, compared with the other steps. However, half of these participants still had actual issues with citation and using technical words. In addition, even though the participants' posttest outcomes showed improvement in including all the main ideas and keeping the view of the author, 12 of the interviewees said that they still had issues with these two steps. Further, in their paraphrases of the practice passages in the class, the participants noted they were confused about which words were "technical" (field-specific) since some of the practice passages were not from their discipline. In the interview, seven participants noted that "technical" words could be a challenge for them in texts from outside their own disciplines. Overall, as Madhavi (2013) found, NNEs can improve through instruction but may still need both additional instruction and ongoing practice.

One challenge noted in the interview data by three participants was using a pen and paper as the instructor requested for the pretest and posttest. They said that they are used to typing on a computer where they can add and delete easily. They stated that this difficulty affected their paraphrasing performance in both tests; this is a claim that is not supported by Harshbarger's (2020) findings but can be investigated in future research.

#### **5.4 Student and Teacher Perceptions of the Instructional Process**

In answer to the third research question, this section provides the students' and teacher's perceptions of the instructional process.

##### ***Students***

Students were positive about using the paraphrasing guidelines. In the interviews, for example, all of the participants described the paraphrasing guidelines positively, using words such as "organized," "helpful," "informative," "useful," "precise," and "concise" because the guidelines include clear steps that they can follow while paraphrasing. One participant said, "the guidelines are informative

for us, okay for me personally, because it is clear, they are informative because they say exactly what we need do and how to do it." Then, she said "it has a definition, and we can go back anytime and check if our product fit the definition or not." Another participant found the guidelines to be very helpful, so he sent a copy of the guidelines to his friend in his native country to use. In a slightly different take, one participant stated that it is beneficial to use and internalize the guidelines to start learning paraphrasing, but not to the extent that they would "kill our creativity in paraphrasing." In addition, two participants said the guidelines would be more helpful if they were short and each step included specific points because they found it hard to follow the long blocks of text such as those found in Steps 2 and 7. One participant recommended that teachers should use these guidelines in teaching paraphrasing starting at the high school level because they can show students the steps that lead to composing acceptable paraphrases. She added that, "paraphrasing is an ongoing process" and it should be practiced always; this is in keeping with Rossi's (2022) suggestion that paraphrasing be taught and receive feedback at all levels.

According to their responses in the interviews, all participants found working in pairs and groups helpful. They noted that pair work was beneficial and engaging because they learned from each other and expressed different perspectives regarding paraphrasing. For example, they all commented that working with a partner exposed them to other perspectives and enhanced their paraphrasing skills. One participant said, "I always enjoy working in group, you hear different ideas from different people from different backgrounds, definitely they support you when you do not understand, walk through the sentence and explain it in many ways." Another participant commented that he likes working in a group because he believes that "knowledge should be shared." However, one participant said that "it is good you have someone check your product, but it can slow the process."

Participants also felt that the instruction was useful. Six interviewees noted that, while they had internalized the guidelines and knew what to do, because of time restrictions they were not always able to show it in their paraphrases. However, while looking at their posttests during their interview, all of the participants were able to remember what they did in their paraphrases and were able to point out which words and structures they had borrowed directly from the original text. When reviewing their posttests, three participants were able to provide appropriate synonyms that they had not written in their paraphrases. In addition, one participant mentioned that keeping the view of the author was new to him and he found it important because he said that previously "I was adding my voice to my paraphrase." Overall, all of the interviewed participants expressed that they were happy to have the guidelines and specific instruction, and that,

while they knew they needed more practice, they thought that they had gained important knowledge through the process.

### ***Instructor***

The instructor's perceptions focused on the guidelines themselves and the format of the instruction. She played a major role in modifying the paraphrasing guidelines based on her notes, suggestions from research-based evidence, and observations she made of her students and their writing. For example, the researcher met with the instructor before the initial implementation of the guidelines to discuss how to present the guidelines and whether they were worded in ways that the focal students would understand. In the original version of the guidelines (Figure 1), the definition of paraphrasing, guidelines, and evaluation criteria were together. The instructor suggested presenting the handout with the definition and guidelines first, and then presenting evaluation criteria as a separate checklist after the students had practiced paraphrasing so that they would not be overwhelmed with information.

After working with the students during the guideline introduction and practice, the instructor perceived that some of the guidelines were not specific enough for her students to follow. Therefore, she asked the researcher to revise the wording and layout of those guidelines (as in Appendix C). For example, the instructor recommended breaking down "the commonly used words" guidance so the students could understand what this term implied. She also suggested modifications such as deleting the word "main" from guideline 2, which originally said, "included all main ideas," and changing it to "included all ideas." This was because the literature suggests that a paraphrase should contain the same content as the original, and the instructor did not want the students to get confused by which were main ideas and which were not. Furthermore, the instructor asked the researcher to provide a precise and specific definition of "technical" words because the instructor found what the researcher had written about technical words was not clear to the students. Similarly, the instructor questioned the precise percentage of the original phrase that constituted an acceptable length for the paraphrase. The instructor believed that this step would not be helpful for students unless they had a more specific number. The instructor suggested adding "within 90% of the original text" to the length requirement, based on guidance from online paraphrasing resources that she found. Therefore, the instructor's perceptions about teaching and using the guidelines helped to modify the definition and make the guidelines more specific, which she perceived would (and did) help her students.

