

# Quizlet AI Vocabulary: A Catalyst for Enhancing Algerian EFL Students' Critical Paraphrasing Skills

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## Abstract

Over the past few years, the convergence of artificial intelligence (AI) and education has developed as a transformative force, redefining traditional teaching practices and advancing education modernization. Although Quizlet AI Vocabulary has considerable potential to enhance productivity, efficiency, and learning convenience, concerns persist regarding its effectiveness in developing EFL students' critical paraphrasing skills. This study examines the impact of Quizlet AI Vocabulary on 3<sup>rd</sup> year EFL students' critical paraphrasing abilities through the acquisition of formal vocabulary. The integration of this AI-powered tool represents a strategic approach to strengthening students' paraphrasing skills, as it supports vocabulary enrichment, enables clearer expression of complex ideas, and reduces plagiarism by encouraging original wording. To address these objectives, the research investigates usage patterns and draws on a qualitative quasi-experimental design involving 80 third-year EFL students from the department of English in Mostaganem University. The results indicate that the independent variable (Quizlet AI Vocabulary) exerts a positive and significant effect on the dependent variable (critical paraphrasing skill).

**Keywords:** *Quizlet AI Vocabulary, Metacognitive Knowledge, Critical Paraphrasing, Language Proficiency, Plagiarism, EFL Students.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Language proficiency depends not only on grammar and pronunciation but also on the right choice of words. Eloquence, defined as a distinct yet effective and appropriate use of language (Kachru, 1987), requires that word choice supplies importance, symbolic value, and expressivity to messages. Vocabulary may also be described in terms of varieties and registers. Skilful use of registers can signal social status, marketability, and acceptability. A rich and diverse vocabulary is thus an indicator of language proficiency, and EFL learners may improve their vocabulary and develop other language components and skills through vocabulary work. Ellis (2003) argued that although extensive listening, reading, and meaningful communication promote language acquisition and learning, vocabulary is a crucial element in understanding input and producing output. For EFL learners, vocabulary is seen as a language component that underlies other components such as phonology, morphology, and syntax, and forms sentences and discourse. It is therefore foundational in developing listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation.

Today's world is known as the age of technology, in which machines and artificial intelligence has become the partner across all dimensions of life, including education. The applications of AI in education are rapidly evolving, reshaping the overall teaching and learning landscape (Popenici & Kerr, 2017). Since its launch in 2007, Quizlet has been a popular study website and mobile app with approximately 50 million active users worldwide. It is free to study and create flashcard sets on any subject, and its main goal is self-directed

education for any subject or topic. It enables students to pursue deeper learning in an on-demand learning environment without time or place restrictions, unlike traditional classroom learning. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, education focused on distance learning, and Quizlet was selected as one of the top learning platforms. The platform originally started as a digital tool to assist students in their academic disciplines. Yet, after an investment between 2016 and 2020, Quizlet integrated three principal elements—writing, diagramming, and live testing—into its mobile app and website. Consequently, these types benefit the education sector and everyday users by giving answers in various subjects in a simplified manner.

The study's objectives are to determine whether Quizlet encourages EFL learners to engage in critical paraphrasing that instructors consider essential for development and to identify the accompanying metacognitive knowledge and monitoring strategies that surface during the process. Critical paraphrasing involves analysing textual components to ascertain relevance of knowledge elements, including the stances taken toward texts and the criteria used to evaluate them. It entails similar focus on perceptions of texts and is considered as a transferable skill; but the transfer of independently acquired skills is a pressing issue throughout language education.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Paraphrasing, recombining and rewording existing information, has become a central competence in communicative language use in social, academic, and professional spheres. As academic writers develop, they assume big responsibility for the authenticity of their writing and attempt to present original arguments through critical analysis and synthesis of sources rather than summarization. The teaching of paraphrasing to EFL learners forms an essential part of educational programmes. Scholars have specified the goals of paraphrasing pedagogy, delineating explicit teaching of intent and process as components that support learner agency (Choy & Lee, 2012).

Paraphrasing is a widely recognized process in second language acquisition (SLA) that enables students to demonstrate comprehension of source material, develop critical thinking, and submit academically acceptable work (Setsuko & Yukako, 2008). Abdul Samad et al. (2019) characterize paraphrasing as a rewriting skill that necessitates a high cognitive load and a developed proficiency in the target language.

