

## EXPLORING THE REALIZATION OF COHESION AS A RESOURCE OF TEXT TEXTURE ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC WRITING

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to explore the realization of cohesion as text texture resource on undergraduate students' academic writing. The researchers were aware that students' writing might be affected by their understanding of what had been learned before. To write an academic writing was not easy for them since they should integrate knowledge either the content being writing or grammar including text texture. Texture of text were realized in cohesion devices namely reference, conjunction, ellipsis and lexical organization. In order to do this study, the researchers applied qualitative method, the population was academic writings texts that were written by students in 2021. Purposive random sampling strategy were applied to get the 12 samples of these writing specified only texts related to teaching and learning English. Data gained were identified and classified based on the view of resources of cohesion realization and then be analyzed and interpreted to get its result about the text texture. Based on the analysis it was found out that the realization of cohesion as resources of text texture were in reference that covered to personal, demonstrative and comparative references; conjunctions, ellipsis, substitution and lexical organization It was found out that cohesion resources were realized in reference, conjunction and repetition were mostly used. This fact might because of text types and students' limitation of using varieties realization of substitution, ellipsis and other lexical cohesion. It is hoped that the result of this study can give contribution to the English lecturers, especially to the lecturers of writing and grammar.

**Keywords:** *academic writing; cohesion; realization; text texture; undergraduate students.*

### INTRODUCTION

The significance of cohesive devices in both written and spoken texts cannot be overstated, as they play a crucial role in creating semantic connections within a text (Halliday 2014; Alyousef, 2021; Kifti et al., 2022; Tabari and Johnson, 2023; Ngongo, 2023; Galparvan, 2024). These devices, when applied at the grammatical level, ensure a text's coherence, aiding listeners or readers in comprehending its intended message.

Cohesive devices are integral to various text types, including academic writing by students learning English as a foreign language. It's essential for these students to grasp the application of cohesive devices in both oral and written communication. However, learners often find it challenging to employ the full range of cohesive strategies effectively.

This research focuses on how cohesive devices manifest in the academic writing of students. It aims to observe and analyze the practical use of

language, particularly the implementation of cohesive devices in academic contexts. Recognizing the pedagogical importance of cohesive devices helps forge a positive educational rapport between authors and readers, facilitating understanding (Kitti et al., 2021).

Given the pivotal role of cohesive devices in academic writing, this study seeks to answer two main questions: (1) How is text texture realized in students' academic writing? and (2) What types of cohesive devices are employed to unify the text texture in academic writings?

By examining academic writings as a corpus, this study scrutinizes the semantic links facilitated by cohesive devices at the grammatical level. The analysis incorporates Halliday (1985), Bloor and Bloor's (1995), and Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004, 2014) frameworks on cohesive devices, including reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion. Previous research by experts such as Ngongo (2013, 2015,

2023), Alyousef (2021), and others have laid the groundwork for understanding lexical and grammatical cohesion in both spoken and written texts, providing a foundation for this study.

The recent shift to online learning, including the submission and feedback process for academic writing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, presents a unique context for analyzing students' text texture and cohesive device usage. This study acknowledges the lexicogrammatical resources as pivotal for text texture, emphasizing the importance of cohesion in creating a unified and coherent text. Cohesion is defined as the semantic links that bind a text, forming a cohesive and interdependent structure.

The exploration of cohesion as a resource of text texture in undergraduate students' academic writing is a critical aspect of linguistic analysis that has garnered significant attention in recent academic research. Studies across various contexts and methodologies have shed light on how cohesive devices contribute to the clarity, coherence, and overall textual integrity of academic writing, especially among students learning English as a Second Language (ESL) or as a foreign language (EFL).

Alimohammadi (2023) provides a comprehensive examination of coherence and cohesion within ESL academic writing environments, emphasizing the role of translation and the Framework of Orientation to Meaning in Language Teaching (FOMT) in enhancing language teaching methodologies. This study underscores the importance of cohesive devices in facilitating a deeper understanding of academic texts among ESL learners.

Ansori et al. (2023) delve into the cohesion of descriptive text writing among students in an Indonesian secondary school, highlighting the challenges and successes in employing cohesive devices in their writings. Similarly, Ariwibowo et al. (2023) analyze cohesion devices in recount texts, offering insights into the pedagogical implications of cohesion in narrative writing.

