

Enhancing EFL Learners' Writing Sub-Skills With AI-Mediated Tools: Take QuillBot as an Example

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Abstract—Writing has consistently been one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners. Various AI-powered technologies have contributed to enhancing writing proficiency in EFL settings. This study examines the effectiveness of QuillBot, an AI-driven tool designed to improve multiple writing aspects, including vocabulary, phrasal verbs, sentence structure, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases. The research involved 25 EFL students enrolled in a Reading and Writing course, where they utilized QuillBot as a learning aid. Researchers assessed students' writing performance before and after the experiment through pre- and post-tests. The results, analyzed using a dependent-sample t-test, revealed that QuillBot significantly improved students' writing skills, particularly in vocabulary, sentence sequencing, and grammatical structures. Further research on QuillBot could help address other challenges in EFL teaching and learning.

Index Terms—AI-powered tool, writing skills enhancement, QuillBot, EFL learning

I. INTRODUCTION

Writing poses a significant challenge for EFL students (Fitria, 2022; Hieu et al., 2022; Na & Mai, 2017). Educators have implemented various strategies to make the writing process more accessible for these learners. One such approach is the integration of technology into EFL writing classrooms, where AI-mediated applications like Prepostseo, Paraphrasing-Tool, and QuillBot are utilized to enhance writing skills (Mohammad et al., 2023). Among these tools, QuillBot is widely used for paraphrasing, a crucial skill in academic writing that requires proficiency in English language fundamentals and paragraph organization. Paraphrasing tools help users replace words while maintaining the original meaning, thereby reducing the risk of plagiarism (Wahyuni et al., 2025). Techniques such as synonym replacement, sentence restructuring, phrase reformation, and converting between active and passive voice contribute to improved writing proficiency. These AI-powered tools not only support students in avoiding plagiarism but also enhance their overall writing skills (Bin & Michael, 2019).

According to Fitria (2022), QuillBot is a time-efficient tool that enhances text clarity and helps users find appropriate synonyms. Its extensive vocabulary and user-friendly interface make it a widely used resource among students, writers, bloggers, and businesses worldwide.

AI-powered tools can generate alternative words and phrase structures in multiple languages, allowing students to express their ideas while adhering to grammatical rules. Additionally, these tools support vocabulary expansion, ultimately improving multilingual communication skills (Khalid & Anis, 2024).

Research indicates that AI tools are particularly beneficial for students struggling with fundamental writing challenges.

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Many learners identify grammar errors and language barriers as their primary obstacles. Tools like QuillBot and Grammarly help ease writing assignments by refining vocabulary and correcting grammatical mistakes. Furthermore, these technologies improve sentence structure and overall coherence, leading to more polished writing (Khalid & Anis, 2024).

Educators also recognize that AI writing tools can assist students in developing strong sentence structures, organizing their ideas effectively, making informed word choices, and expanding their vocabulary (Khalid & Anis, 2024). However, Hieu et al. (2022) note that students often struggle with paraphrasing due to limited vocabulary, grammatical range, and accuracy.

However, there is limited research on the use of AI-mediated tools in improving EFL learners' writing sub-skills, particularly in areas such as vocabulary, phrasal verbs, sentence sequencing, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases, specifically at PY Najran University. This study aims to support the development of these skills, which are often challenging due to complex language concepts like grammar and syntax. Integrating QuillBot with technological devices in the classroom can also assist teachers by exposing students to a diverse range of vocabulary and sentence structures. Therefore, this study focuses on achieving the following objectives and answer these research questions:

Objectives

- To identify the challenges EFL students face in EFL writing classroom
- To analyze the significant improvements in students' writing after using QuillBot, an AI-mediated tool
- To document students' experiences with QuillBot and its impact on their writing process

