



QuillBot as a Digital Writing Tool: An Analysis of Writing Improvement and the Development of Beginner Writers

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Abstract: Beginner students often face difficulties in academic writing, such as organizing ideas, choosing correct grammar, and expressing information in their own words. Because of this, many students use QuillBot as a writing support tool. This study aims to understand how QuillBot helps beginner writers become more independent in academic writing. The research used a mixed-method approach with 30 students from the English Language and Literature Department at the State University of Medan, with data collected through a Likert-scale questionnaire and open-ended reflections. The findings show that more than 70% of the students use QuillBot frequently in their writing tasks. Most students said that QuillBot helps improve grammar accuracy, sentence clarity, and paraphrasing skills, and also increases their confidence in writing. The summarizing feature also helps students identify and restate main ideas. However, 59% of the students noted that using QuillBot too much may reduce creativity and lead to dependency. The study concludes that QuillBot is helpful as a supporting tool for writing, but it should be used in balance. Students still need to practice writing independently so they can develop their own writing style and confidence.

Keywords: Academic Writing; Paraphrasing; QuillBot; Summarizing; Writing Independence

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the most challenging skills for beginner learners, especially in a foreign or second language. They are required to master grammar, develop vocabulary, organise ideas, and at the same time find their own voice. According to Andrea A. Lunsford (2007), the teaching of writing should not merely focus on correcting errors, but also help writers see themselves as authors who are able to understand their audience and make deliberate choices in their texts. Similarly, Ken Hyland (2003) explains that academic writing development requires both linguistic mastery and social awareness, because writing is always shaped by interaction with readers and communities of practice. These perspectives show that writing is not just a technical skill, but also a cognitive and social activity that requires scaffolding to move novice learners from dependence to independence.

In recent years, the emergence of AI-powered writing tools such as QuillBot has added new possibilities in this process. Benjamin Lira (2025) emphasises that AI-based writing assistance can enhance learning if it is used as a scaffold, but it should not replace the learner's own agency. QuillBot itself provides functions such as paraphrasing, grammar checking, vocabulary improvement, and summarising, which are designed to support users in improving their writing quality. According to

information from QuillBot's academic resources (2023), the tool has been promoted as a partner for students in research and writing tasks, aiming to help them correct, rephrase, and condense information into clearer forms. However, scholars such as Latifah et al. (2024) caution that while the tool saves time, over-reliance may hinder the development of critical thinking and writing autonomy. This creates an important question: does QuillBot genuinely empower beginner writers to take control of their writing, or does it encourage them to depend too heavily on machine assistance?

Central to this discussion are the core skills of paraphrasing and summarising, which allow learners to interact with source texts and express knowledge in their own words. Chris Callison-Burch (2003) shows that paraphrasing requires both meaning preservation and stylistic variation, and even advanced writers often struggle to paraphrase effectively without falling into surface-level word substitution. For summarising, McCombes (2020) provides practical academic guidance by showing how writers can condense complex information into clear and concise main points, demonstrating comprehension and critical selection. Paul Michiels (2022) also stresses that teaching paraphrasing strategies reduces plagiarism risks and builds student confidence, while summarising instruction develops clarity and organisation. These insights highlight why paraphrasing and summarising are essential for beginner writers: by learning to restate and condense texts, students not only avoid plagiarism but also gradually construct their own independent authorial voice.

Recent studies from 2022 to 2024 show that QuillBot provides many benefits for students in writing. Kurniati & Fithriani (2022) found that postgraduate students felt helped by QuillBot because it reduced their writing anxiety. Budianto et al. (2022) explained that summarising improves comprehension and accuracy, though without practice students tend to copy. Kim (2023) showed that QuillBot improved sentence complexity, vocabulary, and readability. Mohammad et al. (2023) reported that students were enthusiastic when using QuillBot, especially for paraphrasing. In 2024, studies by Laila & Daulay, Latifah et al., Asmara & Kastuhandani, Thohir et al., and El-Garawany supported similar results, showing that QuillBot enhances fluency, reduces grammar errors, increases confidence, and makes paraphrasing easier, though overuse may limit critical thinking and independence. Indonesian experts also highlight the importance of academic writing skills. Dirgeyasa (2017) stressed the value of essay writing, summarising, and paraphrasing; Basori (2018) emphasised coherence, cohesion, and critical thinking; and Rustan et al. (2020) noted the need for clear and systematic argumentation. Overall, QuillBot can effectively support writing, but it must be balanced with direct practice to maintain students' independence.