Learners encounter challenges in generating paraphrasing because of the automaticity of first language processing and multi-competence in using both first and target language simultaneously (Akmal Awang and Hashim, 2019). These learners may also possess paraphrasing skills for mother tongue materials that do not readily transfer to second language. Therefore, EFL learners require EFL-specific instruction and practice to enhance their metalinguistic knowledge, discover paraphrasing strategies, and gain second language exposure through conceptually and lexically flexible paraphrases.

Nino (2009) argued that paraphrasing is a fundamental writing technique that involves citing others' ideas, enabling students to incorporate expert perspectives into their academic writing. As academic writers develop, they assume more responsibility for the authenticity of their writing and intend to present original arguments through critical analysis and synthesis of sources rather than summarization. This process requires critical thinking and a sophisticated cognitive approach that may help identify biases and evidence, enabling the formulation of counterarguments and synthesis of information.

Through analysis, students divide complex information into manageable parts, illustrating relationships of ideas and drawing conclusions (Reichenbach, 2001). This process ensures individual comprehension, helping students effectively restate concepts in their own words. Paraphrasing relies on critical thinking strategies, including critical reading, comprehension, and analysis of original texts, while maintaining academic integrity and proper citation practices. By applying cognitive skills, students can paraphrase effectively, avoiding plagiarism and preserving the original author's ideas.

### **2.1. Quizlet AI: A Digital Learning Platform**

Being normalized in daily life, technology has been integrated into language learning. Technological advancements have assisted teachers in their classrooms by providing students with opportunities to directly interact with different technologies (Alabbad and Bin Hawamel, 2020). Quizlet AI is an effective tool for repetition, motivating learners, and introducing variety into vocabulary lessons (Skattenborg, 2020). It also increases students' persistence and engagement in language learning, making it a beneficial approach to studying second language vocabulary (Anjaniputra and Salsabila, 2018). The students find Quizlet AI motivating and diverse, enhancing their learning process. They also perceive it as user-friendly and effective due to its access and ease of use (Dizon, 2016).

The platform's open nature raises concerns about accuracy and reliability, as user-generated content can contain errors (Bi, 2019). Additionally, the disparity between the mobile and desktop versions limits learners' ability to fully utilize the platform's capabilities (Dizon, 2016). Technical limitations, lack of adaptive tasks, and limited contextualized learning options impede vocabulary acquisition. To maximize efficacy, integrating complementary resources and ensuring structured instructional support is crucial.

### **2.2. Quizlet AI for Vocabulary Development and Critical Paraphrasing Skills**

Quizlet AI Vocabulary is an online platform that promotes autonomous vocabulary learning among students. It is a mobile-friendly tool that offers an innovative and enjoyable approach to vocabulary acquisition. Research has shown that Quizlet AI Vocabulary increases students' motivation to learn vocabulary (Setiawan and Wiedarti, 2020) and enhances acquisition, retention, and recall, providing personalized learning experiences that boost students' engagement and motivation. It is an essential component of modern language education, supporting differentiated instruction and fostering autonomous learning.

Vocabulary acquisition is crucial for effective speaking, reading, and writing (Richards and Renandya, 2002). The integration of Quizlet AI Vocabulary and critical paraphrasing fosters language proficiency, academic productivity, writing skills, and critical thinking. This technology-assisted tool enables learners to acquire, practise, and test language competencies, thus, contributing to the development of critical paraphrasing skills.

Quizlet AI leverages spaced repetition techniques and multimodal learning strategies to reinforce vocabulary retention (Vargas, 2011). Effective paraphrasing requires learners to restructure sentences and manipulate grammatical patterns without altering the intended meaning (Keck, 2006). Quizlet AI Vocabulary facilitates vocabulary acquisition, empowering learners to actively construct knowledge and prepare for paraphrasing tasks. The strategic integration of Quizlet AI Vocabulary tools within educational programs serves as a catalyst for the development of critical paraphrasing skills, equipping students with the competence to articulate complex ideas, effectively paraphrase texts, and advance their academic writing proficiency.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Quizlet has gained popularity in language education, yet evidence of its educational impact remains scant. This study investigates whether Quizlet can enhance students' critical paraphrasing skills, thereby promoting learner-controlled and technology-supported approach to foreign language learning. This would lead us to assume that Quizlet AI vocabulary may help EFL students understand proper contextual usage and facilitate effective paraphrasing process in different contexts.

