



## Paraphrased Texts in the Literature Review Section of Undergraduate Theses Written by EFL Students at the English Language Education Program of Universitas Negeri Padang

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### Abstract

This research was conducted to find out types of paraphrases and paraphrasing techniques in EFL students' paraphrased texts. It was content analysis and descriptive research. The data were obtained from 11 undergraduate theses written by students of the UNP English Language Education Program in the graduation period of March 2020 to March 2021. The total data found were 49 paraphrases which were analysed by using Keck's (2006) Taxonomy of Paraphrase Types and Pieterick's Paraphrasing Techniques in Injai (2015). Regarding the types of paraphrases, these texts were 55% Near Copy, 20% Minimal Revision, 20% Moderate Revision, and 4% Substantial Revision. Meanwhile, there are 10 types of paraphrasing techniques used by these texts (7 sub-techniques of Syntactic Paraphrasing and 3 sub-techniques of Semantic Paraphrasing). Moreover, the most frequently used paraphrasing techniques were "using synonyms, definitions, or antonyms" and "changing sentence structure". The finding of Near Copy as the most common type in the paraphrased texts indicated the quality of paraphrases produced by EFL students remains low and unacceptable in terms of plagiarism. While related to paraphrasing techniques, this study showed that the application of paraphrasing techniques among EFL students was still ineffective, suggesting the critical need for further mastery training of these techniques.

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## INTRODUCTION

EFL students are said to be fluent in English when they have gone through and completed a process that makes them master four aspects of language skills. These skills cover four areas: reading; writing; listening; and speaking, and are categorized into two types: receptive skills and productive skills (Harmer, 2001, p.265).

Receptive skills consist of reading and listening, while productive skills are writing and speaking. Most EFL students start learning by trying to understand and comprehend English through receptive skills. After gaining enough knowledge, they start producing language through speaking and writing.

Writing as well as other skills is very important to master to communicate well in English. However, expressing feelings and thoughts in written form involves a complex process requiring profound knowledge in morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and discourse (Gillon, 2004 in The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, n.d). Therefore, many have argued that writing is by far the most challenging skill, (Kencanaawati and Aina, 2016; Richard and Renandya, 2002; Tillema, 2012) so that mastery of writing becomes a benchmark for one's proficiency in language.

Additionally, several studies (Eliwarti and Maarof, 2014; Nguyen, 2009; Nurhidayah, 2017) show that many EFL students lack proficiency in writing. It also happens in EFL students at the college level. Yet, writing skill is crucial for them because at this level they are required to complete many tasks in the form of academic writing, such as essays, papers, theses, and so on.

Academic writing is in a different advanced level of difficulty compared to other types of writing. It must be reliable and be based on existing theories and research. However, the action of incorporating the sources is extremely susceptible to plagiarism if not done properly. Plagiarism is the practice of misrepresenting others' ideas, statements, or findings as one's own. In the academic community, plagiarism is strictly prohibited as it is considered as a copyright infringement. The academic ramifications of this problem are significant. It can result in a student being failed in a class, being expelled from college, and even being prosecuted for intellectual property theft.

Plagiarism can occur purposefully or inadvertently (Ayton, 2014; Roka, 2017). Deliberate plagiarism is indeed done with the intention of deceiving by stealing others' ideas and not acknowledging the owner of the original concept. Unintentional plagiarism, on the other hand, typically comes as a result of a lack of ability to incorporate other people's ideas appropriately and an unawareness of the similar writing exists. Therefore, writers must have an awareness of the importance of this problem and how to solve it.

One of the ways to solve this problem is by mastering some ways in integrating sources appropriately into one's own writing. The ways include quoting, summarizing, and paraphrasing. Firstly, quoting is copying the words from a source text and enclosing them in quotation marks in one's own writing (Ashford Writing Center, 2015). Secondly, summarizing is stating the main ideas of a source text by creating a new text which is usually shorter than the original because it only provides an overview (Ashford Writing Center, 2015). Thirdly, paraphrasing is rewriting a text using different words to borrow or elaborate its ideas (Literary Terms, 2015).