Taken together, these studies confirm that QuillBot can support learners in moving “from copying to creating.” Yet most of the evidence so far has focused on short-term performance indicators such as grammar accuracy, paraphrasing quality, or self-reported perceptions. Few have explored the deeper question of how QuillBot shapes the independence and identity of beginner writers. Furthermore, while systematic reviews have acknowledged the risk of over-use, they rarely address how students can balance AI support with their own creative processes. This is the gap that the present article seeks to address. By focusing not only on measurable improvements but also on the empowering potential of QuillBot, this study investigates how QuillBot enables beginner writers to become more independent in writing.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Previous Studies on Writing and AI Tools

Writing has long been recognised as one of the most demanding skills in language learning, and recent scholarship has paid particular attention to the role of paraphrasing and summarising as foundations for academic success. Michiels (2022) emphasised that explicit instruction in paraphrasing strategies is essential because many students tend to rely on surface-level word substitutions, which increases the risk of plagiarism. By teaching paraphrasing more systematically, learners can gradually build confidence in re-expressing ideas in their own voice, a skill closely linked to independent authorship. Alongside paraphrasing, summarising is also critical for academic literacy. McCombes (2020) described summarising as the process of condensing long or complex information into concise statements that preserve the main meaning, noting that this practice strengthens comprehension, organisation of ideas, and clarity in student writing.

More recent work continues to highlight the importance of these skills in academic contexts. Aprianoto et al. (2024) analysed university students’ paraphrasing techniques and found significant variation across learners, including differences by gender. Their study not only confirmed that paraphrasing remains a challenge but also revealed how learners adopt different strategies depending on their background and writing experience. Budianto et al. (2022), in a systematic review of summary writing between 2014 and 2021, concluded that summarising is a proven method for enhancing reading comprehension and writing accuracy, yet also warned that without consistent practice, students revert to copying rather than processing information. These studies collectively indicate that paraphrasing and summarising remain central challenges for student writers, especially in academic settings where independence and originality are required.

In parallel with traditional pedagogy, the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) tools has introduced new approaches to supporting these skills. Alharbi (2023) presented a pedagogical overview of automated writing assistance in foreign language classrooms, arguing that AI tools can support paraphrasing, summarising, and grammar by providing real-time feedback and examples that students can model. Burkhard (2022) further explored students' perceptions of AI-powered writing technologies and found that learners valued their efficiency and accessibility, but were also concerned that excessive reliance might reduce their own practice in paraphrasing and summarising. Similarly, Noor Hanim Rahmat (2025) investigated relationships between paraphrasing strategies in academic writing and confirmed that effective paraphrasing requires a combination of cognitive, linguistic, and strategic awareness. These findings point to a balance: while AI tools offer support in managing language difficulties, educators and students must ensure that they are used as scaffolding rather than as substitutes for authentic practice.

Studies on QuillBot in Academic Writing

Within the growing field of AI tools, QuillBot has received particular scholarly attention for its role in supporting academic writing. Research conducted between 2022 and 2024 has consistently examined its potential benefits and limitations. Kurniati and Fithriani (2022) reported that postgraduate students perceived QuillBot positively, particularly appreciating its paraphrasing function which helped reduce anxiety and improve their approach to writing. Kim (2023) carried out a quasi-experimental study with EFL students and found measurable improvements in syntactic complexity, lexical richness, and readability after using QuillBot, suggesting that the tool can directly influence linguistic quality. Similarly, Mohammad et al. (2023) found that students were enthusiastic in using QuillBot for paraphrasing, seeing it as an engaging way to strengthen language skills while also building confidence in academic expression.