#### 3.1. Research Design and Data Collection

To achieve the objectives, a qualitative method was used. A quasi-experiment was utilized as data collection instrument with a group of EFL students to assess their ability to critically paraphrase texts using Quizlet AI vocabulary. The present study involved a population of eighty (80) 3<sup>rd</sup> year students from the department of English in Mostaganem University in the academic year 2024-2025.

The informants were taught essential paraphrasing skills and were evaluated on how well they could express original ideas using alternative wording with their critical paraphrasing abilities measured before and after the intervention. Selecting this number of participants keeps a balance between statistical reliability and practical feasibility, making the study purposeful

The study addresses the issue of plagiarism through copying and pasting without respecting the proper rules of paraphrasing in general and, in particular, critical paraphrasing, due to the students' limited vocabulary load. The aim is to help EFL students overcome this issue through the use of Quizlet AI vocabulary to enhance their critical paraphrasing skills and the quality of their academic writing styles.

The study refers to the use of Quizlet AI vocabulary (independent variable), where we tried to capture its effect in enhancing students' critical paraphrasing skills for high-quality of academic writing (dependent variable). The quasi-experimental design involves two structured groups: a controlled group using traditional paraphrasing methods and an experimental group in a pre-test, post-test, formative test and final test design, integrating Quizlet AI vocabulary.

This design clearly illustrates the cause-effect relationship between the variables. It specifically highlights the impact of Quizlet AI vocabulary implementation on students' critical paraphrasing competence. Thus, any alterations observed in the dependent variable can be attributed to influence the independent variable. This approach was chosen so that qualitative data could be used to analyse and interpret the effect of Quizlet AI Vocabulary on critical paraphrasing, in particular, students' paraphrasing process, perceptions, and attitudes regarding this digital tool.

#### 3.2. Data Analysis

To examine the data obtained from four tests (pre-test, post-test, formative test, and final test), SPSS Statistics Pro chart was adapted. Eighty (80) test papers were gathered for correction and analysis. Two distinct groups were employed. Both groups were composed of forty (40) students: a controlled group using traditional method, and an experimental one using Quizlet AI for vocabulary replacement for critical paraphrasing.

##### 3.2.1. Pre-test Analysis

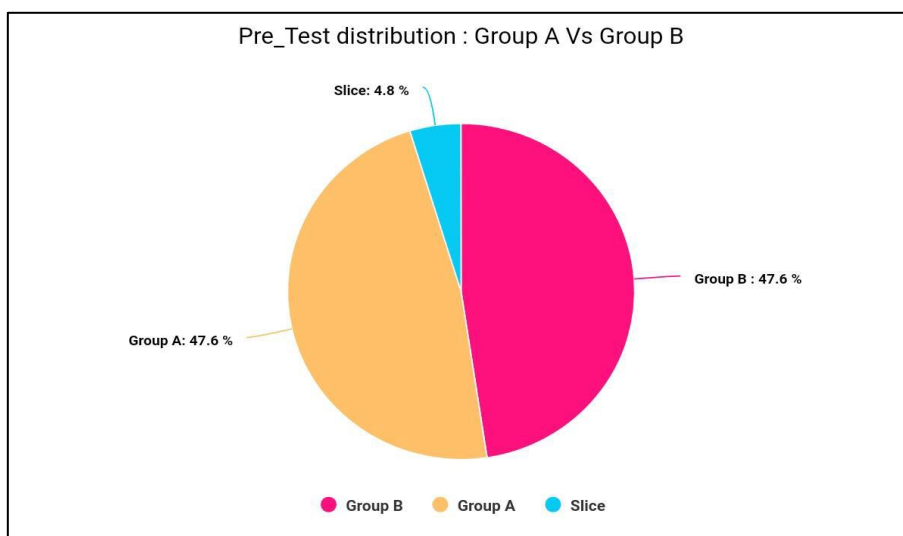
The pre-test means percentages distribution between the two groups demonstrates that both groups have the same percentage scores (47, 6%), which indicates that they had low initial

performance in critical paraphrasing and replacement of formal vocabulary during the paraphrasing process. The comparison emphasizes that there was no significant difference in the beginning at the level of proficiency between both groups, ensuring a fair and valid analysis for the later analysis using Quizlet AI vocabulary.