Of the methods mentioned above, paraphrasing is the most recommended way in incorporating sources (Hyland, 2001; Davies, Beaumont, & Pesina, 2011; Ragin, 2016). It is because paraphrasing has several advantages in academic writing. First, paraphrasing protects the writer from plagiarism because the source text is retold in a different way and in different words. This is in stark contrast to quoting where the

author copied the same text from the source. This is also supported by the results of research from Keck (2014) which showed that EFL students were not dependent on the source text if they were accustomed to paraphrasing. Second, the details of the source text are preserved. This point is what differentiates paraphrasing from summarizing that leaves many important points from the original text (Driscoll & Brizee, 2011). Third, the writer's comprehension of the original text can be demonstrated by paraphrase. Paraphrasing is not only a tool for integrating sources into one's own writing but also a meaning-making process that can help develop written content.

Based on the importance of paraphrasing, a lot of research has been carried out to investigate this topic. Several studies (Badiozaman, 2014; Hayuningrum & Yulia, 2012; Na & Nhat Chi Mai, 2017) examined the difficulties and problems faced by EFL students in paraphrasing. The findings show that the dominant problems experienced by the students are the inability to comprehend the original material and linguistic challenges in composing sentences. In addition, other studies (Ansas & Sukyadi, 2019; Khrismawan & Widiati, 2013; Thadphoothon, 2019) were conducted to learn about the views of paraphrasing among EFL students. Most of the students in the studies considered paraphrasing to be difficult even though their knowledge was sufficient enough about proper paraphrasing. Meanwhile, other researchers (Choi, 2012; Choy & Lee, 2012; Madhavi, 2013) focused on examining the effects of paraphrase practices on EFL students' ability in writing.

However, there are only a few studies, especially in the context of Indonesia, that examine what techniques students use in paraphrasing as well as types of paraphrases found on EFL students' paraphrased texts. Moreover, knowing the types of paraphrases can help in determining the acceptability in terms of plagiarism, and knowing the techniques used for each type of paraphrase can help in finding the most appropriate paraphrasing techniques to avoid plagiarism. Therefore, this research filled the gap of the existing studies by analyzing the types of paraphrases based on Keck's (2006) Types of Paraphrases, as well as the techniques used by EFL students based on Pieterick's Paraphrasing Techniques in Injai (2015). The paraphrased texts analyzed were those within the literature review section of students' undergraduate theses. This section contained a collection of information (theories or research findings) as the basis for conducting a research; thus, paraphrases could be found in it.

### ***Types of Paraphrases***

The taxonomy of Paraphrase Types was formulated by Keck (2006) to classify paraphrases into certain groups based on their criteria. Paraphrases are coded according to some characteristics: "length in words", "reporting phrase", "general links", and "unique links" (Keck, 2006, p. 266).

The term "length in words" represents the number of words within a paraphrase (Keck, 2006, p. 266). Meanwhile "reporting phrases" are phrases used to introduce a paraphrase, for example, "acknowledge," "describe," "point out," "proclaim," "said," etc., (Wolfe, 2007, p. 1). However, if these phrases are found in a paraphrase, they will be excluded from the length in words (Keck, 2006, p. 266).

"General links" refer to words that appear in both the paraphrased text and the source text (Keck, 2006, p. 267), but they function as the topic of the text or technical terms (Mira & Fatimah, 2020, p.58) which cannot be paraphrased. Meanwhile, "unique links" can be described as individual lexical words or string of words found in a paraphrased text that are exactly the same as the ones found in the original text, but do not function as the topic of the text or technical terms (Keck, 2006, p. 266). This "unique links" is the main criterion to determine which type a paraphrase is. The following explanation is the Keck's (2006) classification of paraphrase types.

1. Near Copy (consists of 50% unique links within the paraphrased text).
2. Minimal Revision (consists of 20% to 49% unique links within the paraphrased text).
3. Moderate Revision (consists of 1% to 19% unique links within the paraphrased text).
4. Substantial Revision (consists of 0% unique links within the paraphrased text).