Studies conducted in 2024 expanded this evidence base. Laila and Daulay (2024) confirmed strong positive perceptions, reporting that every participant agreed QuillBot improved their fluency and reduced grammatical errors. At a broader level, Latifah et al. (2024) synthesised 17 studies in a systematic literature review, concluding that QuillBot is efficient and accurate, yet warned that "overuse might hinder critical skill development." Their review highlighted the double-edged nature of AI support: while it helps students produce better texts quickly, it risks reducing opportunities for genuine skill growth. This concern was echoed in a phenomenological study by Asmara and Kastuhandani (2024), who documented how students valued QuillBot's convenience but admitted the danger of

becoming overly dependent on the tool instead of developing their own strategies.

From an instructional standpoint, QuillBot has also been tested in classroom contexts. Thohir et al. (2024) integrated QuillBot into paraphrasing instruction and described the process as “simple, instant, and effective,” enabling students to practise restating ideas in their own words. Their findings align with earlier arguments that paraphrasing, if scaffolded properly, strengthens writing independence. Finally, El-Garawany (2024) designed an intervention study and showed that QuillBot not only improved writing performance but also reduced writing apprehension and enhanced student self- efficacy. This combination of linguistic and affective benefits demonstrates the tool’s potential impact on learner development.

Taken together, these studies highlight both the promise and the limitations of QuillBot in academic writing. On one hand, it clearly improves sentence structure, vocabulary richness, paraphrasing, and summarising, while fostering more positive student attitudes. On the other hand, most of the research has concentrated on short-term outcomes improvements in grammar, readability, or self- reported perceptions without fully exploring the deeper issue of how QuillBot contributes to long-term independence and creative authorship. Few studies examine whether learners can transfer skills gained with QuillBot to contexts where the tool is not available. This gap points to the need for further research, and it is precisely the focus of the present article: to investigate not only how QuillBot improves writing performance but also how it empowers beginner writers to shift from dependence to independence.

3. METHOD

This study used a mixed-method approach that combined both quantitative and qualitative methods to gain a more complete understanding of how QuillBot supports beginner writers in developing their writing independence. A mixed-method design was chosen because it allows researchers to explore not only measurable patterns but also deeper meanings behind participants’ experiences. According to Schoonenboom and Johnson (2022), mixed-method research helps provide a broader and more accurate understanding of a phenomenon by integrating the strengths of both approaches in a single study. The participants were 30 beginner writers from the English Language and Literature Department at the State University of Medan, together with one expert lecturer in academic writing who reviewed and validated the data. In the quantitative phase, data were collected through a questionnaire containing multiple-choice and Likert-scale questions to measure students’ perceptions and attitudes toward using QuillBot. The questionnaire was distributed online via

Google Forms to make data collection more efficient and organised. After collecting the responses, the researchers analysed the data using descriptive statistics such as percentages and averages. To enrich the findings, the qualitative phase was conducted through short open-ended reflections and validation by the expert to explore students' deeper opinions and experiences about how QuillBot influenced their confidence and independence. This combination of methods allowed the researchers to gain both general patterns and detailed insights about the impact of QuillBot on beginner writers.

4. RESULT & DISCUSSION

Q1: Frequency of QuillBot Usage in Academic Writing

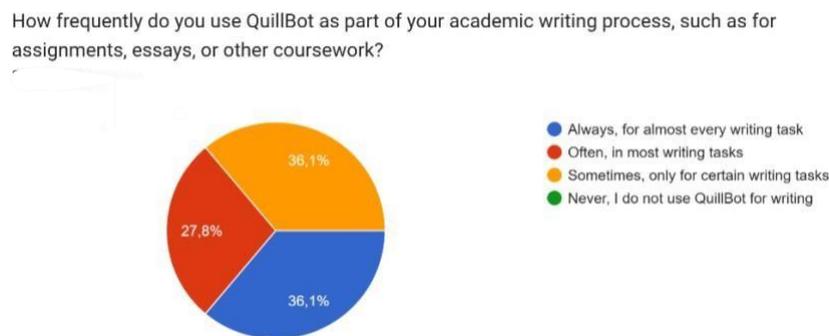


Figure 1. Frequency of QuillBot Usage in Academic Writing.