Benshams et al. (2023) explore the coherence analysis of Iranian MA students' comprehension and production of English relative clauses, suggesting that a solid understanding of cohesive devices can significantly enhance students' academic writing skills. This is echoed in Daud et al.'s (2023) examination of grammatical cohesion in essay writing, which identifies key areas where students struggle with employing effective cohesion strategies.

The role of lexical cohesion is critically analyzed in studies by Hisni et al. (2023), and Jassim (2023), who both point out the nuanced ways in which lexical choices contribute to the overall cohesion and coherence of academic texts. Khalil, Abu-Ayyash, and Salhieh (2023) further emphasize the role of lexical cohesion in improving the quality of essay writing, suggesting targeted instructional strategies to bolster students' writing competencies.

Pandie et al.'s (2023) analysis of cohesion in IELTS reading texts and Mahmood and Dhia's (2023) study on cohesion-based equivalence in translation highlight the broader implications of cohesive devices in both understanding and producing complex academic texts.

The collection of references provided explores the multifaceted role of cohesion as a resource for text texture in undergraduate students' academic writing. This synthesis delves into various dimensions of cohesion, ranging from its developmental changes as evidenced in high school students measured by Coh-Metrix, to its critical role in text creation, and the detailed analysis of cohesive devices in different academic writing contexts.

Wang (2023) investigates how text cohesion evolves with grade levels among senior high school students, highlighting an advancement in writing abilities towards more coherent and organized expression. Similarly, Daud et al. (2023) examine grammatical cohesion in students' essay writing, emphasizing the significance of cohesion for ensuring clarity and the logical progression of arguments.

Sitio et al. (2023), and Ariwibowo et al. (2023), provide in-depth analyses on the realization of cohesive devices in The Jakarta Post news editorials and students' recount text writings, respectively. These studies show the variation and effectiveness of cohesive strategies in enhancing text texture, demonstrating how judiciously employed cohesive devices can significantly improve the readability and comprehensibility of academic texts.

Jassim (2023) discusses the role of cohesion in text creation, underlining the importance of cohesive elements in facilitating text comprehension and effective text production. Bhartia, Sehrawat, & Sharma (2023) explore students' assessments of global and local coherence and their psychological impacts, revealing how cohesion influences perceptions and assessments of text quality.

Nunan & Choi (2023), and Ramzan et al. (2023) explore the challenges in academic writing for English as a Second Language (ESL) learners, stressing the necessity of cohesion for clarity and coherence in academic writing. Umarova (2023) presents a unique perspective on online learning and cohesion use in the context of the pandemic, highlighting the adaptation of learning strategies to maintain coherence in writing.

Thi et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of feedback in enhancing text cohesion, focusing on how higher proficiency students engage with and apply feedback from teachers and Grammarly in an EFL writing course. This indicates the critical role of constructive feedback in refining cohesive use in student writings.

Siddiqui et al. (2023) conduct an error analysis on paragraph organization in the writing of Pakistani college students, offering insights into common errors that disrupt text cohesion and coherence.

these references collectively underscore the importance of cohesion as a resource for text texture in academic writing by undergraduate students. The researches show that an understanding and effective use of cohesive devices not only enhance clarity and coherence of texts but also facilitate the learning process and the improvement of students' writing skills.

In synthesizing these findings, it becomes evident that cohesive devices play a pivotal role in enhancing the textural quality of undergraduate students' academic writing. The realization of

cohesion through reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion not only aids in achieving textual coherence but also supports students' ability to express complex ideas more effectively. This body of research collectively advocates for a more focused pedagogical approach to teaching cohesive devices, emphasizing the need for comprehensive strategies that address the linguistic challenges faced by ESL and EFL learners in academic writing contexts.

This study explores various sources of cohesion, including reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical organization, as outlined by Halliday and his colleagues. Reference functions to maintain participant continuity in the text, while substitution and ellipsis prevent repetition by offering grammatical alternatives. Conjunctions connect clauses and reveal the text's underlying semantic relationships, categorized into additive, adversative, causal, and temporal types. Lastly, lexical cohesion, achieved through reiteration and collocation, strengthens the text's cohesive effect by linking lexical items across sentences. This comprehensive examination of cohesive devices aims to enhance understanding and application in academic writing, particularly for students learning English as a foreign language. To summarize the types of cohesion (adopted from Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014, p.608) the table below is presented.

