Use your own words: Questioning EAP materials on paraphrasing

Milada (Millie) Walková

University of Leeds

Outline

Background

Issues with common approaches

- Purpose of paraphrasing
- Paraphrasing and summarising
- Lexico-grammatical changes
- Lexical chunks

Alternatives

Reflection

Paraphrasing

- An important skill related to the use of sources
- **Stages of development**
  - **Patchwriting (Howard 1992) – copying, deleting, replacing, inserting**

Original: *Such 'story myths' are not told for their entertainment value. They provide answers to questions people ask about life, about society and about the world in which they live.*

Patchwriting: *Story myths are not for entertainment purposes, rather they… provide answers to philosophical questions about life, society and the world.*

  - **Legitimate textual borrowing (Petrić 2012) – short quotes with own words**

She proposes a way of improvement, which is to be found in a "radically historicizing humanism" that will, apart from human suffering, acknowledge also refugees' "narrative authority, historical agency, and political memory"…

- University lecturers who ineffective paraphrasing in a paraphrasing task – a paragraph out of context, no purpose for writing (Roig 2001)

Approaching teaching paraphrasing: Lawson (2018)

What is plagiarism?

One of the most important skills we can help learners within EAP is helping and teachers need to think about what plagiarism is. The Cambridge Adva is your own.' More than just pretending, many people even see plagiarism students at American universities, the number of charges of plagiarism ha Pennycook (1996) noted that the notion that ownership of texts is a weste doing.

The takeaway for teachers is to realise that our students may not underst understand that it is essential to acknowledge the ideas of others when w

The penalties for plagiarism can be quite harsh. At Monash University, for a requirement to resubmit. In more serious cases, where the faculty believ receiving a 0 grade for the unit, or potential expulsion.

Paraphrasing is the answer

Strong paraphrasing skills will set learners up for success in their universit

- Example: *Online learning is popular.*

- Paraphrase: *Online learning is liked by many people.*

- "regularly ask students to paraphrase single sentences as warmers or small activities during the lesson"

Purpose of paraphrasing

- Avoiding plagiarism rather than using the ideas of others for one's own **purposes** in writing

- **Formalistic**: any sentence from a text can be paraphrased

- "*students are not writing from sources; they are writing from sentences selected from sources*" (Howard et al. 2010: 188, original italics) – questions around students' understanding of the texts as a whole

Paraphrasing versus summarising

- Different length; a selected point v. key points

Bailey (2015: 28)

Paraphrasing involves rewriting a text so that the language is significantly different while the content stays the same. Summarising means reducing the length of a text but retaining the main points.

Davies (2022: 91)

Again, when paraphrasing (as opposed to summarizing) you need to cover *all* the main points and will often need to write *more* words than appeared in the source text.

Paraphrasing or summarising

- Does it help students to use their own words more effectively?

- Is it authentic?

Dubois (1988: 183, emphasis added):

"**Paraphrase** is restatement of an idea in different words but the same length. **Summary** is an abbreviated statement of a result or fact from a single source article; **generalization** is statement of similarity from the work of two or more source articles."

This has been true, even for well-differentiated, slow-growing tumors (1–4).

Type	%
Direct quotation	3 %
Paraphrase	17 %
Summary	38 %
Generalisation	42 %

Lexico-grammatical changes: word order

Academic English UK (n.d.)

Key steps to effective paraphrasing

1. **Highlight important words / key terms** (words that cannot be changed)
2. **Find synonyms / alternative words** for high frequency words
3. **Change grammar:** sentence structure, active to passive, nouns to verbs, adjectives to adverbs, word order, etc.
4. **Check meaning**

- Example: *Memory is the capacity for storing and retrieving information.*
- Paraphrase: *Data recovery and storage are facilitated in the memory.*

Coherence

Dementia is a neurodegenerative condition that leads to a progressive decline in cognitive abilities, ultimately impairing memory. Memory refers to the ability to store and access information.