The first survey item asked how frequently students use QuillBot in their academic writing tasks such as essays, assignments, and coursework. The pie chart shows that 37.1% of respondents reported using QuillBot always, and another 37.1% stated they often use it in most writing activities. Meanwhile, 25.7% said they only use it sometimes, and none indicated that they never use it. This result reveals that the majority of students (over 70%) have made QuillBot an integral part of their writing routine. The frequent use demonstrates the platform's growing relevance as a writing support tool in academic settings. It also indicates students' increasing trust in AI-powered writing aids. The fact that only a small portion uses it occasionally may reflect differences in writing confidence or accessibility. Overall, the data suggest that QuillBot has become a consistent companion in students' writing processes.

Q2: Perceived Effect on Grammar Accuracy and Clarity

To what extent do you agree that QuillBot helps you improve grammar accuracy, sentence structure, and overall clarity in your writing?

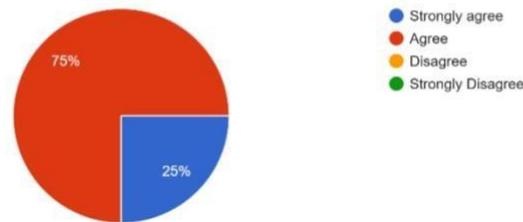


Figure 2. Perceived Effect on Grammar Accuracy and Clarity.

The second diagram shows that 74.3% of students agreed and 25.7% strongly agreed that QuillBot helps them improve grammar accuracy, sentence structure, and clarity. No respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. This strong consensus suggests that students view QuillBot as highly effective in correcting grammatical mistakes and organizing sentences logically. The result aligns with previous studies showing that grammar-assistance tools enhance learners' self-correction ability and linguistic awareness. The absence of negative responses also implies that QuillBot's AI corrections are generally accurate and accepted by users. Students likely value its ability to instantly highlight errors that traditional grammar lessons may not address in real time. Thus, QuillBot functions not only as an editing platform but also as a grammar-learning facilitator.

Q3: Understanding of Paraphrasing Skills

QuillBot has helped me better understand how to paraphrase texts by providing examples of how information can be restated in different words while keeping the original meaning.

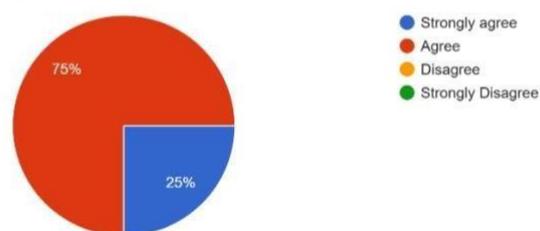


Figure 3. Understanding of Paraphrasing Skills.

The third survey focused on QuillBot's role in developing paraphrasing ability. The results are identical to the previous chart: 74.3% agreed and 25.7% strongly agreed that QuillBot helps them understand how to rephrase texts while maintaining the original meaning. This finding demonstrates that students perceive QuillBot's paraphrasing feature as a valuable educational aid. By offering multiple sentence rewrites, the tool exposes users to varied linguistic structures, improving their sense of sentence flexibility and vocabulary use. Students learn how to restate ideas more effectively and avoid plagiarism by maintaining

semantic accuracy. This aligns with the concept of “assisted learning,” where AI tools serve as examples of good language practice rather than direct substitutes for human creativity. The result highlights QuillBot’s potential as a meaningful writing mentor rather than just a shortcut.

Q4: Boost in Writing Confidence

Using QuillBot makes me feel more confident when writing academic essays because it provides immediate suggestions and corrections that I can learn from.

