

Paraphrasing – an overlooked, but fundamental language skill

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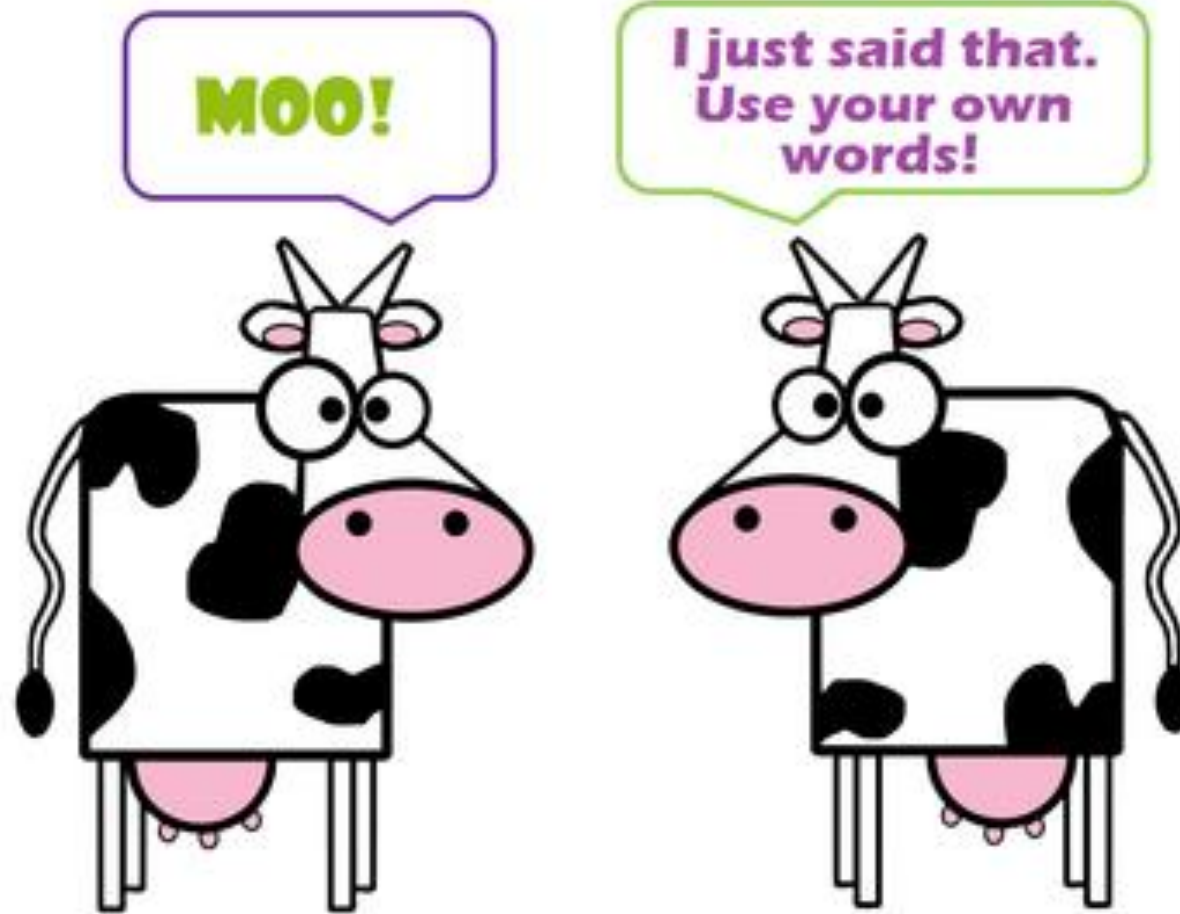


Today

1. The wh-'s of paraphrasing
 - a. What is it?
 - b. When is it used?
 - c. Why is it an important skill?
2. Methods of paraphrasing
3. Examples of activities
4. Best practice tips
5. Reflection



What is paraphrasing?





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To express the meaning (of the writer or speaker or something written or spoken) using different words, especially to achieve greater clarity.

- Oxford dictionary

A paraphrase of something is the same thing written or spoken using different words, often in a simpler and shorter form that makes the original meaning clearer.

- Cambridge dictionary





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When is it used?

1. As an alternative to a direct quotation.
2. To restate someone else's ideas without changing the meaning.
3. To support claims used, or provide evidence for, your own ideas.
4. To check your understanding.





Why is it an important skill?

1. Helps to avoid plagiarism.
2. Useful conversational strategy.
3. Shows you really understand the source text.
4. Useful in a testing context (e.g. IELTS).





Methods of paraphrasing

using only one of these methods is not enough – an effective paraphrase can combine many/all of these strategies.

1. Using synonyms.
2. Changing sentence structure.
3. Using active/passive forms.
4. Changing word forms.
5. Combine/split sentences.
6. Using positive/negative statements.
7. Using different grammar structures.
8. Any others?





Example activities

1. Synonym practice





Synonym practice

Many

Multiple

Several

A lot

A large number

Some

A number of

Countless

Myriad





Example activities

Find more activities around the room:

- Do they seem useful?
- Do you think they could work in your context?
- How might you need to adapt it?





Example activities

*points/competition at teacher's discretion

1. Synonym practice
2. Board races
3. Sentence paraphrasing
4. Using class texts
5. Paraphrasing longer texts
6. Individual paraphrasing practice
7. Any others you know/have used?



Reflection

1. Which activity was your favourite today?
2. Which of these activities seem useful for your context? Why?
3. Can you foresee any challenges?
4. Are there any that definitely wouldn't work? Why?
5. Any other questions?





Best practice

1. Teach the skills first.
2. Groups -> pairs -> individual. Don't move on until students are ready.
3. Teach students to evaluate paraphrases themselves.
4. Use familiar texts/topics at first, before moving to more challenging texts.
5. Practice it in writing AND speaking.



Thank you!

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