Dementia is a neurodegenerative condition that leads to a progressive decline in cognitive abilities, ultimately impairing memory. *Data recovery and storage are facilitated in the memory.*

Sentences created with CoPilot (Microsoft 2024)

Lexico-grammatical changes: formality

Davies (2022:94)

Original

This <u>model</u> provides a <u>microeconomic theoretic rationale</u> for why <u>researchers</u> have failed to find <u>consistent evidence</u> of the <u>superiority</u> of one <u>teaching technique</u> over another in the <u>production of learning</u> in <u>economics.</u> (Becker, 1997, p. 9).

Simplified version:

This accounts for why theorists working in the area found the following: a student that is taught with Method A is no better prepared than if he is taught with Method B. The evidence does not show that either A or B is better in terms of learning outcomes (Becker, 1997, p. 9).

Use your own words

University of Leeds (2024):

How to paraphrase others' work

Paraphrasing is using your own words to express someone else's ideas.

Lexical chunks

- Semi-prefabricated chunks (Sinclair 1991)

- A text from Bailey (2011:43-44, emphasis added)

"… **This is partly because** the demand for labour is seasonal, usually in the autumn, and also because the work is hard. **As a result**, in areas such as California part of the fruit harvest is often unpicked and left to rot.

There are several obvious **reasons why** developing mechanical pickers is challenging. …"

- Bailey (2011:47): *There has been much debate…* changed into paraphrase *…has been the subject of considerable discussion.*

Recommendations

- Teach students to paraphrase ideas not sentences
- Encourage students to select ideas from sources and adapt these to fit their own purposes in writing and to fit their text

Example sentence (Standl et al. 2019:8, emphasis added):

"Based on these criteria, **the current global diabetes prevalence in 2017 was 8.8%** (95% confidence interval (CI) 7.2–11.3%), standardised for the age group 20–79 years, **with a further increase expected to 9.9%** (95% CI 7.5–12.7%) **by** the year **2045**."

Examples of materials

- A pre-sessional course for PhD students
- EGAP – mixed disciplines
- Students' IELTS range from 4.5 – 6.5 – mixed abilities

Task: Practising paraphrasing

Read the first three paragraphs of Wellington (2013) on p.1494. Write a one-sentence paraphrase for each of the following:

a) What did Burgess and Wellington (2010)'s study investigate (topic) and how (data sources)?

b) What three main themes emerged?

c) What was the first area of impact?

d) What was the second area of impact?

e) What was the third area of impact?

Task: Practising paraphrasing

Read the chapter summary from Almuarik (2019, Section 2.9) and then write a paraphrase for each of the following purposes:

1. You want to say that Almuarik critiques previous literature and how/why.

2. You want to say what Almuarik recommends for further research.

Task: From the original to the paraphrase

Now compare the paraphrases from Task 2 to the following extracts from the original sources. For each paraphrase:

1.   Decide if the paraphrase is good or poor and why.

2.   What language changes have been made in the paraphrase compared to the original? Why do you think Almuarik made these changes?