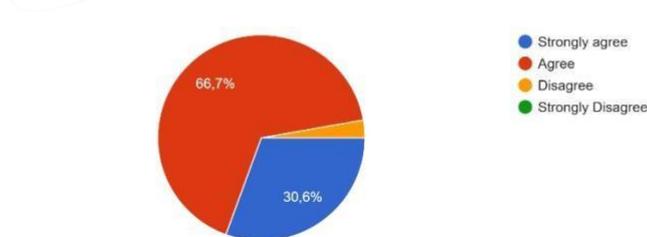


Figure 4. Boost in Writing Confidence.

The fourth chart illustrates that 65.7% of respondents agreed and 31.4% strongly agreed that using QuillBot makes them feel more confident when writing academic essays. Only a very small number (around 3%) disagreed. Students explained that QuillBot provides immediate suggestions and corrections, which reduce the fear of making mistakes. The sense of “safety net” allows them to focus on developing ideas instead of worrying about grammar or word choice. This confidence boost is a crucial aspect of writing fluency, especially for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. When students trust that their drafts can be polished through AI tools, they become more willing to take risks and write more freely. This confidence, however, should be balanced with awareness that genuine writing competence must still come from practice and reflection, not mere reliance on automated correction.

Q5: Improvement in Summarizing and Note-Taking Skills

The summarising feature in QuillBot has improved my ability to identify and condense the main ideas of a text, which is useful for academic reading and note-taking.

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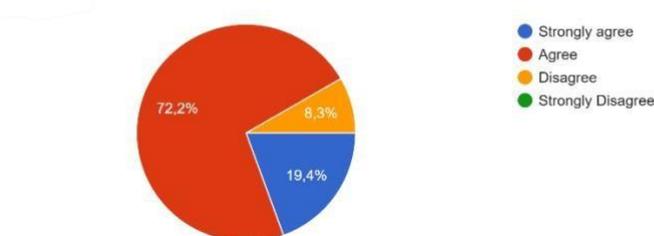


Figure 5. Improvement in Summarizing and Note-Taking Skills.

The fifth chart indicates that 71.4% of respondents agreed, 20% strongly agreed, and 8.6% disagreed that QuillBot’s summarizing feature helps them identify and condense main ideas from texts. These results show that most students find QuillBot’s summarizing tool

effective for academic reading, note-taking, and comprehension exercises. It helps them identify central arguments quickly, an important skill in research writing and literature review. The small portion who disagreed may represent those who prefer doing summaries manually to strengthen critical reading. Nevertheless, the data clearly suggest that QuillBot supports students in handling complex information and simplifying long texts—a crucial ability in the academic context.

Q6: How does QuillBot influence your confidence as a writer?

Table 1. Students' Perceived Influence of QuillBot on Writing Confidence.

No	Category	Summary Answer	Percentage
1	Improves grammar and writing style	Most students said QuillBot boosts their confidence because it helps correct grammar mistakes, improve sentence flow, and enhance vocabulary. They feel safer and more professional when writing.	53%
2	Increases confidence and motivation	Students feel encouraged to write longer texts and explore more ideas since QuillBot minimizes fear of making mistakes. It gives them a sense of comfort while drafting.	21%
3	Provides learning and self-improvement	Students learn from QuillBot's corrections by comparing before–after results, understanding how to improve clarity and structure.	15%
4	Helps paraphrasing / academic writing	QuillBot supports paraphrasing in research papers and essays, helping students restate ideas clearly and avoid plagiarism.	9%

The open-ended responses were categorized into several themes. Over half of the participants (53%) stated that QuillBot primarily improves grammar and writing style, making them more confident writers. 21% mentioned that it increases motivation and reduces anxiety, while 15% reported that it encourages learning and self-improvement. A smaller group (9%) found it especially helpful for academic paraphrasing. This thematic distribution reinforces the earlier findings from the Likert-scale questions. Students regard QuillBot not just as a grammar tool but as an aid that shapes their identity as developing writers. It builds their self-assurance and fosters a positive attitude toward writing tasks. This implies that integrating QuillBot in learning environments can help bridge the gap between language accuracy and writing confidence.