Research Questions

1. What major writing challenges do EFL students encounter?
2. Are there significant improvements in students' writing when using QuillBot?
3. What are students' experiences with using this AI-mediated tool?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study is consistent with Connectivism, a theory emphasizing the role of technology in learning. It improves writing experiences, notably paraphrasing skills, by utilizing AI-mediated tools such as Quill Bot. This tailored learning environment benefits both teachers and students, resulting in enhanced excitement and insights (Corbett & Spinello, 2020). According to research, technology mediated classrooms improve student learning experiences. This study uses QuillBot, the AI driven tool, to develop paraphrasing skills of students. The incorporation of the AI tool has drastically influenced learners' experiences. QuillBot not only offers specialized learning prospects by extending its instructional support but also minimizes the chances of human error (as cited in Mohammad et al., 2023). Several studies have explored the role of QuillBot in academic writing. Fitria (2021) conducted a descriptive qualitative study evaluating QuillBot's effectiveness in rewriting and paraphrasing English texts. The findings highlighted that QuillBot employs various paraphrasing techniques, including synonym replacement, word form changes, shifts between active and passive voice, and phrase restructuring.

Building on this, Fitria (2022) conducted another qualitative study using observation to assess QuillBot's role in paraphrasing scientific writing to reduce plagiarism. The study confirmed that QuillBot aids students in improving their writing by offering multiple paraphrasing options.

Similarly, Rakhmanina and Serasi (2022) examined QuillBot's impact through observational research. Their study emphasized QuillBot's ability to restructure sentences and replace phrases automatically, making it a valuable tool for students struggling with manual paraphrasing. They concluded that QuillBot serves as an effective alternative for students who find traditional paraphrasing challenging.

Nurul and Siti (2021) conducted a quantitative study focusing on the difficulties mechanical engineering vocational students face in paraphrasing for academic writing. Their research examined various online paraphrasing tools, including QuillBot, Prepostseo, Spinbot, and Paraphrasing-Tool. The results indicated that these tools significantly helped students improve their English writing skills by modifying vocabulary, sentence structure, and parts of speech.

In another study, Kurniati and Fithriani (2022) explored QuillBot's effectiveness among 20 postgraduate students specializing in English language teaching. Using semi-structured interviews and questionnaires, their qualitative study revealed that students had a positive perception of QuillBot and believed it enhanced the quality of their writing.

Furthermore, Khabib (2022) investigated AI-based writing tools for assisting teachers in drafting scientific articles. Using pre- and post-surveys, the study demonstrated that AI-powered writing assistants improved accuracy, productivity, and error reduction. The study also found that these tools increased student engagement and motivation in academic writing.

Although existing research highlights QuillBot's role in overcoming paraphrasing challenges, there is limited experimental research—particularly at PY Najran University—on its potential to enhance EFL students' writing sub-skills, including vocabulary, phrasal verbs, sentence sequencing, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions. This study aims to bridge the gap.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study employed a **quasi-experimental design** using a **pretest and post-test** approach with a single-group setup to assess the effectiveness of QuillBot in enhancing EFL students' writing skills. A quasi-experimental method is useful for evaluating the impact of an intervention on a specific student group (Creswell, 2009).

The study followed these steps:

- **Pretest:** Administered to all participants to evaluate their initial writing proficiency.
- **Implementation of QuillBot:** Students used QuillBot as a writing aid during the study.
- **Post-test:** Conducted after students had used QuillBot to measure changes in their writing abilities.

The primary objective was to identify common writing difficulties among EFL students and observe improvements in their writing skills after using QuillBot.

B. Data Collection Tools

The study employed **two main data collection tools**:

- **A Writing Test:** The test was designed by the researchers based on previous literature and teaching experience. It covered six key areas:
 - Sentence sequencing
 - Phrasal verbs
 - Vocabulary
 - Prepositional phrases
 - Adjectives
 - Adverbs

The test had an average completion time of **45 minutes**.

- **Semi-Structured Interviews:** A set of interview questions was designed to gather qualitative insights into students' experiences with QuillBot. The interview covered how QuillBot influenced various aspects of writing, such as vocabulary, sentence sequencing, and the use of grammatical elements.