Table 1. *Types of cohesion*

General type			Grammatical zone [(location in) grammatical unit]	Lexical zone [lexical item]
Transition between messages			CONJUNCTION [unit:clause]	
Status of elements	In meaning		REFERENCE [unit:nominal, adverb]	LEXICAL COHESION [synonymy, hyponymy]
	In wording		ELLIPSIS-&-SUBSTITUTION [unit(complex):clause, nominal group, adverbial group]	[repetition, collocation]

The research gap identified in this study lies in the nuanced understanding of how cohesive devices are employed by students learning English as a foreign language, specifically within the domain of academic writing. Previous studies have extensively explored the use of cohesive devices in various forms of texts and their importance in ensuring text coherence and comprehensibility. However, there is a noticeable scarcity of research focusing on the detailed application and challenges faced by non-native

English speakers in integrating cohesive devices into their academic writings. This gap highlights the need for a closer examination of the types and effectiveness of cohesive strategies used by these students in constructing coherent academic texts.

The novelty of this research stems from its specific focus on analyzing the text texture realized through cohesive devices in academic writings produced by students during the COVID-19 pandemic, a period marked by a significant shift to online learning and digital submission

processes. This unique context provides an opportunity to explore how remote learning environments and the absence of traditional, interactive classroom settings might have influenced students' use and understanding of cohesive devices in their writings. Additionally, this study aims to contribute new insights into the pedagogical strategies that can support students in overcoming these challenges. By identifying the types of cohesive devices most frequently used, as well as those that students struggle with, this research seeks to offer targeted recommendations for enhancing the teaching and learning of cohesive device application in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts. Thus, the research not only fills a gap in the existing literature but also proposes practical implications for improving EFL academic writing instruction in the digital era.

**METHOD**

This study employs a descriptive documentary analysis approach to examine cohesion within undergraduate students' academic writings, particularly those concerning English teaching and learning composed in 2021. A purposive selection strategy was used to gather a representative sample of 12 texts from the broader student population, focusing specifically on those pieces that provide insight into the textural cohesiveness. The chosen texts were subjected to a detailed analytical process designed to uncover the mechanisms of cohesion present within the academic discourse.

The analysis was conducted using a combination of formal and informal methods, thereby ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the text's structure and coherence. The theoretical foundation for this investigation was provided by Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), drawing on the seminal works of Halliday (1976, 1994), along with Eggins (1994). This theoretical perspective facilitated a nuanced analysis of the texts, enabling the identification

and classification of cohesive devices and their contribution to the overall textual unity.

In addition to qualitative analysis, this study also incorporated quantitative data to augment the interpretation of the findings, providing a richer context for understanding the role of cohesion in academic writing. The collaborative effort between the authors and co-authors in data collection, classification, analysis, and interpretation ensures a robust and comprehensive exploration of the subject matter.

The insights gained from this study are intended to inform pedagogical practices, offering valuable recommendations for lecturers involved in teaching writing and academic structure. By identifying key areas where students struggle with creating cohesive texts, educators can tailor their instruction to address these challenges, ultimately enhancing students' ability to produce coherent and cohesive academic writings. This approach not only contributes to the academic community by deepening our understanding of text cohesion but also offers practical benefits for improving student outcomes in academic writing.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In analyzing student academic writings, it was observed that text texture is established through cohesive devices such as reference, conjunction, ellipsis, and lexical organization. From an examination of eleven student theses, it emerged that three categories of references were predominantly employed: personal, demonstrative, and comparative.

*Reference*

Regarding personal references, these were utilized either as the main noun in a phrase or as determinatives and deictics, including possessive determiners or premodifiers. These references were noted in both singular and plural forms, indicating a variety of personal reference strategies employed within the texts to maintain cohesion and clarity.