Keck (2006) explains further detail on the plagiarism-related acceptability of each paraphrase type. Near Copy is the type that is considered unacceptable and might result in plagiarism. On the other hand, Minimal Revision is in the vague category of acceptability; unclear if it might be accepted or not. Out of all this, the Moderate Revision and Substantial Revision types are acceptable. The higher the percentage of unique links, the more likely it is that plagiarism will occur.

### ***Paraphrasing Techniques***

The term "paraphrasing techniques" has other terms such as "paraphrasing strategies" (Injai, 2015) and "paraphrasing methods" (Higher Score, 2007). Although they are mentioned differently, they refer to the same thing: technical ways employed by students in paraphrasing. In the application to paraphrasing, these techniques can be used separately or combined to produce a paraphrased text.

Some experts suggest their versions of paraphrasing techniques, like Pieterick (Injai, 2015). The techniques are as follows:

1. Syntactic Paraphrasing
  - a. Changing active voice to passive or vice versa
  - b. Changing positive to the negative sentence or vice versa
  - c. Separating long sentence to short sentence
  - d. Expanding phrases for clarity
  - e. Shortening phrases for conciseness
  - f. Combining sentences
  - g. Changing sentence structure
2. Semantic Paraphrasing
  - a. Changing parts of speech
  - b. Using synonyms, definitions, or antonyms
  - c. Changing numbers and percentages
  - d. Changing word order
3. Organization Paraphrasing

This version of Pieterick’s paraphrasing techniques is more complete than the previous one as cited in Dung (2010) because Injai (2015) added some sub-techniques to two main techniques: "syntactic paraphrasing" and "semantic paraphrasing". The addition in syntactic paraphrasing includes "combining sentences" and "changing sentence structure," while semantic paraphrasing includes "changing number and percentage".

**RESEARCH METHOD**

This research was conducted by using content analysis and a descriptive research design. As explained by Eriyanto (2011), content analysis is used to describe aspects and characteristics of a text. This design was chosen because the present study aimed at describing the conditions regarding the types and techniques of paraphrasing of paraphrased texts found in the literature review section of undergraduate theses, where the data were in the form of words, phrases, and sentences.

The subjects analyzed were taken from 11 undergraduate theses written by students of the UNP English Language Education Program in the graduation period of March 2020 to March 2021. Some thesis documents were asked directly to the writers in the form of softcopy and others were ordered from the repository of UNP. The researcher searched the paraphrased texts in the literature review section of each thesis. All the paraphrases found then selected based on the "selection criteria" that had been compiled by the researcher. The selected ones were used as the research data. After that, the data were compared to the source texts which were obtained based on the citations and references provided in the theses. The paraphrased texts and its sources, then, were analyzed to find types of paraphrases and paraphrasing techniques based on the instruments – Keck’s (2006) Types of Paraphrases and Pieterick’s Paraphrasing Techniques in Injai (2015).

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

***Research Findings***

*a. Types of Paraphrases*

All types of paraphrases proposed by Keck (2006) were found in all the data analyzed. The following table describes the number of paraphrased texts classified by the types.

**Table 1.** Types of Paraphrases Findings

No.	Type of Paraphrase	Frequency	Percentage
1	Near Copy	27	55%
2	Minimal Revision	10	20%
3	Moderate Revision	10	20%
4	Substantial Revision	2	4%
<b>Total</b>		<b>49</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on Table 1, more than half of the paraphrased texts found were categorized as the Near Copy type. Meanwhile, 20% of paraphrased texts were categorized as Minimal Revision and the other 20% as Moderate Revision. On the

other hand, texts classified as Substantial Revision were the least frequently encountered with a percentage of 4%.

In addition, the acceptability of paraphrased texts was classified based on Keck’s (2006) theory as presented in the table below.

