Supporting L2 Writing Using QuillBot

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Abstract
As Artificial Intelligence (AI) grows in accessibility and popularity, educators are faced with the challenge of adopting this new form of information disbursement. AI platforms could benefit language learning by providing individual writing support in addition to instructional support for the classroom teacher. AI platforms could pose risks to student fidelity with AI-produced work products. This paper will discuss and exemplify the use of QuillBot, an AI writing platform, that could be used as a teaching and learning tool for second language (L2) writing instruction. By using this technology to plan meaningful and student-tailored lessons, educators can continue to provide an interactive learning space for multilingual learners (MLs) in the language classroom.

Keywords
Artificial Intelligence (AI), language learning, teaching and learning tool, L2 writing instruction, multilingual learners (MLs)

Introduction

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) platforms emerge, teachers and academics are interested in exploring how this new technology supports multilingual learners' second language writing development. Teachers may integrate AI tools throughout the writing process – planning, drafting, editing, and revising. In the planning stage, AI tools may be used to help learners begin writing (Barrot, 2023) – a commonly challenging aspect for writers of all proficiency levels. Subsequently, in the drafting and editing stages, multilingual learners (MLs) could use AI as an editing tool to make suggestions on vocabulary usage, syntax, and discourse structure. One can simply prompt Chat GPT with the following request: "Hi, Chat. Can you please provide me with suggestions on how to fix the cohesion and coherence of this paragraph?" Ultimately, these tools have the potential to assist students across all stages of the writing process.

From a research perspective in second language writing, Jia et al. (2022) discovered that learners' writing skills improve with AI-generated corrective feedback. Additionally, toward the end of the writing process, students' language can be supported with Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) systems when implemented in a context-appropriate manner (Alharbi, 2023). This growing body of research indicates the potential of AI tools to support language learners at various stages of their language development.

Specifically, this teaching technique piece will highlight the utilization of QuillBot, a tool designed to bolster sentence structure and vocabulary proficiency among multilingual learners. However, before delving into strategies for incorporating QuillBot into instruction for multilingual learners, it is imperative to first examine the potential risks associated with AI.

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Risks of AI

Although AI provides various language support platforms, educators should view AI with a critical lens. Ethical considerations will include considerations relating to the AI platforms chosen. AI is limited in that it only knows the information that it has been given by its program users. According to Vaccino-Salvadore (2023), there is possible biased language generation and the perpetuation of stereotypes, discrimination, and prejudice in language learning interactions with AI. AI could produce misinformation, such as incorrect information relating to historical data. In his research, Barrot (2023) claims that teachers should provide students with appropriate ways to engage with technology, including ethical considerations and precautions. Therefore, it is essential to highlight the risk of AI platforms becoming biased, racist, and discriminatory based on information received.

      In the ML classroom, educators should be mindful of which programs will produce the most accurate language support. MLs are learning academic and communicative language, so teaching the differences between written and spoken language is imperative. AI is a tool to support the acquisition of these different language domains. Moreover, students should learn ways in which to use AI as a learning support tool and not as a tool for plagiarism. When using QuillBot as a teaching tool, educators should plan for student writing to occur within the classroom space and under their supervision. This will prevent any student from using this platform or any other AI writing tool to do their work for them.

QuillBot

QuillBot is an AI platform that provides writing support by displaying sentence structure and vocabulary variations in a side-by-side format (see Figure 1 below). A writer may input a sample of their writing and see the changes by mode, QuillBot's term for writing style. The modes available through the platform are labeled as standard, fluency, formal, academic, simple, creative, expand, and shorten. Each mode provides distinctive wording and phrasing at the platform's discretion. Additionally, there is a custom writing mode, with the premium account, that enables the writer to use writing style variations like Shakespeare, a social media influencer, and Gen Z slang, to name a few.