Despite all the changes she suggested, the instructor expressed positive attitudes toward the guidelines and their use. She said that she found the guidelines effective and was happy with the feedback from the students. The

instructor mentioned several times that she found the steps helpful and relatively easy to teach because they break down the complexity of paraphrasing. Based on her teaching experience with these students, she said that her students like it when she breaks down the complexity of concepts and tasks. Overall, she perceived that both the guidelines and instructions were useful and that she would use them again with other students.

## **6. Methodological Limitations**

This study has a number of methodological limitations. One of these limitations is the small number of participants. However, the 14 participants provided rich data about how students use and react to the guidelines. Another limitation is the short course time dedicated to paraphrasing instruction and practice. This limitation, however, is based on the study occurring in a natural setting and could not be avoided. This also means that participants were not available to take a delayed posttest, which may have added useful information about transfer and/or retention of the guidelines and paraphrasing skills. A third limitation was not allowing the students to use resources such as a dictionary or their personal computers while paraphrasing in both the pretest and the posttest; they used only a hard copy of the guidelines for the posttest. This was because the instructor wanted to see how the students paraphrased without access to digital models or examples and to keep them from revisiting their products before the posttest. This also helped the participants and instructor to understand what challenges (e.g., grammar, vocabulary) participants had while using only their current knowledge. If the participants were given permission to use all the resources to check their synonyms or usage of grammar, possibly their outcomes would be different for both the pretest and posttest. Future research can address this issue.

## **7. Conclusions and Implications**

The findings of this study demonstrate that specific guidelines and direct instruction can help students to become aware of the specific challenges they face while paraphrasing, and explicit instruction can give them the information they need to improve their paraphrasing skills; this is in keeping with findings from Harshbarger (2020), Ji (2012), and others. In our study, the guidelines, including the definition and evaluation questions, appeared to raise the NNES students' awareness of what effective paraphrasing consists of, while the explicit instruction on paraphrasing steps showed them how to make appropriate textual changes while constructing their paraphrases. Further, the NNES students who participated in this study were able to identify their paraphrasing challenges by using the guidelines as a checklist. Consequently, the students who used the guidelines both improved some aspects of their paraphrasing performance and were

overwhelmingly positive in their responses to the information. The instructor was also positive about her experience incorporating the guidelines, as she perceived that they resulted in measurably improved paraphrasing skills among the NNES students during the course.

In spite of the overall positive results and perceptions of the paraphrasing guidelines and instruction, the outcomes indicate that, while some component skills involved in the process of paraphrasing showed improvement, others did not. On the positive side, instruction appeared to help the participants to learn to change all the words and sentence structures in the original text. In addition, the participants learned to recognize the difference between writing summaries and writing paraphrases. However, the guidelines and instruction seemed to be less effective at teaching the students how to include all the ideas of the original text and produce a paraphrase that was as long as the original text; perhaps this was because our evaluation of the appropriate length of the paraphrase was too strict. Alternatively, this reduced effectiveness for some students may indicate that the steps involved in retaining the original author's ideas and matching the original length were not given as much emphasis in the instruction as other facets of the guidelines. It might also be because retaining the original author's ideas is more abstract than many of the other guidelines. It could also stem from students' attitudes toward and ability in reading and writing in English, especially for NNESs, found to be important by Bouma (2020) and others. Future studies might collect such data to help explain student outcomes.

The continued difficulties the participants had with some of the paraphrasing guidelines serve to remind us that paraphrasing is indeed a complex process that can involve overlap among the different components (Bouma, 2020; Harshbarger, 2012). In other words, lack of one component can affect other components. For example, lack of including all the ideas in the original text can affect keeping the view of the author and matching the length of the original text. Another example is that the use of inappropriate synonyms and failure to change sentence structures appropriately can also affect maintaining the view of the author. Therefore, teachers may need to show students how this overlap can influence their paraphrases. In addition, evaluating students' paraphrases according to each criterion separately can provide an opportunity to closely explore how each component works and highlight relationships among the criteria. Overall, we agree with Mariani et al. (2021) that universities should pay more attention to paraphrasing support for students.