Concerning the seven criteria results, the mean scores varied across the criteria. Firstly, depth of understanding, the majority of students in both groups got grades below average (20%/47.6%), which means that they couldn't understand and interpret the material. As far as critical referring, semantic transformation, and vocabulary precision are concerned, the participants had the same mean scores (15%\ 47.6%).

**Table 1: Pre-test Criteria Marks**

Criterion	Weight (%)	Marks out of 47.6%
Depth of Understanding	20%	9.52
Critical Referring	15%	7.14
Semantic Transformations	15%	7.14
Vocabulary Precision	15%	7.14
Grammar and Mechanics	10%	4.76
Clarity and Coherence	15%	7.14
Originality and Creativity	10%	4.76
Total	100%	47.6



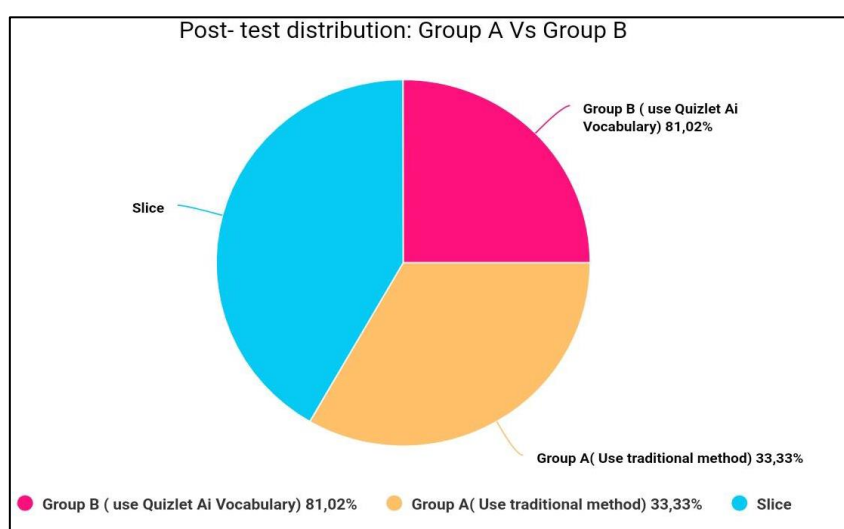
**Figure 1: Pre-Test Distribution**

**Post-test Analysis**

The data presented in the table are the final mark scores of the post-test. The table below shows the comparison between two groups: the controlled group that used the traditional method for vocabulary replacement, and the second group, which is the experimental one that used Quizlet AI vocabulary for vocabulary replacement. It is noticed that the total score of control group (A) was 33.33%, while the total score average of experimental group (B) was 81.02%.

**Table 2: Post Test Performance Comparison Table of Final Marks (Group A Vs Group B)**

Evaluation Criteria	Group A (%)	Group B (%)
Depth of Understanding	32.0%	82.0%
Critical Referring	30.0%	80.0%
Semantic Transformations	31.0%	83.0%
Vocabulary Precision	33.0%	85.0%
Grammar and Mechanics	34.0%	80.0%
Clarity and Coherence	36.0%	82.0%
Originality and Creativity	35.0%	78.0%
Use of Quizlet AI Vocabulary	N/A	85.0%
Average Total Score	33.33%	81.02%