Figure 1
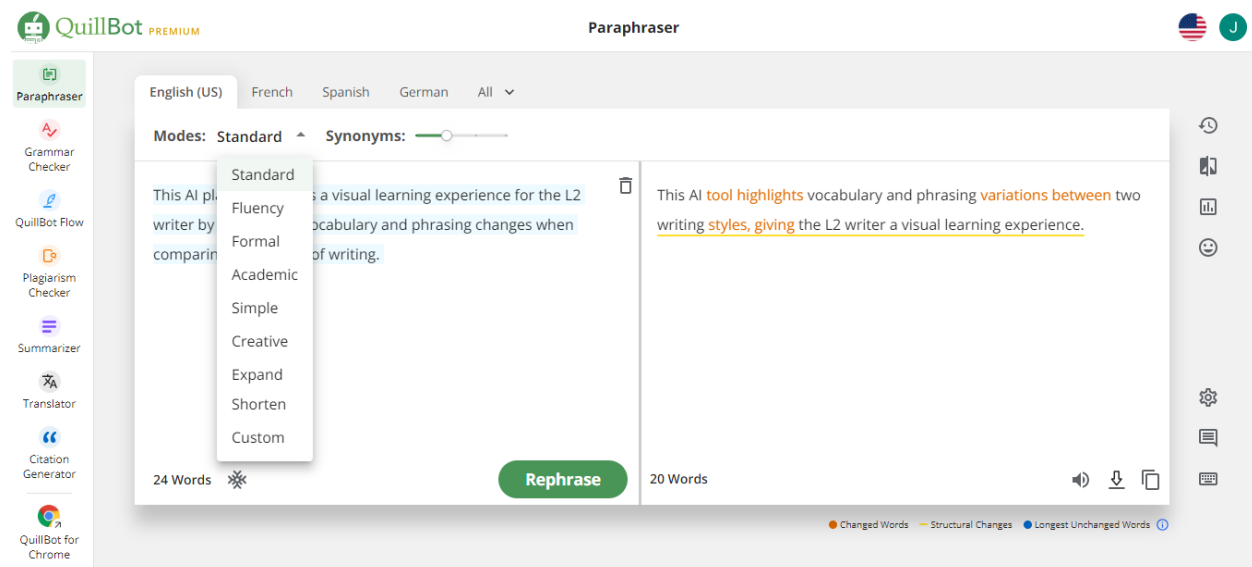
The platform is available in 26 languages and provides paraphrasing, a grammar checker, a plagiarism checker, QuillBot Flow which is a co-writer feature, a summarizer, a citation generator, and a translator feature. The grammar checker scans any writing input and makes grammar corrections and/or suggestions. The plagiarism checker scans writing for parts of the text that may not be cited correctly. The co-writer feature (see Figure 2) provides grammar, spelling, and phrasing suggestions to the right of the screen as the writer types into the QuillBot platform. It also provides feedback on writing similar to what a human instructor may give.