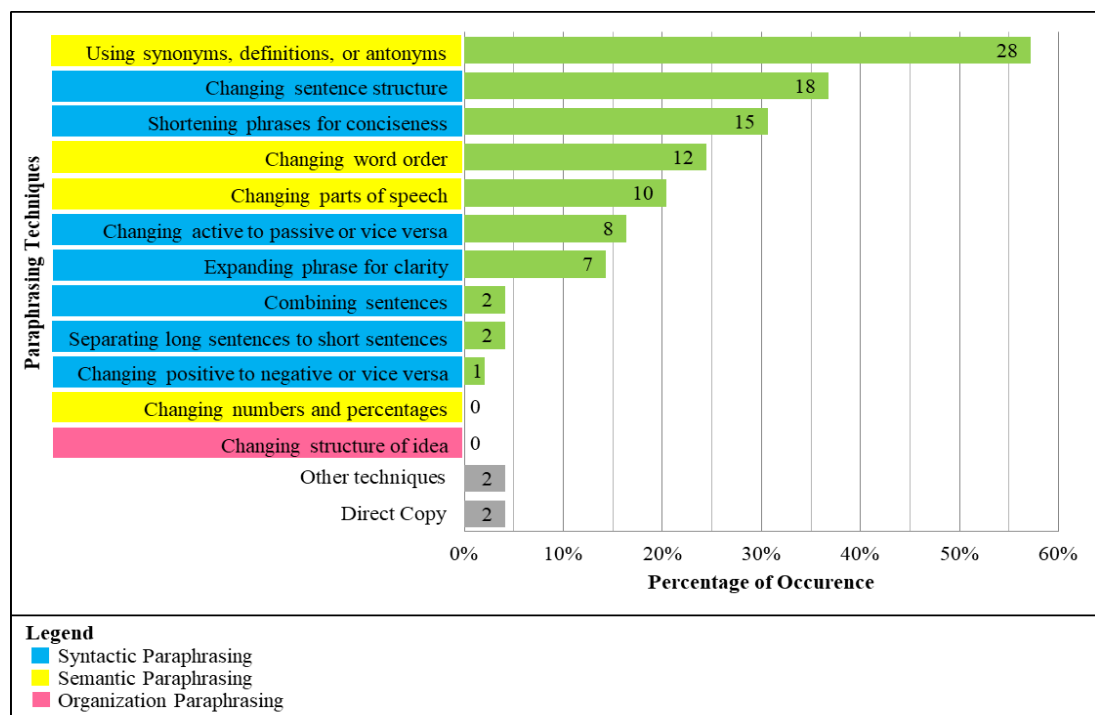
**Table 2.** Paraphrase Types Based on the Acceptability Findings

No.	Acceptability	Type of Paraphrase	Frequency	Percentage
1	Unacceptable	Near Copy	27	55%
2	Vague	Minimal Revision	10	20%
3	Acceptable	Moderate Revision & Substantial Revision	12	24%
<b>Total</b>			<b>49</b>	<b>100%</b>

In terms of acceptability for plagiarism, more than half of the data found were unacceptable (Near Copy) and one-fifth were in vague category (Minimal Revision). Only less than one-quarter of the data were acceptable (Moderate Revision and Substantial Revision).

*b. Paraphrasing Techniques*

Of the total 12 techniques proposed by Pieterick (as cited in Injai, 2015), this study found 10 techniques used in the literature review section of students' undergraduate theses. The following is a graphic explaining the findings in details.



**Graphic 1.** Paraphrasing Techniques Findings

As illustrated in Graphic 1, the most frequently used technique was "using synonyms, definitions, or antonyms" (28 texts), followed by "changing sentence structure" and "shortening phrases for conciseness" which were found in 18 and 15 texts respectively. On the other hand, the three least used techniques were "combining sentences" and "separating long sentences to short sentences" which were both found in 2 texts, and "changing positive to negative or vice versa" (found in 1 paraphrased text). Meanwhile, "changing numbers and percentages" and "changing structure of idea" were not found. In addition, the study found 2 texts employed other techniques and 2 direct copies (did not use any technique).