### **7.1 Teaching Implications**

This study has multiple teaching implications. It indicates that instructors teaching paraphrasing can:

- Focus on teaching the differences between paraphrasing and summary so that the distinctions are clear.
- Consider teaching paraphrasing guidelines explicitly rather than as part of summarizing as the literature indicates has often been done in the past.
- Provide students with examples to show them how the components of paraphrasing affect each other.
- Provide opportunities for students to learn from each other while working on a paraphrasing task.
- Provide students with sources or lists of technical words used in different disciplines to familiarize them with and enrich their knowledge about technical words.
- Make students aware of aspects of paraphrasing that can lead to plagiarism and possibly harsh penalties.
- Consider a wholistic evaluation of students' paraphrasing first, and then look for problems students have with using the guidelines.
- Reflect on the idea that, in order to promote social justice and equity in higher education and provide all students with access to the educational skills and tools they require, there is an urgent need to develop and follow a unified, practical, and accessible definition of paraphrasing.
- Provide clear paraphrasing guidelines to students to help them to avoid committing plagiarism, and to allow instructors to explore each case of supposed plagiarism with an outlook that considers student backgrounds, cultures, and previous learning.

## 7.2 Future Research

This study has numerous implications for future research. For example, studies can evaluate the guidelines used in this study in disparate writing contexts in order to refine them from different perspectives. In addition, to gain more information about students' ability to paraphrase, students can be given more paraphrasing tasks as well as the time to revise their paraphrases after expert evaluation. Further, to see how practice might influence students' performance, students can be given extensive paraphrasing training between the pretest and posttest. The impact of students' cultural and disciplinary backgrounds on their knowledge and skill in paraphrasing can also be studied. Another potential topic for future study is the transfer of the results of paraphrasing instruction and practice to students' writing for other classes. Finally, future research can examine how students' paraphrases might change if they are allowed to use digital resources. In other words, although we have found that explicit instruction and specific guidelines can be effective in helping NNES students learn to paraphrase effectively, more research is needed to find ways to help NNESs to improve their paraphrasing skills and learn how to construct acceptable paraphrases.

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### ***Appendix A: Pre/posttest***

#### **Paraphrasing**

*Instructions:* Paraphrase the following text excerpts using your current knowledge. The excerpts are taken from: Egbert, J., & Sanden, S. (2015). *Writing education research: Guidelines for publishable scholarship*. New York: Routledge

1. Abstracts are generally one paragraph (150-300 words) in length and consist of 5-10 sentences, although this is not a hard and fast rule. Many publishing outlets provide a set word limit for abstracts, and it is important for the author to check the submission requirements for the target journal in order to meet the requirements
2. Too often authors do not include enough detail for their data sources and process or include many appendices at the end of the paper that they expect will demonstrate the what and why. However, the manuscript narrative should be able to stand alone without the appendices; the purpose of the appendices is to add additional detail to the text's explanation.
3. Although the title is found at the beginning of a manuscript, it is often developed after the manuscript is written in order for it to accurately represent the content of the manuscript. Because it is the first part of the manuscript that readers and reviewers usually see, and by which the manuscript is often quickly judged, the title must be concise, clear, and inviting to the reader. The purpose of the title is not only to inform the reader of the content of the manuscript, but to draw the reader in.

## **Appendix B.** Stimulated Recall Interview Questions

Follow-up questions varied depending on participants' responses to the original questions and to the paraphrased texts.

1. What do you think about the guidelines?
2. What do you think about your products here? How do you perceive them?
3. What kind of challenges did you face while paraphrasing these passages?
4. What do you think about your paraphrase of [this specific passage]?
5. How do you confirm that your paraphrase is acceptable?
6. What resources do you use/ how do you help yourself to paraphrase?
7. Was the information in [these passages] familiar to you?
8. What do you think about working in pairs to paraphrase?
9. Did you find any issues with the guidelines? Are any unclear?
10. What challenges do you find with paraphrasing?
11. Did the passages seem familiar to you?
12. Is there anything else you want to add?

## **Appendix C.** More detailed guidelines

### **PARAPHRASING**

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#### **Definition**

An acceptable paraphrase is a new version of a text based on:

1. Understanding the original text,
2. Making relevant and sufficient changes to commonly used words,
3. Fitting the new words into different grammatical structures and organization while keeping the meaning and author's attitude from the original text.

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#### **Steps for Creating an Acceptable Paraphrase**

1. Read the original text several times. Use what you already know about the topic and any available resources to understand the meaning of the original text.
  2. In your paraphrase, include all the main points from the original text.
  3. Keep the view, tone, and attitude of the author of the original text.
  4. Use appropriate synonyms for all the verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, and nouns in the original text. Avoid having 3-4 unchanged words in a row.
  5. Change the sentence and/or phrase structure of the original text and make any other changes that the new structure(s) requires.
  6. Use quotation marks for the author's exact words if there is a necessity to keep them in the paraphrased text.
  7. Keep the technical words (i.e., those that have a specific meaning within a field or are used in business, law, or science) from the original text.
  8. Make your paraphrase about as long as the original passage.
  9. Cite your paraphrased text according to the reference style you are required to use.
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