Table 1. *Personal reference Items (Adopted from Halliday 2014)*

		Head			Premodifier
		Thing: pronoun	Deitic: determiner		
		Determinative	Possessive		
Singular	masculine	He/him	His		His
	feminine	She/her	Her		Hers
	neutral	it	[its]		Its
Plural		They/them	Their		Theirs

Table 1 pictures that personal reference items cohesion that tie the text. The examples of were used in academic writing as one type of

personal reference in students' writing can be seen in this following data.

- (1) //The writer analyze **the transcription** and put **them** in the table of check list...//(YN p26)
- (2) ///.... in a series of **sequence steps**, **They** are organized by goal, material, ....//(MC p 9)
- (3) //The researcher takes **questionnaire** as an instrument// **It** is related to the ....//(FY p29)
- (4) ///**Teacher** faced difficulty of using internet media // **She** followed every instruction... //(FJ p32)

Examples 1 to 4 showcase various personal reference uses, linking back to specific elements

within the text: "them" referring to sequential steps, "it" connecting to a questionnaire, and "she" pointing to a teacher. Additionally, the text incorporates diverse personal references, both as main subjects or modifiers, in both singular and plural forms. According to Halliday, personal references are amongst the most frequently utilized cohesive devices in writing (Halliday, 1994, p. 312). In this particular study, personal references play a crucial role in maintaining continuity of participants across the thesis, ensuring clarity in tracking through the use of demonstrative references. The application of demonstrative references within the students' thesis writing is detailed in Table 2, illustrating their significance in enhancing text cohesion and clarity.

Table 2. *Demonstrative reference items in text (Adopted from Halliday 2014)*

		Nominal group		Adverbial group	
		Head/Thing	Premodifier/ Deitic	Head	
		Pronoun	Determiner	Adverb	
Specific	near	This/these	This/.these	Here (now)	
	remote	That/those	That/those	There(then)	
Non-specific		it	The		

Table 2 illustrates examples of demonstrative references utilized in student writings, highlighting references that can be specific, indicating proximity through the use of "this/these" for closeness and "that/those" for distance. Additionally, it showcases non-specific references such as "it" and "the," which do not refer to a specific proximity. Examples demonstrating how demonstrative references are applied in the text are provided in examples five and six. These examples underscore the versatility of demonstrative references in pointing out relations of nearness or remoteness, as well as their function in referring to entities in a more general sense.

///...**These** strategies are mentioned in the theory of teaching writing strategies....//(MC p36)

- (1) /// UNESCO has set a standard for reading books should be 4-6 hours per day// **This** is indicated by the percentage....//(AN p34)
- (2) ....there is no right and wrong answer. It is open question...(RA p12)

Examples five and six illustrate the use of demonstrative referencing. In these instances, the words 'these' and 'this' are categorized as specific demonstrative references, while example six showcases the use of 'it' as a non-specific demonstrative reference.

Halliday describes demonstrative referencing as a form of "verbal pointing" that indicates a "degree of proximity" to the referenced item (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, 2014). Demonstrative references often employ "the" as a determiner or premodifier to point out something non-specific yet explicitly referred to within the text. This type of referencing plays a crucial role in directing the reader's attention to specific elements within the discourse. Among the various cohesive devices observed in student writings, references, particularly demonstrative ones, were predominant.

In addition to demonstrative references, comparative references were also a significant aspect, characterized by expressions such as "the same," "another," "bigger," "equally," and "likewise." Common comparative references included terms like "such," "other," and "more," indicating a standard pattern of usage among students. These comparative references function to draw parallels or highlight differences, thereby enriching the text's cohesion by connecting ideas or concepts based on similarity or contrast. Examples from student theses demonstrate the application of comparative references, underscoring their importance in establishing connections within academic discourse.

(3)/// In marginal interaction, students act **more** as listeners //and **less** speak out in the classroom/// (FY p23)

(4)///Emoji can be described as graphic symbols or ideogram that not only show facial expression but also **wider** concepts and idea.../// (JW p10)

(10)///...Direct method is one of the **most** well known methods for a lonh time, which focuses.../// (YN p15)

Examples eight to ten demonstrate the employment of comparative references such as "more," "less," "wider," and "most" in student writings. These comparative reference items function within nominal groups to signal general characteristics like identity, similarity, and difference, or to point out specific attributes concerning quality and quantity. This mechanism, as elucidated by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), aids in linking concepts by underscoring their commonalities or distinctions, thereby enhancing the cohesion of the text by making the relationships within the discourse clearer.