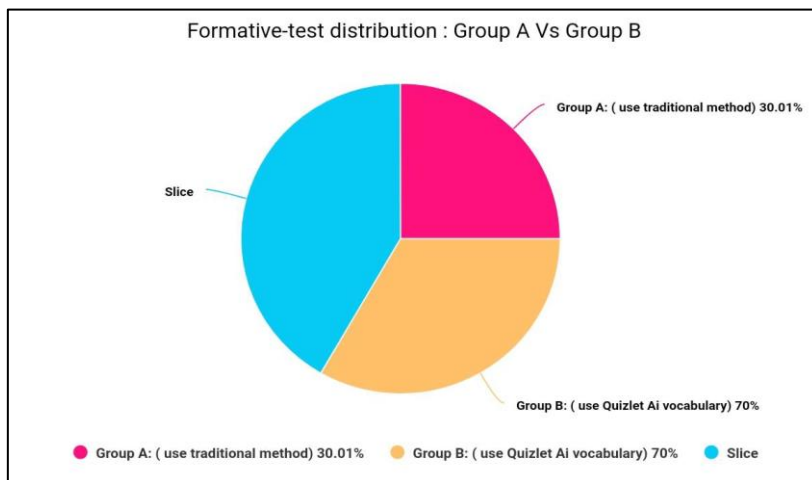
**Figure 2: Post Test Distribution**

**Formative-Test Analysis**

The data demonstrated in the table are the mark scores of formative tests. Therefore, the table shows the comparison between two groups: the controlled group that used the traditional method for vocabulary replacement and the second group, which is the experimental one that used Quizlet AI vocabulary for the same purpose. So, we notice that the total score of the controlled group (A) was 30.01%, while the total score average of experimental group (B) was 70%.

**Table 3: Formative Test Performance Comparison of Final Marks (G A Vs G B)**

Evaluation Criteria	Group A (%)	Group B (%)
Depth of Understanding	28.8%	72.2%
Critical Referring	27.0%	70.4%
Semantic Transformations	27.9%	72.6%
Vocabulary Precision	29.7%	74.3%
Grammar and Mechanics	30.6%	69.9%
Clarity and Coherence	32.4%	71.7%
Originality and Creativity	31.5%	67.9%
Use of Quizlet AI Vocabulary	N/A	70.0%
Average Total Score	30.01%	70%



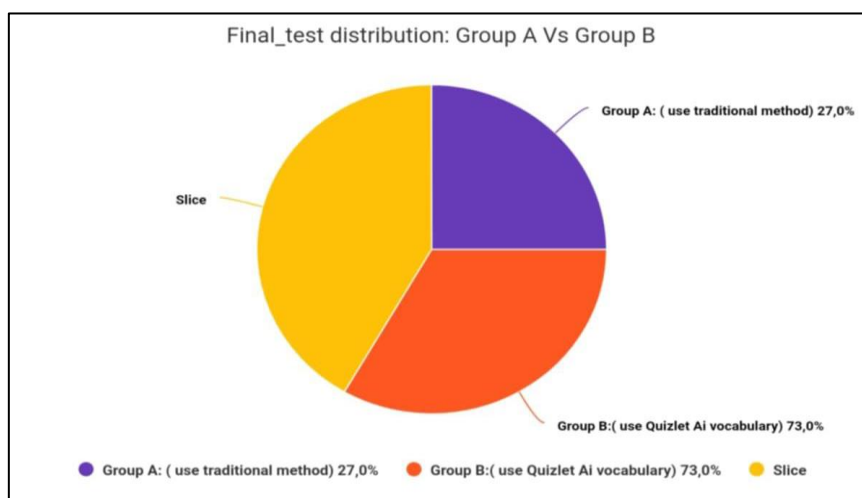
**Figure 3: Formative-Test Distribution**

**Final Test Analysis**

The data illustrated in the table are the mark scores of the final test. The table below shows a comparative analysis between two groups: the controlled group that used the traditional method for vocabulary replacement, and the experimental group that used Quizlet AI for vocabulary. We can say that the total score of the experimental group (B) was 73%, contrary to the total score average of the controlled group (A), which was 27%.

**Table 4: Final Test Performance of Final Marks Group A Vs Group B**

Evaluation Criteria	Group A (%)	Group B (%)
Depth of Understanding	25.91%	75.30%
Critical Referring	24.29%	73.44%
Semantic Transformations	25.09%	75.67%
Vocabulary Precision	26.72%	77.51%
Grammar and Mechanics	27.54%	72.87%
Clarity and Coherence	29.15%	74.79%
Originality and Creativity	28.35%	70.79%
Use of Quizlet AI Vocabulary	N/A	73.79%
Average Total Score	27%	73%



**Figure 4: Final-Test Distribution**

#### 4. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The pre-test results show that the students have a minimum ability to rephrase or paraphrase meaningfully and accurately precise use of vocabulary, accuracy in spelling, and sentence structure. Surprisingly, in grammar and mechanics, originality and creativity, both groups had an above-average mark (10% - 47.6%). This implies that they made spelling and writing mistakes because of their limited proficiency in paraphrasing passages in their own style with proper citations. Overall, the findings suggest that the students demonstrate weak critical paraphrasing skills and tend to rely on informal vocabulary.

