This dissertation consists of two manuscripts to explore how university-level English language learners (ELLs) learn to paraphrase. The first study explored how Arab English Language learners (AELLs) understand, perform, and evaluate written paraphrasing. A case study examined the data of five AELLs collected through three data collection sources: (a) background questionnaire, (b) paraphrasing task documents, and (c) semi-structured interviews. The data were coded and then individually compared for each of the five participants for similarities and differences and also to discover patterns among them. The findings of this study included that AELLs face difficulty with paraphrasing and their paraphrases are often evaluated as unacceptable. To support these AELLs, this study proposed a new definition of paraphrasing and a set of paraphrasing guidelines.

Based on the first paper, the second paper explored the use of the paraphrasing guidelines in instruction to support graduate ELLs in paraphrasing. Fourteen graduate ELLs participated in this study and their data, along with the instructor’s thoughts and ideas, were collected through six data sources including: background questionnaire, video instruction, pre-test and posttest, task documents, stimulation recall interviews, and teacher interviews. The findings of the study showed that the explicit instruction of paraphrasing has effectively supported the implementation of the guidelines. In addition, the participants’ outcomes in the posttest improved and their perception about using paraphrasing guidelines was positive and showed their willingness to use them in future.