Regarding conjunctions, they are pivotal in weaving together the narrative of student theses, ensuring a seamless flow of ideas. Halliday (2014) outlines their main purposes as facilitating elaboration (through appositive and clarificative means), extension (via additive, adversative, and variative methods), and enhancement (through temporal, comparative, causal, conditional, concessive, and content-related approaches). These varied uses of conjunctions enrich the text's coherence, allowing authors to more effectively detail, contrast, compare, and elucidate concepts, as illustrated by the examples provided.

(12) ///.... **As a mean** of communication, language can accommodate various idea/// (RA p1)

(13)///... **so that** it arouses students interest on online program/// (AY p3)

(14)///.... The lecture must give motivation to students, //**then** they motivated to learn/// (FB p.15)

(15) // But the online learning process the lecturers and the students doing the communication through the media online// (FB p.16)

Example 12 illustrates the use of conjunction for the purpose of elaboration, specifically through apposition, which adds explanatory information or clarifies the preceding text. Example number 13 showcases the use of

conjunctions for enhancement, particularly to establish causal relationships, indicating reasons or causes. Example number 14 employs conjunctions for enhancement again, but focuses on conditional relationships, presenting scenarios or conditions. Meanwhile, example number 15 uses conjunctions for enhancement through concessive relationships, acknowledging contrasts or exceptions. These types of conjunctions serve to deepen the coherence between clauses in the text, enhancing its overall flow and readability. Other conjunctions enhancing text cohesion include "but," "thus," "therefore," "finally," "however," "so," "anyway," "though," "in consequence," "additionally," and "moreover."

Substitution and ellipsis, as Halliday (2014) details, are crucial for academic writing, appearing in clauses, verbal, and nominal groups. Substitution in clauses often takes the form of "so" in yes/no responses, while ellipsis frequently occurs in "wh-" constructions. In verbal and nominal groups, substitution appears as "do" for verbs and "one" for nouns. These tools are sparingly but effectively used in thesis writing to tie new material with existing knowledge and to manage teacher-directed tasks, enhancing textual cohesion without redundancy.

Lexical cohesion extends beyond grammatical referencing, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction, relying on the vocabulary's non-grammatical arrangement to unify the text. It includes repetition, synonymy, hyponymy (for elaboration), meronymy (for extension), and collocation (for enhancement). Repetition is notably prevalent, connecting lexical items within the text to reinforce themes and ideas, illustrating the deliberate repetition of terms to maintain thematic consistency and enhance clarity.

(18) ///**The teacher** prepared Watch App and Google Classroom in teaching //but **the teacher**

also use You Tube.../// (FP p:39)

(19) // A person will pay more attention to **enjoy** some activities/ or to **enjoy** certain subjects// (AB p3)

(20) /// **The writer** will review some previous researches// which **the writer** discusses the points// which have relation to the title/// (FP p7)

Examples 18 to 20 illustrate the technique of repetition, focusing on the repeated use of terms such as "teacher," "enjoy," and "writer." This method is in line with Halliday's (2004) understanding that lexical cohesion is effectively

enhanced by repeating key lexical elements within a text. Such repetition serves to strengthen the coherence of the discourse by reinforcing concepts and themes consistently across the text.

Regarding synonymy, examples 21 and 22 showcase how the strategic use of varied yet semantically similar vocabulary can enrich the text's coherence and diversity. This approach allows for the expression of parallel ideas without sacrificing the clarity of the discourse, thereby maintaining reader engagement and understanding through a richer lexical palette.

(21) ///...it can be concluded //that internet has some **benefit** or **advantages** in learning process...// it can also has bad influence or disadvantages.../// (Fp p18)

(22) ///...their processing **capacity** to read...//...interferes with their **ability** to comprehend...///  
(DFA p10)

Example 21 demonstrates the use of "benefit" and "advantages" as synonyms, providing varied expressions for the same concept, while example 22 uses "capacity" and "ability" interchangeably. This technique of employing synonyms, such as matching "comprehend" with "understanding," "influence" with "interfere," "technique" with "strategy," and "colleague" with "classmate," along with equating "obstacle" to "problem," showcases the strategic use of varied vocabulary to maintain conceptual continuity without redundancy. This approach to synonymy enriches the text by offering diverse expressions that enhance understanding and engagement, without necessarily requiring direct one-to-one correspondence between words.