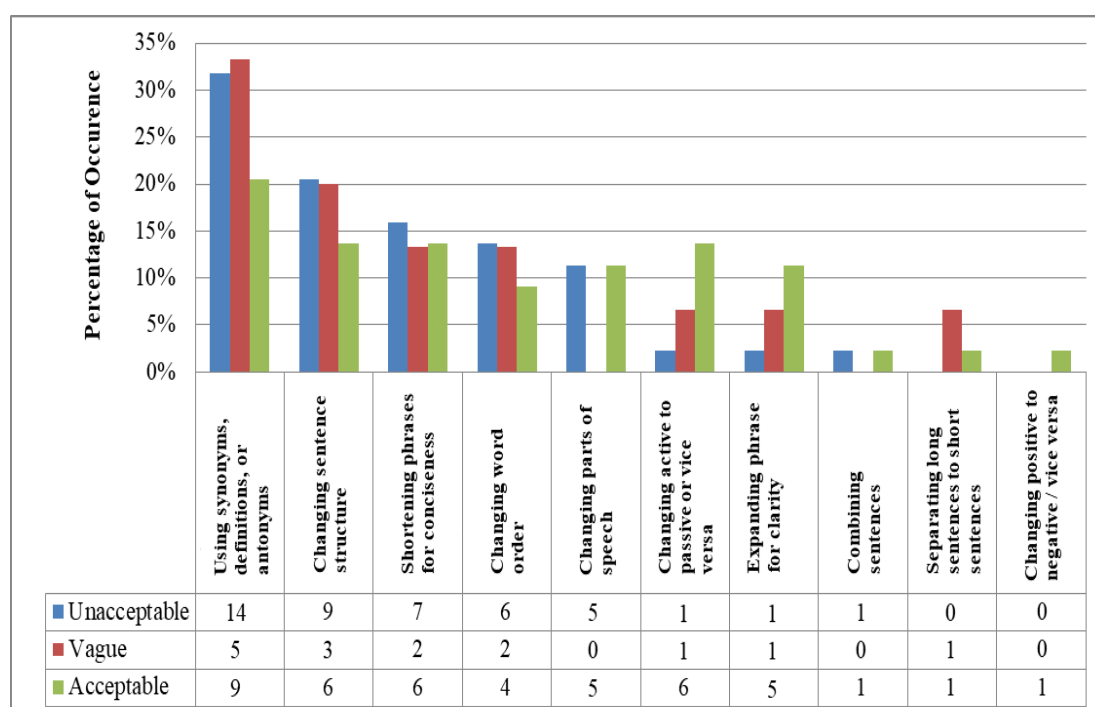
In addition to the paraphrasing techniques findings on all paraphrased texts, the researcher analyzed the techniques used based on the paraphrase types. Then, the techniques were grouped according to the acceptability of paraphrase types. The results are shown in the following table and graphics.

**Table 3.** Paraphrasing Techniques Based on Paraphrase Types

No.	Paraphrasing Techniques	Types of Paraphrases							
		Near Copy		Minimal Revision		Moderate Revision		Substantial Revision	
		Freq.	Pct.	Freq.	Pct.	Freq.	Pct.	Freq.	Pct.
1	Using synonyms, definitions, or antonyms	14	32%	5	33%	7	18%	2	50%
2	Changing sentence structure	9	20%	3	20%	5	13%	1	25%
3	Shortening phrases for conciseness	7	16%	2	13%	6	15%	0	0%
4	Changing word order	6	14%	2	13%	4	10%	0	0%
5	Changing parts of speech	5	11%	0	0%	5	13%	0	0%
6	Changing active to passive or vice versa	1	2%	1	7%	5	13%	1	25%
7	Expanding phrase for clarity	1	2%	1	7%	5	13%	0	0%
8	Combining sentences	1	2%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
9	Separating long sentences to short	0	0%	1	7%	1	3%	0	0%

sentences									
10	Changing positive to negative or vice versa	0	0%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>		<b>44</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3 showed that "using synonyms, definitions, or antonyms" was the most frequently used paraphrasing technique in all types of paraphrases.