In the classroom, QuillBot may act as an additional resource for learning about different writing styles. When using the paraphrase tool in the program (see Figure 3), writing that is input into the left-hand side of the screen results in changes in phrasing and vocabulary on the right-hand side of the screen. A valuable aspect of this platform is that it provides a visual comparison of writing so the learner sees the changes that may happen throughout changes in writing style.

Figure 2
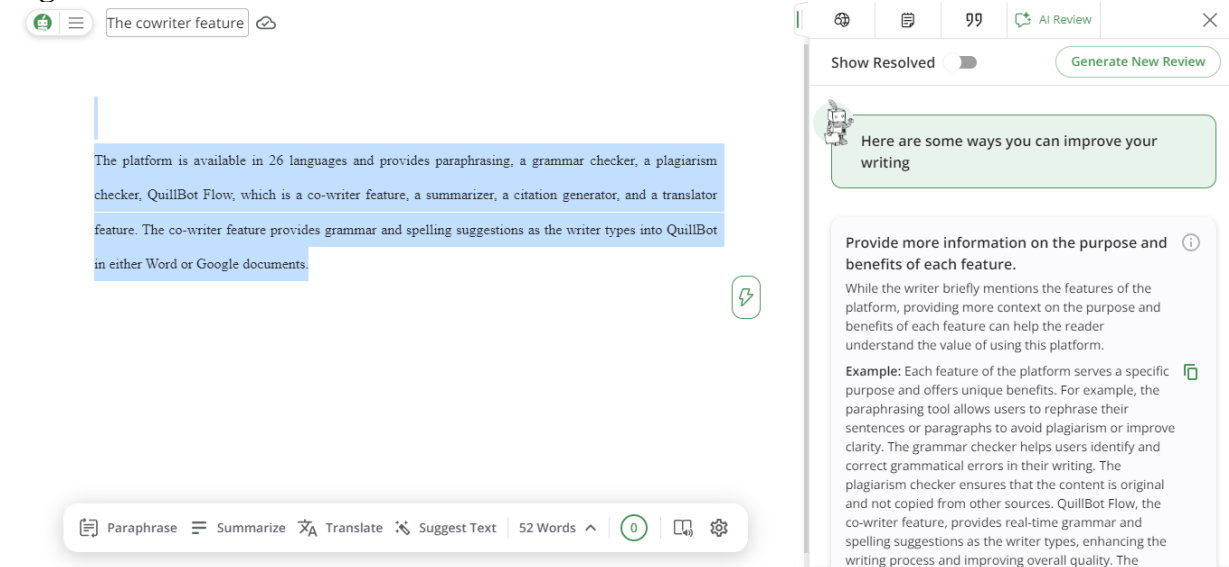
Figure 3
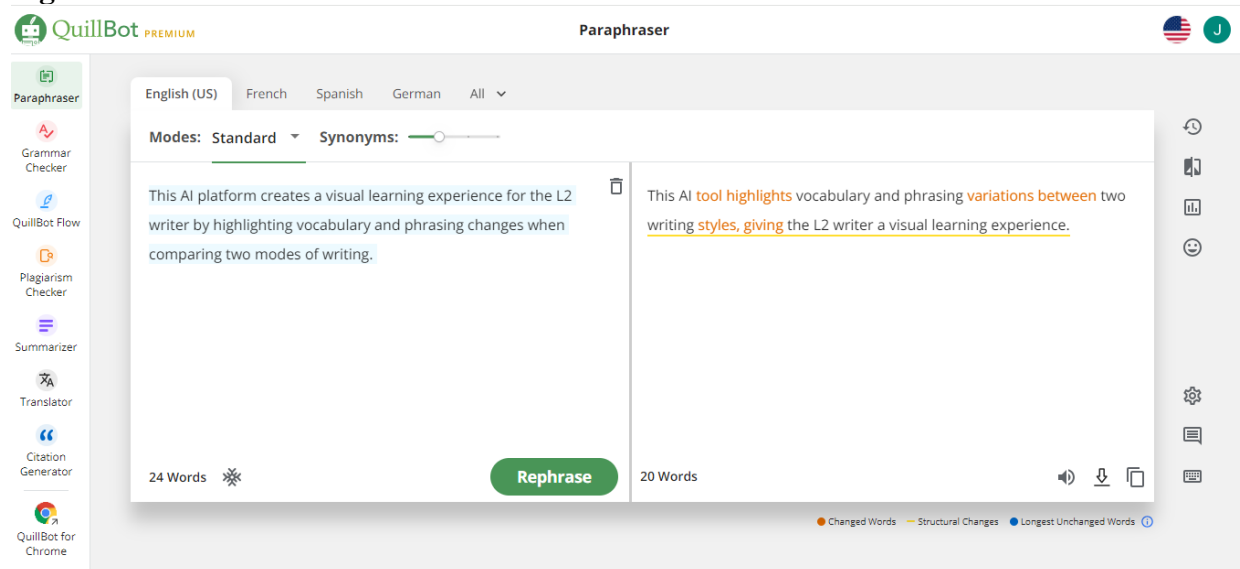
Teaching Example