The post-test results reveal a substantial performance gap between Group A (using a traditional vocabulary replacement strategy for critical paraphrasing process) and Group B (using Quizlet AI vocabulary for the same purpose). The experimental group (B) achieved a total average score of 81.02% compared to the controlled group (A) 33.33%. The data clearly highlighted the effectiveness of Quizlet AI vocabulary in enhancing critical paraphrasing skills for high-quality of academic writing.

Concerning the criteria for the controlled group vs. the criteria for the experimental group, the mean scores are valid for each criterion. Beginning with, the depth of understanding, the experimental group (B) got above 80%, and the controlled group (A) 32%. This suggests that the use of Quizlet AI vocabulary helps learners better grasp the meaning of complex words clearly and deeply.

As far as critical referring is concerned, there was also a comparative analysis of score percentages between the groups, with group A having a lower score (30%) compared to group B (80%). This shows that Quizlet AI vocabulary support may enable students to process, comprehend, and explain information in their own styles, with proper citation. Likewise, in semantic transformations and vocabulary precision, the controlled group (A) scored 31% and 33%, whereas the experimental group (B) scored 83% and 85%. This explains clearly that (B) performed better than (A) thanks to the assistance of the Quizlet AI vocabulary tool that allowed them to improve their ability to rephrase, reframe, and manipulate sentence structures efficiently.

In addition, this application helped them select the correct and accurate vocabulary. There was also progress regarding the experimental group (B) performance in grammar and mechanics, clarity and coherence, originality and creativity, in which students had excellent scores between 78% and 82%, better than the controlled group (A), scoring between 34% and 36%.

Moving forward to the usage of Quizlet AI vocabulary, this criterion is an exclusive one, because it was only for the experimental group (B) that showed a high score 85%, representing effective integration of Quizlet AI vocabulary in their process of critical paraphrasing and writing process, which helped them avoid confusion and misunderstanding complex vocabulary. Therefore, this validates the relevance and usability of the tool in real academic tasks and contexts.

The formative test results revealed a performance gap between the controlled group (A) using the traditional method for vocabulary replacement for the critical paraphrasing process, and the experimental group (B) using Quizlet AI vocabulary for vocabulary replacement during the paraphrasing task. The experimental group had achieved a high total score of 70%, whereas the controlled group had a total score of 30, 01%.

Regarding the criteria for the controlled group vs. those of the experimental one, the mean scores are valid for each criterion. To start with, the depth of understanding in experimental group (B) reached 72.2%, more than the controlled group (A) at 28.8%. This demonstrates that the use of Quizlet AI vocabulary helps learners better understand the meanings of complex words more clearly and deeply.

The results also demonstrated a high score for the experimental group (B) in both critical referring 70.4%, and semantic transformations 72.6%, while the controlled group (A) had lower average scores in both previous criteria 27%, and 27.9%. This confirms that the effectiveness of Quizlet AI vocabulary helps learners vary their language and foster critical engagement with vocabulary.

In terms of vocabulary precision and grammar mechanics, the experimental group (B) again had achieved higher scores 74.3% and 69.9 %, compared to the controlled group (A) 29.7% and 30.6%. For both clarity and coherence, originality and creativity, the experimental group (B) performed better (71.7 and 67.9) than the controlled one (A) 32.4 and 32.4. This application not only increased linguistic accuracy but also assisted students foster clear thinking and be more creative in their writing. Finally, the use of Quizlet AI vocabulary for the experimental group (B) scored a high average (70 %). This demonstrated successful integration of AI-powered tool in the process of learning in general and writing in particular.

The final test results reveal a substantial performance gap between group A (using traditional vocabulary replacement strategy for critical paraphrasing process) and group B (using Quizlet AI vocabulary for replacing vocabulary for critical paraphrasing). The experimental group (B) achieved a total average score of 73%, compared to the controlled group (A) 27%. The data clearly highlighted the effectiveness of Quizlet AI vocabulary in enhancing critical paraphrasing skills for high-quality of academic writing.

Concerning the criteria for the controlled group vs. those of the experimental group, the mean scores are valid for each criterion. Beginning with, depth of understanding, the experimental group (B) had a higher score of 75.30%, than the controlled one (A) 25.91%. This suggests that the use of Quizlet AI vocabulary helps learners comprehend the meaning of complex words more clearly and deeply.