Interview Questions:

1. What vocabulary-related experiences have you had with QuillBot?
2. How has QuillBot affected your experience with phrasal verbs?
3. How has QuillBot impacted your sentence sequencing skills?
4. How has QuillBot influenced your use of prepositional phrases, adjectives, and adverbs?
5. How do you feel about QuillBot's general ease of use and effectiveness?

A volunteer instructor conducted the interviews immediately after the post-test. Each interview lasted **5 to 10 minutes**. The questions were based on previous studies and researchers' teaching experiences (Fitria, 2021, 2022; Maulidia, 2021).

C. Sampling

The study was conducted at **Najran University's Preparatory Year Program** using a **convenience sampling method**. A total of **25 Level 1 students** participated in the research.

D. Data Collection & Analysis

Assessment Checklist

A **rubric-based assessment checklist** was developed to evaluate students' writing skills. It included **six key categories**:

1. Vocabulary
2. Phrasal verbs
3. Sentence sequencing
4. Prepositional phrases
5. Adjectives
6. Adverbs

t-test: To highlight the significance of the contrast the variation between pre-test and post-test averages, the researchers employed paired-sample t-tests, as shown in Table 3. The means differ significantly from one another. The sample proportion (represented by π) is not equal to a certain value (represented by π_0) in a two-tailed hypothesis.

$$H1 : \pi \neq \pi_0$$

Validity

To ensure the validity of the assessment checklist, it was reviewed by **six experts** from **Najran University's English Department**. Their feedback was incorporated into the final version, ensuring that it effectively measured students' progress in the six key writing areas.

Reliability

To apply the evaluation criteria, researchers used a sample of fifteen students. A second, more experienced researcher assessed it as well. The Holste equation was used to determine the stability of the correctors (observers): the percentage ratio of agreement instances to disagreement instances. Table 1 displays the assessment checklist's reliability coefficients.

TABLE 1
THE RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS OF THE ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

No	Issues of Writing Domain	No. of agreements	No. of disagreements	Reliability coefficients
1	Vocabulary	13	2	0.87
2	Phrasal verbs	12	3	0.80
3	Sequencing sentences	13	2	0.87
4	Use of adjectives	11	4	0.73
5	Use of adverb	12	3	0.80
6	Prepositional Phrase	13	12	0.87
	Total	74	16	0.82

The assessment checklist's coefficient factor, as shown in Table 1, is 0.82. The assessment checklist's accuracy is indicated by its high percentage.

E. Instructional Program

For more than four years, writing instructors have been using the online paraphrasing tool, the QuillBot. It was utilized during the third semester, which ran from August 2024 to December 2024. A pre-test was administered before the program. The researcher developed an instructional program that comprised the following phases because of student's unsatisfactory pretest results:

1. Additionally, the following procedure was used to teach students how to use QuillBot, the AI-mediated tool, in the classroom.

i. QuillBot usage was demonstrated to the students. They were specifically instructed on how to compose a statement and use a unique function offered by the QuillBot to evaluate its grammar.

ii. The QuillBot's paraphrasing function aided students in learning the language.

iii. QuillBot's grammar checker function assisted students in recognizing errors in the usage of prepositional phrases, adjectives, adverbs, and phrasal verbs. The following tasks were carried out by teachers:

2. Have students compose a few sentences utilizing adverbs, adjectives, and phrasal verbs.

3. It was implied in the instructions that students must employ proper sentence structure.

4. As they wrote phrases on QuillBot, students were also urged to apply the new language they had learned.

5. By using QuillBot's grammar checker tool, which offered the proper usage of grammatical items and vocabulary, it was noticed that students learned the correct phrasal verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.

6. Using the QuillBot as a guide, students were urged to compose sentences with the proper subject-verb agreement, sentence component sequencing, etc.

7. Used QuillBot to provide feedback on EFL students' writing especially to correctly use adjectives, adverbs, vocabulary etc.

8. Examined the articles that the EFL students had learned.

9. Researchers performed a test (post-test) to ascertain the usefulness of the AI-mediated QuillBot tool. The posttest indicates that the students' writing abilities have significantly improved.

However, additional writing issues could not be addressed due to the limitations of this study.