**Graphic 2.** Paraphrasing Techniques Based on Paraphrase Types Acceptability

Graphic 2 indicated that the acceptable paraphrases used "using synonyms, definitions, or antonyms" less than the unacceptable and vague ones did. On the other hand, "changing active to passive or vice versa" and "expanding phrases for clarity" were employed more frequently in the acceptable paraphrases than in the others. In addition, "changing positive to negative or vice versa" was only found in the acceptable category.

### **Discussion**

All types of paraphrases proposed by Keck (2006) were found in this study. The most common type found was Near Copy with a percentage of 55% of the total 49 paraphrased texts, followed by Minimal Revision and Moderate Revision with 20% each. While the Substantial Revision type was the least frequent – only 4%. It is in line with the results of other studies (Keck, 2006; Injai, 2015; Pertiwi, 2019; Sarair, Astila, & Nurviani, 2019) where Near Copy was the mostly found type in EFL students' paraphrases.



According to Keck (2006), Near Copy is considered unacceptable in terms of plagiarism; thus, more than half of the paraphrased texts found in this study are unacceptable paraphrases. It shows that EFL students tend to copy many words from the source text because the Near Copy type basically has the highest level of word similarity (among the all types) between paraphrased texts and original texts. Specifically, it means that at least 50% of the words used in the paraphrase are derived from the same words found in the original text. Therefore, this situation can lead to plagiarism (Keck, 2006; Dung, 2010) which is measured by how identical a text to its source is (IEEE, 2021).

Some factors might contribute to EFL students' proclivity for the Near Copy type. The first one is the knowledge on the concept of plagiarism. Some research reported that EFL students still have a poor understanding of plagiarism (Mustafa; 2016, Rodhiya, Wijayati, & Bukhori; 2020). They might not know to what extent the similarity (the main parameter of plagiarism) between a paraphrase and its source is allowed. It could happen because the acceptable similarity index itself is still under discussion in the academic community (Halgamuge, 2018). Each institution in different regions has its own standard (Omotayo in Halgamuge, 2018); there is still no universally accepted standard.

The second factor is the knowledge of paraphrasing. EFL students are not familiar with paraphrasing (Oda & Yamamoto; 2007, Mira & Fatimah (2020), as their first exposure to it occurs in college. Additionally, they are unfamiliar with the criteria for appropriate paraphrases (Khairunnisa, Sutapa, & Surmiyati; 2014). Also, they do not master the techniques used in paraphrasing (Dung; 2010, Injai; 2015). All of these issues could be the reasons of EFL students' inability to write high-quality paraphrased texts, as demonstrated in this study.

Even though EFL students have the awareness of plagiarism and a good understanding of paraphrasing, it cannot be guaranteed that they will produce proper paraphrases. This condition is demonstrated by the research of Khristawan & Widiati (2013) indicating that EFL students' knowledge of plagiarism and paraphrasing is inversely proportional to the resulting paraphrases. It is due to another aspect, notably the problems faced in paraphrasing itself. For instance, because students have difficulties comprehending the source text, they find it difficult to rephrase it in their own words and hence prefer to deliver it with a significant amount of copied words (Na & Nhat Chi Mai; 2017). Also, students' limited vocabulary contributes to the same issue (Dung; 2010, Choy & Lee; 2012, Khairunnisa, Sutapa, & Surmiyati; 2014, Na & Nhat Chi Mai; 2017, Mira & Fatimah; 2020).

Moreover, regarding the paraphrasing techniques, this study found "using synonyms, definitions, or antonyms" as the most dominant paraphrasing technique used by EFL students in their literature review section of undergraduate theses, followed by "changing sentence structure" and "shortening phrases for conciseness". This finding is in line with other research which found that using synonyms and changing sentence structure were the most frequently used techniques by EFL students in paraphrasing (Dung; 2010, Khristawan & Widiati; 2013, Injai; 2015).

