

Paraphrasing Challenges and Strategies Among NNS Students in an ESP Context

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Abstract

Paraphrasing is a fundamental skill in academic writing, yet it presents notable challenges for non-native English speakers (NNS), particularly within English for Specific Purposes (ESP) contexts, where it remains underexplored. This study investigates the paraphrasing difficulties and strategies of 26 undergraduate NNS students enrolled in an ESP course. Data were collected through analysis of written paraphrasing tasks and text-based interviews. Findings highlight that the primary obstacles were understanding technical content and specialized vocabulary, largely due to limited prior exposure and insufficient language proficiency. Students predominantly relied on surface-level strategies such as synonym replacement and sentence restructuring. Despite these challenges, participants expressed positive attitudes toward guided instruction, emphasizing the value of teacher support throughout the writing process. The study recommends that effective paraphrasing instruction in ESP settings should integrate explicit teaching with sustained practice. These insights offer practical implications for ESP pedagogy and future research.

Keywords

English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Paraphrasing Challenges, Language proficiency, Pedagogical support.