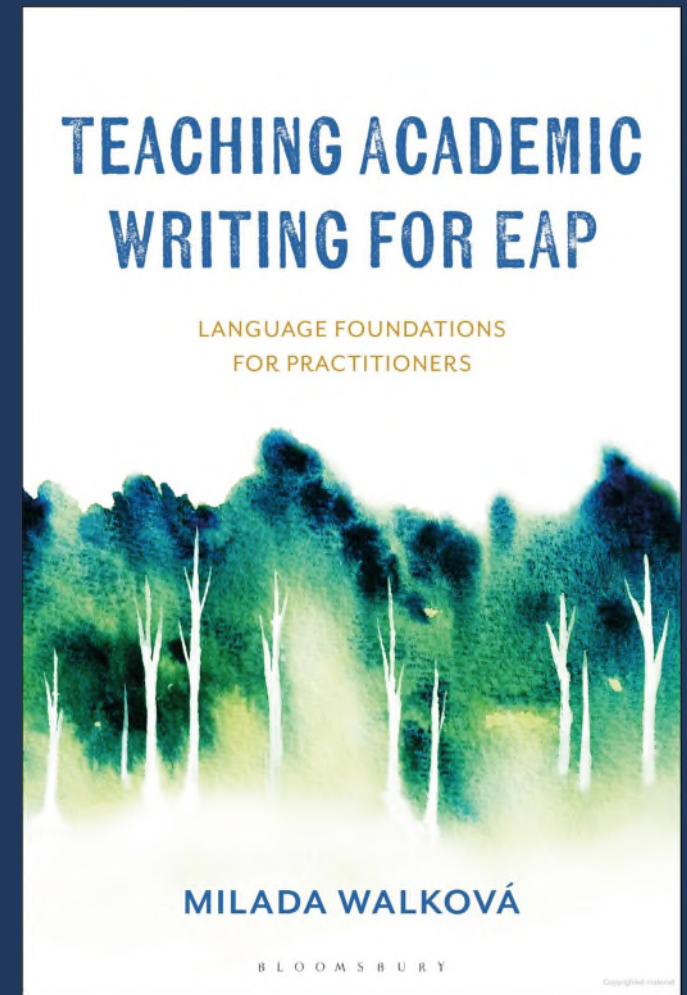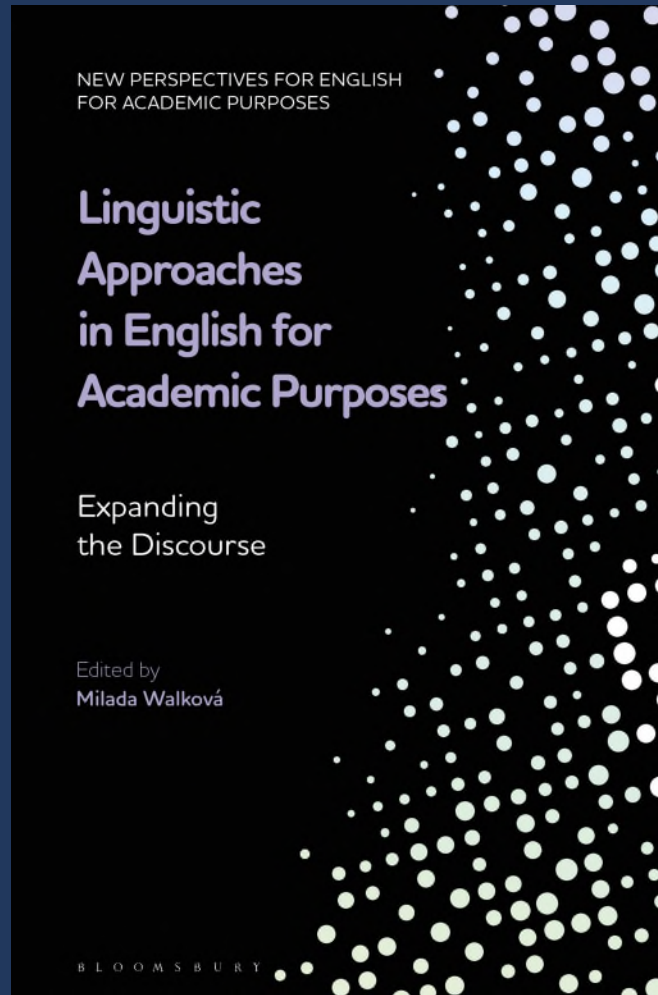# Task: Alternative paraphrases

Now compare paraphrases A and B from Task 2 to the following alternatives. For each alternative, decide if the alternative is better than the paraphrase in Almuarik or not and why. You might also refer to the chapter text (pp.30-31).

Reflection

- Students **used to** the formalistic approach
- **Reading** skills
- **Synthesising:** generalisation
- **Purposes** of using sources
  - Rhetorical functions of citations: Harwood (2009) as many as 11
- **Paraphrasing software/Gen AI?**
  - Students: technology does not help to learn (Roe et al. 2024)
- **Future scholarship/research**:
  - Developing student writers – role of reading comprehension
  - Experienced writers – authentic lexico-grammatical changes (textual study; think-aloud protocols)

M.Walkova@leeds.ac.uk

Thank you

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