The high usage of "using synonyms, definitions, or antonyms" could be caused by students' preference. According to Dung (2010) and Khristawan and Widiati

(2013), it was one of the most preferred technique by students in paraphrasing. When the students in Dung's (2010) research were asked to choose amongst all of Pieterick's paraphrasing techniques, employing synonyms was preferred by 43 percent of them because they considered it as a very easy technique to implement. Meanwhile, the observations made by Khismawan and Widiati (2013) in their research showed that participants were very productive in using synonyms in paraphrasing. Furthermore, based on the present study, this preference could be due to no restrictions on the use of dictionaries and thesauruses, as well as the ease of access to these two resources with which the students could easily find synonyms, definitions, or antonyms.

Students' habit and preferences could also contribute to the fact that "changing sentence structure" was one of the most often used techniques. Khismawan and Widiati (2013) revealed that the students in their study tend to change the sentence structure immediately when they start paraphrasing. It was expressed by Khismawan and Widiati (2013) as something that the students spontaneously did. Furthermore, Dung (2010) discovered that "changing sentence structure" was the most preferred technique, with 47 percent of all participants in his survey voting for it.

Along with the findings of the most common employed techniques, the absence of "changing numbers and percentages" and "changing structure of ideas" in this study also needs to be discussed. The "changing numbers and percentages" was not found in this research due to the absence of paraphrased texts derived from the source containing numbers and percentages. Meanwhile, the absence of "changing structure of ideas" requires additional discussion, since it is related to Injai's (2015) study, which similarly discovered no indication of this technique being used on students' paraphrases.

As demonstrated by various sources, the absence of a "changing structure of ideas" is likely owing to some factors. One of them is students' perceptions of how ideas are organized. According to Keck (2014), both L1 and L2 students believe that the organization of ideas in the text they produce must correspond to the one in the source text. Likewise, a study conducted by Khairunnisa, Sutapa, and Surmiyati (2014) discovered that over 70 percent of EFL students struggled with rearranging ideas. It is also supported by Dung's (2010) research, which found that more than half of EFL students participating in this study chose changing order of ideas as the most difficult aspect in paraphrasing. As a result of the students' perspective and ability regarding changing order of ideas, this technique might be utilized infrequently or possibly not at all.

The following section discusses the paraphrasing techniques found based on the types of paraphrases, which were also classified according to their plagiarism acceptability. The current study's findings revealed that the most frequently employed technique among all types of paraphrases was "using synonyms, definitions, or antonyms". There were, however, distinctions in the tendency and optimization of using this technique between the acceptable paraphrases (Moderate Revision and Substantial Revision) and the unacceptable and vague ones (Near Copy and Minimal Revision respectively). The acceptable paraphrases had a lower tendency for using this technique, but applied it more effectively than the others.

Furthermore, other findings from the present study indicated that the use of "changing active to passive or vice versa" and "expanding phrases for clarity" was more prevalent in acceptable paraphrases than in others. Injai's (2015) research also found that the use of "changing active to passive or vice versa" was higher in high ability students than in moderate and low ability ones. The frequent use of the "changing active to passive or vice versa" technique in the acceptable texts was probably due to the possibility to re-express the original text in different words. For example, the use of passive voice in a paraphrase can omit the subject of the original sentence; as a result, the paraphrase did not contain this subject (the paraphrase could reduce the use of the same word derived from the source text). On the other hand, the use of "expanding phrases for clarity" technique indicated that when describing a phrase in details, the use of words were greater and more diversified. Hence, the level of word similarity between the paraphrase and its source could be lowered, resulting in a more acceptable paraphrased text.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings and discussion, the majority of paraphrased texts found in this study were the Near Copy type which means the quality of paraphrases produced by EFL students remains low. It also implies that various aspects underlying this condition (knowledge of plagiarism and paraphrasing, along with problems in paraphrasing itself) still require further discussion for EFL students to write appropriate paraphrased texts.

This study also showed that generating acceptable paraphrases did not require a large number of techniques but the optimal use of each technique. It also indicated that the application of paraphrasing techniques among EFL students was still ineffective, suggesting the critical need for further mastery training of these techniques, especially ones capable of significantly altering the level of word similarity such as "using synonyms, definitions, or antonyms", "changing active to passive or vice versa", and "expanding phrases for clarity" (as found in this current research), so the level of plagiarism in paraphrasing can be decreased.

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