Q7: In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of using QuillBot in learning to write?

Table 2. Students' Perceived Disadvantages of QuillBot.

No	Category	Summary Answer	Percentage
1	Dependency reduces creativity	Most respondents warned that using QuillBot too often may reduce creativity and critical thinking, as writers might rely too much on AI-generated sentences.	59%
2	Loss of originality / unnatural tone	Some students said QuillBot sometimes makes writing sound robotic or less personal, changing the tone of the original text.	18%
3	Premium limitation / access issue	Several respondents mentioned limitations in the free version, such as restricted modes or shorter text length.	12%
4	Other minor issues	A few students noted that QuillBot occasionally misunderstands context or changes meaning unintentionally, but still found it generally helpful.	24%

The second open-ended analysis revealed a balanced perspective. 59% of respondents identified dependency and reduced creativity as the main disadvantages of using QuillBot. 18% pointed out a loss of originality, 12% mentioned premium access limitations, and 24% cited minor issues such as context inaccuracy. While students appreciate QuillBot's efficiency, they also acknowledge its risks. The findings indicate awareness among users that overreliance on AI might hinder independent language development. Some responses show that students still recognize the importance of human creativity and authenticity in academic writing. Therefore, instructors should guide learners to use QuillBot as a learning supplement rather than a replacement for critical thinking.

Q8: Suggest one way QuillBot could be used effectively in writing classes.**Table 3.** Students' Suggested Effective Uses of QuillBot.

No	Category	Summary Answer	Percentage
1	As a revision tool (draft checking)	The majority of students suggested using QuillBot for revising drafts. Students write first, then use QuillBot to check grammar and clarity before submission.	44%
2	As a learning / comparison activity	Students recommended comparing their original writing with QuillBot's version to understand language improvement and style differences.	26%
3	For paraphrasing practice	QuillBot can be used for paraphrasing and summarizing practice to help students learn to rewrite texts effectively and avoid plagiarism.	18%
4	For group / collaborative writing	Students proposed using QuillBot during peer or group writing activities to discuss and reflect on suggested changes together.	26%

Finally, the third open-ended question explored how QuillBot could be used effectively in classroom instruction. 44% recommended using it as a revision tool, where students first write their drafts and then improve them using QuillBot. 26% suggested using it as a learning and comparison activity, while 18% preferred it for paraphrasing exercises. The remaining 26% supported its use for group or collaborative writing activities. This reflects that students see QuillBot as a flexible learning companion rather than a shortcut. When integrated into writing pedagogy, it can foster peer learning, analytical thinking, and reflective practice. Students not only learn how to fix their grammar but also how to analyze why certain changes make their writing better. Such classroom practices encourage autonomy and deepen understanding of language use in real contexts.

5. CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that QuillBot is used very often by students and has a strong effect on their writing. More than 70% of the students said they always or often use QuillBot, which means it has become a regular part of their writing process. The data also shows that 74.3% agreed and 25.7% strongly agreed that QuillBot helps improve grammar and makes sentences clearer. The same percentages were also found in how QuillBot helps with paraphrasing, showing that students learn to restate ideas better while avoiding copying. Confidence also increased because 65.7% agreed and 31.4% strongly agreed that they feel more confident when writing after using QuillBot. For summarizing, 71.4% said QuillBot

helps them understand the main ideas in texts more easily and express them more clearly. However, 59% of students warned that using QuillBot too much can cause dependency and reduce creativity. This means that QuillBot is helpful, but it should be used in balance. Overall, QuillBot can be seen as a useful learning partner that guides students while they develop their writing skills. It works best when students use it to check, compare, and improve their drafts, instead of letting the tool do all the thinking. Students still need to practice writing independently so they can build their own style, ideas, and confidence. When used wisely, QuillBot not only helps students write better, but also supports them in slowly growing into more independent and responsible writers.

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