When teaching narrative writing in a seventh-grade classroom, QuillBot could act as a co-teacher, aiding students in their writing process by providing suggested revisions. I will demonstrate how to use this platform for a 10-minute warm-up exercise.

Step 1: Provide a writing prompt asking students to write about their best birthday memory.
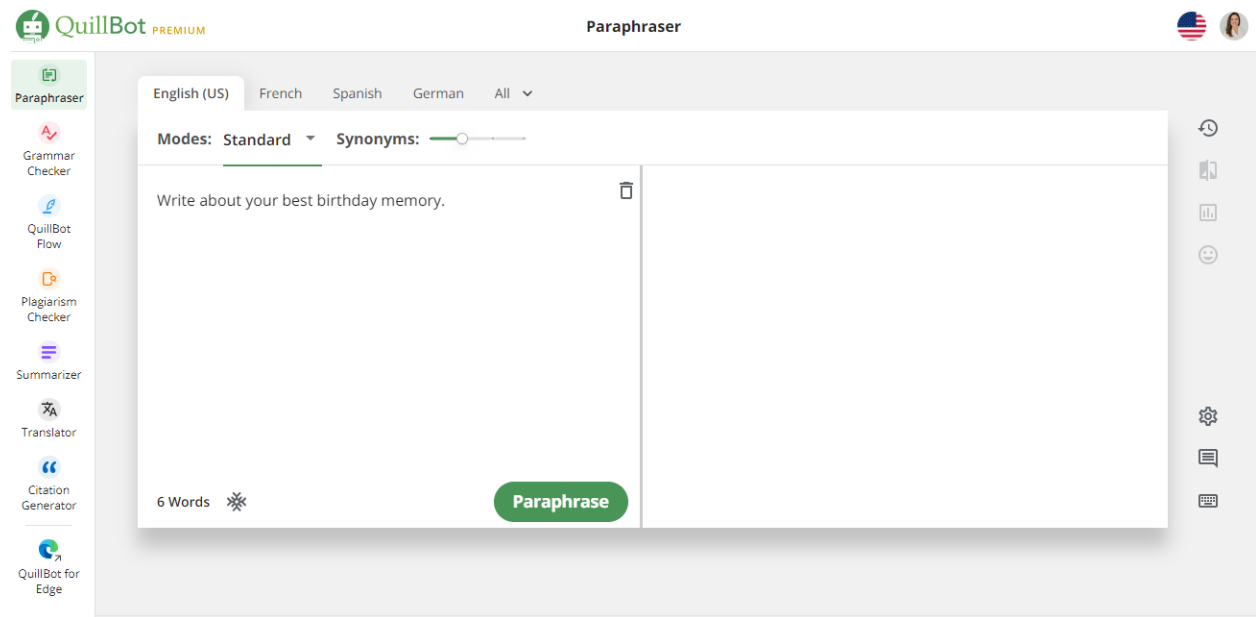
Step 2: Display a sample writing about a birthday memory in QuillBot.
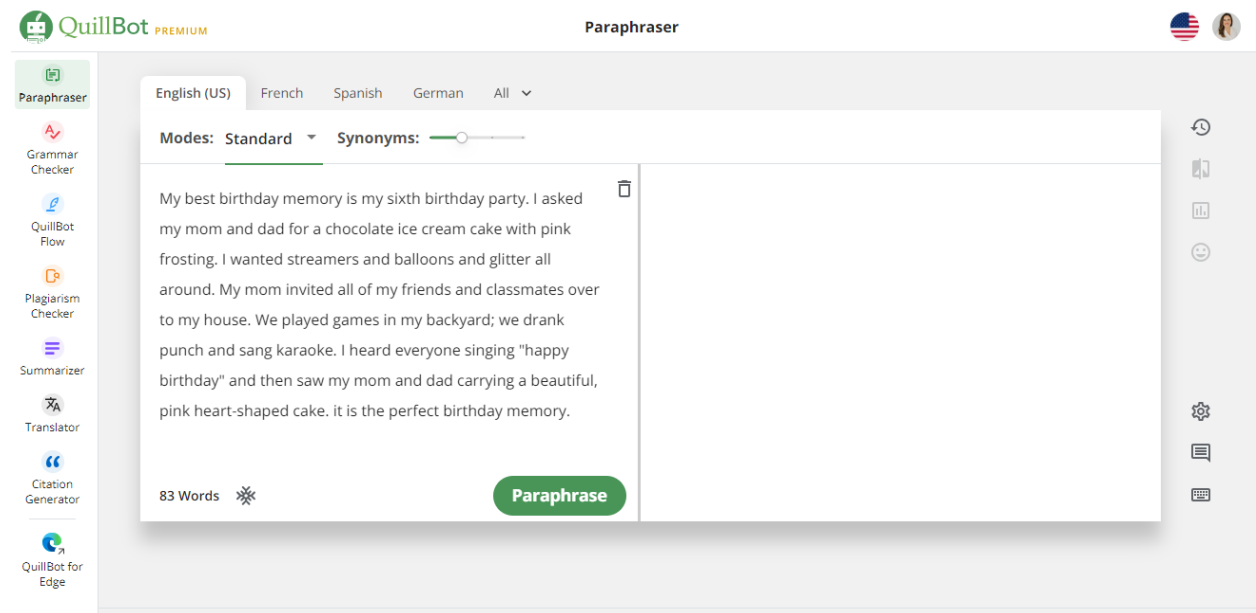
Step 3: Show the birthday memory sample in different genres of writing, discussing the variations in phrasing and vocabulary use. Students then compare and contrast the two genres - formal and academic below.

Formal

Academic

Step 4: Students will take their previous writing sample and write it in a different genre.

In a separate lesson, the students could divide into small groups, with their writing samples, and practice making changes to these samples when given a particular genre. By focusing on a particular genre, each group would have the opportunity to not only practice writing in this genre but also to work with other students to make genre-specific changes in phrasing and vocabulary. As a whole class activity, students would share their original writings and their new writings in the chosen genre for their group. Other groups would have the chance to make suggestions for changes or to ask questions about the reasoning behind the changes made. Samples from each student group would be compared in QuillBot to samples given by the platform. The class discussion would continue with a list of common features seen in each genre of writing. After a few lessons of writing practice as a whole group and in small groups, a final individual student assessment could be a writing assignment where students are given a sample of writing and asked to change it to a particular style.

L2 Writing & QuillBot

In the language classroom, QuillBot may be a tool for building student efficacy in L2 writing. QuillBot provides several supports for L2 writers, most notably the paraphrase tool. Using QuillBot's paraphrase feature, L2 writers may explore various styles of writing. This AI platform creates a visual learning experience for the L2 writer by highlighting vocabulary and phrasing changes when comparing two modes of writing, hence supporting the development of writing style variations for L2s.

Conclusion

Educators have the opportunity to integrate AI as a beneficial tool for writing in the classroom so students may use these programs effectively outside of the classroom. Leveraging platforms like QuillBot empowers teachers to assist L2 writers by providing grammar and phrasing suggestions, essentially allowing AI to function as a collaborative co-teacher, exemplifying writing learning processes.

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