F. Data Analysis Methods

The assessment checklist was used to the fifteen students who made up the study's exploratory samples. An additional veteran researcher also shared their thoughts. The Holste equation, calculated as the percentage of agreements over total agreements and disagreements, was applied to assess the stability of the correctors, as shown in Table 1. Researchers used paired t-tests to show how important the difference between the pre-test and post-test means was, as seen in Table 3.

In the end, the interview data was content analysed using the methodology for qualitative data analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). When assessing qualitative data, the following procedures were used:

The gathered data was carefully studied, themes were developed from it, themes were checked to make sure they accurately reflected their experiences using the online AI tool for paraphrasing, themes were defined and given names, and exemplars were found.

IV. RESULTS

Results of Research Question 1: What major writing challenges do EFL students encounter?

The researchers' checklist for evaluating EFL students' writing challenges is exhibited in Table 2. They concentrated on prepositional phrases, adjectives, adverbs, phrasal verbs, and sentence sequencing. Teachers can identify students' writing issues by looking at written samples.

For each category—vocabulary, phrasal verbs, sequencing sentences, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases—it shows three distinct samples (poor, good, and best). The samples demonstrate how poor students' English is. They are

unable to recognize and distinguish between various lexical and grammatical components. However, as demonstrated by the samples, students' performance improved following the use of QuillBot, the AI-mediated tool.

TABLE 2
STUDENTS' WRITING SAMPLES

Student performance Domain	POOR	GOOD	BEST
Vocabulary			
Phrasal Verbs			
Sequencing Sentences			
Use of Adjectives/Adverbs			
Prepositional Phrases			

Results of Research Question 2: Are there any significant improvements in students' writing after using QuillBot?

Table 3 exemplifies that the researchers applied a paired-sample t-test to verify the significance of mean differences between the pre- and post-tests. Table 3 shows that the researchers used a paired-sample t-test to determine the significance of mean differences between the pre- and post-tests.

TABLE 3
DETAILS OF THE PAIRED-SAMPLE T-TEST USED TO CALCULATE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MEAN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRE- AND POST-TEST SCORES

Domain		Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Effect size	Level
Vocabulary	Pretest	1.67	1.3	-15.500-	24	.000	3.1	Large
	Posttest	4.00	1.119					
Phrasal verbs	Pretest	1.64	1.035	-10.023	24	.000	1.98	Large
	Posttest	3.92	1.351					
Sequencing Sentence	Pretest	.80	.956	-3.588-	24	.001	0.71	Large
	Posttest	1.75	1.331					
Use of Adjective	Pretest	3.32	1.375	-5.598-	24	.000	1.12	Large
	Posttest	4.84	.473					
Use of Adverb	Pretest	1.84	1.179	-8.088-	24	.000	1.62	Large
	Posttest	4.43	.821					
Prepositional Phrases	Pretest	1.16	.898	-11.338-	24	.000	2.27	Large
	Posttest	4.48	1.193					
Total	Pretest	10.45	2.646	-16.782-	24	.000	3.36	Large
	Posttest	23.44	3.177					

The pre-test and post-test mean differences are statistically significant, as Table 3 demonstrates. The post-test with a large effect size is supported by the 95% confidence interval and the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$).

Results of Research Question 3: How do students feel about utilizing the AI-mediated tool?

The aim of the study was to conduct in-person interviews with students to document their first-hand experiences using QuillBot to hone their paraphrasing abilities. In terms of vocabulary, phrasal verbs, sequencing sentences, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases, as well as their general QuillBot experiences, including its ease of use, simplicity, and versatility, the data was categorized into five primary groups.