For critical referring, there was also a comparative analysis of score percentages between both groups, in which group (A) had a low score of 24.29%, compared to group (B) that scored higher 73.44%. This indicates that Quizlet AI vocabulary support may help students process, comprehend, and explain information in their own styles, with proper citation. Likewise, in semantic transformations and vocabulary precision, group (A) scores were 25,09 %, and 26,72 %, whereas the experimental group (B) results were 75,67%, and 73,0%. This clearly demonstrates that group (B) performed better than group (A) due to the assistance of the Quizlet AI vocabulary tool, which allowed them to improve their ability to rephrase, reframe, and manipulate sentence structures efficiently.

It is worth saying that the application helped students select the appropriate vocabulary. There is an improvement regarding the experimental group (B) performance in grammar and mechanics, clarity and coherence, and originality and creativity. The experimental group's scores ranged from 70.79% to 74.79%, more than the controlled group (A) with scores between 27.54 %, and 29.15%. Moving forward to the usage of Quizlet AI vocabulary, this criterion is an exclusive one, because it was only for the experiment group (B) that achieved a high score of 73.79%, representing an effective integration of Quizlet AI vocabulary in critical

paraphrasing and writing process. This helped them avoid confusion and misunderstanding of complex vocabulary, and validates the relevance and usability of this tool in real academic tasks and contexts.

## 5. PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

One design consideration is to provide additional guidance on critical analysis prior to the first paraphrase task. Educators can prompt students to articulate their position on the source text, evaluate the strength of its arguments, and justify their choices for both the paraphrase and the accompanying critical commentary. Further scaffolding and illustration of potential source texts for practice might enhance transfer opportunities. To reinforce the initial and final design tasks, instructors could share an exemplary student model to bolster confidence and clarify objectives, enhancing the written prompts offered in the platform.

To help both educators and students use AI vocabulary for critical paraphrasing, it is important to say that the goal should not be to simply replace words, but to genuinely understand and express ideas. Teachers can encourage students to first read and interpret the original text in their own words before using AI tools, focusing on meaning rather than surface-level synonyms. On the other hand, students should be guided to question AI-generated paraphrases by checking whether the original intent, tone, and accuracy are preserved. It is also helpful to compare multiple versions, highlight key terms that should not be altered, and why certain word choices are better than others. Finally, both educators and learners should treat AI as a support tool rather than a shortcut, using it to expand vocabulary, explore alternative phrasing, and strengthen critical thinking skills.

Continued peer-review engagement might benefit learners ready to synthesize course insights or prioritize contextually relevant source materials. Students' heightened approximation to authorial intention in subsequent stages signals that a wider variety of source texts could stimulate a broader array of stance choices and enrich related analyses; yet, a careful balance between content novelty and tactile revisitation remains crucial to develop deeper textual engagement.

## 6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study offers new insights into EFL students' critical paraphrasing, filling an important gap in the literature on paraphrasing and Quizlet AI vocabulary. Nevertheless, the findings are subject to certain limitations that future research could address. First, only undergraduate students at a single university in Algeria participated in the study, hindering understanding of how learners throughout the country or beyond might respond. Expanding the participant pool could reveal the students' characteristics that influence how Quizlet AI vocabulary affects critical paraphrasing, as well as new task designs that further enhance criticality. Second, the study examined critical paraphrasing during one semester only. Investigating longer-term effects on criticality, or its gradual development in an initial study followed by a focus on creativity, might uncover distinct learning flows.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Integrating AI vocabulary tools, particularly Quizlet, into EFL instruction deepens understanding of paraphrasing as a critical communicative skill and enhances students' ability to produce high-quality, critically engaged paraphrases. Challenges associated with lexical

access impede effective paraphrasing, and efficient use of vocabulary tools alleviates cognitive load and expands lexical choice. Critical paraphrasing is further enabled when the tools employed generate appropriate vocabulary choices and reinforce learners' engagement with the source content, stance, and interpretative originality. The considerable demand to clarify the constructs under investigation broadens the theoretical framing of paraphrase production and affords a more nuanced identification of criticality. The findings have important implications for understanding the vocabulary knowledge necessary for successful paraphrasing, particularly vital for higher-order writing tasks in which students are expected to engage critically with and respond to source materials.

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