In terms of hyponymy and collocation, hyponymy serves as a method of elaboration within lexical cohesion, establishing relationships by presenting specific examples or variations that belong to a broader category. This technique not only elucidates and broadens concepts but also deepens the textual narrative by integrating particular instances or types within a general class. The use of hyponymy and collocation in the text thereby contributes to a more comprehensive and nuanced exploration of ideas, enriching the discourse with detailed specificity and variety.

(23) // **Teacher's questions** is one small part of **teacher talk**. // (RYA p7)

(24) ///There are other **types of questions**...//, such as **opened-ended questions**/// (RYA p29)

(25) /// ...by avoiding eye contact// it can be said that students do not respond...// (RYA p15)

(26) ///... to create students **critical thinking** in class// the teacher has to push students...//  
(RYA p2)

In examining the structure of academic texts through the lens of cohesion, the examples numbered 23 and 24 illustrate the principle of hyponymy by demonstrating how certain terms fit within broader categories, enhancing the text's clarity and depth. For example, "teacher's questions" are shown to be a specific aspect of "teacher talk," establishing a clear hierarchical relationship that adds depth to the discourse. "Open-ended questions" are presented as a distinct type of "questions," further detailing the range of teacher-student interactions. These instances reveal the sophisticated ways language is used to build a complex and detailed understanding of topics within academic writing.

Examples 25 and 26 highlight the concept of collocation, where certain word pairs naturally co-occur to express meanings that surpass their individual parts, such as "avoiding eye contact" and "creating students' critical thinking." These phrases exemplify how specific combinations of words can significantly enhance the meaning and coherence of the text, enriching the overall discourse.

Moreover, the use of antonyms like "question-answer" and "active-passive sentence" introduces a contrastive dimension to the narrative, deepening the text's richness by juxtaposing different concepts. This method not only captures the reader's interest but also encourages a more engaged and analytical reading experience.

Together, these cohesive techniques—from referencing and conjunctions to repetition, ellipsis, and lexical cohesion—constitute the foundational elements of academic writing, facilitating the creation of texts that are coherent, meaningful, and richly detailed. Through careful application of these devices, writers can navigate readers through complex arguments with ease, ensuring comprehensibility and fostering a deeper engagement with the content. This multifaceted approach to academic writing highlights the intricate nature of scholarly discourse and

underscores the essential role of cohesion in crafting texts that are both unified and insightful.

## CONCLUSION

The comprehensive analysis of students' academic writing reveals the pivotal role of cohesive devices in crafting text texture, highlighting how reference, conjunction, repetition, ellipsis, and lexical cohesion contribute to creating a coherent and unified discourse. The employment of personal, demonstrative, and comparative references enables writers to maintain thematic continuity and referential clarity throughout their texts. Conjunctions serve to weave together disparate ideas, ensuring a smooth narrative flow that guides the reader through the text's argumentative structure.

The analysis further demonstrates that substitution and ellipsis, though used less frequently, offer valuable tools for avoiding redundancy, enabling a more concise and reader-friendly presentation of ideas. Lexical cohesion, manifested through repetition, synonymy, hyponymy, and collocation, enriches the text's lexical field, fostering a deeper semantic connection and enhancing the reader's engagement with the text.

Moreover, the strategic use of antonyms introduces a dynamic contrast within the text, enriching the discourse and inviting readers to engage in a more active and critical reading process. These cohesive devices collectively contribute to the text's overall texture, making academic writing more accessible, engaging, and comprehensible for readers.

This study underscores the importance of cohesive devices in enhancing the quality of academic writing, particularly for students learning English as a foreign language. It highlights the need for targeted instructional strategies that focus on the effective use of these devices, aiming to improve students' writing skills and ensure their academic success. By fostering a deeper understanding of cohesion and coherence, educators can empower students to produce well-structured and compelling academic texts, ultimately enhancing their communicative competence and academic performance.

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