The contents were thoroughly reviewed and organized into distinct themes. Major themes were then found by underlining them. Students responded highly to QuillBot's improvements in vocabulary, phrasal verbs, sentence sequencing, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases. The following extracts represent the participants' perspectives:

- (S1) "It enhanced vocabulary." When it comes to paraphrase, vocabulary is crucial. QuillBot helps me write better.
 (S3) "I improved my vocabulary by learning words and phrases from QuillBot."
 (S5) "I gained new vocabulary that will help me become a better writer in English."
 (S6) "It gave me instructions on how to construct sentences."
 (S8) "It teaches me how to use proper grammar and verbs."
 (S7) "It helped with the written communication of self-expression."
 (S9) "It aids in my comprehension of the grammatical units and their transformation from adjective to adverb, and adverb to adjective."
 (S10) "Writing words, phrases, clauses, etc."
 (S12) "It improved my understanding."
 (S13) "QuillBot assisted with comprehension of various words, sentences, and paragraphs."
 (S15) "It is very simple and easy to use."
 (S14) "Practicing with QuillBot did not present many difficulties."
 (S11) "user-friendly".
 (S3) "Having difficulty with grammar and spelling".
 (S7) "Occasional beep of messages on WhatsApp".
 (S9) "Could not understand everything in English".

V. DISCUSSION

The results showed that students' writing subskills were considerably enhanced by the QuillBot-based instructional program. These results can be due to QuillBot's present use in educational institutions as part of their IT integration. Another aspect is that almost all students own a tablet or smartphone, which makes it simple for them to use paraphrasing tools.

The findings corroborate Fitria's (2022) claim that QuillBot is a time-saving tool that can increase text intelligibility and assist in selecting acceptable synonyms. The findings confirm Miranda's (2021) study, which discovered that students can utilize the paraphrase tool to improve the overall quality of their writing, learn new vocabulary, and better understand the context of a text.

The results also support a different study by Maulidia (2021) that suggests students may utilize online tools to get beyond obstacles in academic writing related to topic, structure, language use, and paraphrasing strategies. According to Kurniati and Fithriani's (2022) additional study, the paraphrasing tool QuillBot enhances academic writing by changing the original sentences.

The study deviates with Chen et al. (2015), who discovered that, maybe because of varying learning levels, both undergraduates and postgraduates have difficulty generating appropriate texts since they lack expertise and online paraphrasing tools. Lack of practice owing to a lack of resources, such as computers, laptops, and the internet, could be the cause of the discrepancies. The devices are out of reach for some students. Furthermore, it should be kept in mind that the tool may not always satisfy the criteria of every course. The curriculum needs to be flexible enough to accommodate the AI tool's features.

The semi-structured interview results regarding the experiences of using QuillBot to improve EFL writing sub-skills among students in their preparatory year are consistent with a different study conducted by Ariyanti and Fitriana (2017), which found that students were struggling to deal with spelling and grammar mistakes when paraphrasing. Additionally, students acknowledged in the interview that they were also disturbed by the sporadic beep of messages on WhatsApp. Another problem that learners encountered was the language barrier, as some of them were unable to comprehend the target language that QuillBot was using. Since there was a pre-made remedy for every issue, students believed QuillBot had inhibited their ability to be creative. Furthermore, some pupils became confused because of having too much information. If students routinely practice using the tool, these problems may be fixed. Teachers can offer ideas on how students might use the technology more creatively so as not to stifle their creativity.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that QuillBot effectively enhanced various writing sub-skills of EFL students, including vocabulary, phrasal verbs, sentence sequencing, and the use of adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases. The tool also exposed students to a broader range of words, leading to improvements in their vocabulary and more appropriate word choices in their writing. Based on these findings, the study recommends incorporating QuillBot into classroom instruction to serve it as a valuable aid in developing students' writing skills. Teachers should integrate it into their teaching strategies to provide access to premium features to maximize the tool's potential, providing students with access to QuillBot's premium features that could enhance their learning experiences. The teachers and other stake holders should

design syllabuses to support technological integration to include digital tools like QuillBot, ensuring that technology is incorporated in a way that supports students' writing development.

The study's scope was limited to a small segment of Najran University's PY students, and the results may vary if the study were conducted with a larger or different student population. Future research should explore the effectiveness of other features of QuillBot, such as its summary tool, essay writing, plagiarism detection, citation generator, and translation capabilities, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of its impact on academic writing.

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