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AN ERROR ANALYSIS OF LEXICAL COHESION IN THE WRITTEN COMPOSITIONS OF BSED-ENGLISH STUDENTS: IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

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Abstract: Cohesion helps connect ideas and organize the content of a text, making it easier for readers to understand and follow the author's message. But despite its significance, this is still a challenge for students, especially with the emphasis on grammar lessons, leaving them with weak transitions and disorganised arguments. Therefore, this qualitative content analysis study explored the lexical cohesion patterns and errors in 13 Background of the Study sections written by third-year BSED English student researchers, using Hoey's (1991) Patterns of Lexis in Text. The findings surfaced that simple lexical repetition was the most frequently used cohesive pattern, followed by complex lexical repetition. However, the overuse of simple lexical repetition and vague co-reference reduced coherence and clarity. Article-related grammatical errors were also found to intersect with lexical cohesion issues. Based on these results, the study proposes corrective instructional strategies and discipline-sensitive activities to improve the academic writing skills of student researchers. This study recommends early integration of lexical cohesion instruction and calls for future studies to expand the scope across disciplines and text types to further improve writing pedagogy.

Keywords: *lexis, error, lexical cohesion, error analysis, instructional strategies*

Introduction

Cohesion is important to unify thoughts and content, making texts easier for readers to follow the author's ideas. One essential aspect of cohesion is lexical cohesion, which refers to the connections between words, phrases, and clauses that create meaning and coherence in a text (Episiasi et al., 2022), helping both writers and readers understand how word choices and their arrangement contribute to coherence. These cohesive ties serve as the glue that binds individual sentences into a unified whole, allowing smoother transitions and clearer relationships between ideas.

But despite its critical role, lexical cohesion remains a significant challenge for second language (L2) learners. The primary problem lies in a pervasive pedagogical imbalance: educators frequently over-prioritise sentence-level grammar while neglecting the macro-level mechanics of cohesion and coherence (Hermin & Hakeem, 2021). Furthermore, the challenge is exacerbated by L1 interference. Many L2 learners resort to literal translation from their first language, failing to account for the unique idiomatic and cohesive nuances of English (Ryan, 2023). This results in texts that may be grammatically "correct" but are rhetorically incoherent, leaving readers confused and unable to extract meaningful

information (Kurniawan & Sumani, 2021). This leaves BSED English students—future language teachers themselves—with "staccato" writing styles characterized by weak transitions, misaligned ideas, and disorganized arguments. Without proper guidance, students would still struggle to structure their thoughts effectively, diminishing the quality of their writing

Previous studies have consistently highlighted students' difficulties in achieving cohesion and coherence both in foreign and second-language writing. Riswanto (2021) found that EFL students struggled to produce cohesive and coherent essays, while Sekwo (2020) reported similar challenges among ESL students, whose texts often lacked coherence due to ineffective use of cohesive devices. Likewise, Khalil and Abu-Ayyash (2023) identified issues related to students' awareness and instruction of lexical cohesive devices, including the decontextualized teaching of cohesion and challenges in receiving feedback and correction. However, while existing research has examined cohesion and coherence in essays and general academic writing, limited attention has been given to the specific lexical cohesion patterns and errors present in undergraduate thesis writing. This gap highlights the need for further investigation into how student researchers employ lexical cohesion in academic texts and how identified errors may inform more context-specific instructional strategies.

This study is significant because limited attention has been given to examining lexical cohesion patterns and errors in the academic writing of BSED English students, particularly in the Background of the Study sections of undergraduate theses. As a result, little is known about how these students establish connections between ideas and the specific cohesion-related difficulties that affect the quality of their writing. Given that BSED English students are future language educators who are expected to demonstrate and teach effective writing practices, understanding their use of lexical cohesion is essential. Therefore, this study aims to provide empirical insights that can guide writing instruction and support the development of more targeted pedagogical interventions for student researchers, especially on the lexical cohesion patterns they employ and the errors they commonly commit.

1.1. Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative content analysis study was to uncover the underlying lexical cohesion patterns and frequencies of errors from the background of the study of qualitative student-researchers from the BSED English program of St. John Paul II College of Davao. In this research, lexical cohesion was generally defined as how words within a text connect to create meaning and maintain coherence in the overall written composition (Episiasi et al., 2022).

1.2. Research questions

Recognizing the pressing need to improve lexical coherence in academic texts, especially among student researchers, the study aimed to answer three key research questions:

1. What underlying lexical cohesion categories are observed in the undergraduate theses?
2. What lexical cohesion errors are classified in the undergraduate theses?
3. How do this lexical cohesion errors inform the creation of corrective instructional strategies?

1.3. Theoretical Lens

The study is anchored on the theory of Halliday and Hasan (1976), who described cohesion as a semantic property that enables readers to interpret a text as a unified whole. They identified five major cohesive devices—reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion—which have served as the foundation for numerous studies on textual coherence. Among these devices, lexical cohesion is particularly important because it establishes semantic relationships among words and ideas across a text. Building on this concept, Hoey (1991) provided a more detailed analysis of lexical cohesion by examining how lexical items are connected through repetition, paraphrase, substitution, co-reference, ellipsis, and deixis. While Halliday and Hasan introduced the concept of lexical cohesion as a key component of textual unity, Hoey extended the analysis by providing specific categories for identifying lexical links and locating points where cohesion breaks down. This approach is particularly relevant to the present study because the Background of the Study section requires writers to develop interconnected arguments and maintain continuity of ideas.

Literature Review

2.1. Cohesion

The concept of cohesion was introduced by Halliday and Hasan (1976), which refers to the use of linguistic elements that connect ideas within a text. They classified cohesion into grammatical and lexical cohesion. It plays an important role in writing because it helps organize ideas logically and allows readers to follow the flow of information more easily. Studies also emphasize that effective use of cohesive devices strengthens the structure and clarity of a text, which improves overall writing quality (Abdi Tabari & Johnson, 2023; Halliday & Hasan, 1976).

Similar findings were observed in other ESL contexts. Kashiha (2022) analyzed essays of ESL students in an English for Academic Purposes course and discovered that reference markers were the most commonly used cohesive devices, while substitutions were rarely used, and conjunctions were sometimes overused or incorrectly applied. Likewise, Sekwo (2020) reported that ESL students often struggle to achieve cohesion and coherence in their essays due to limited knowledge of cohesive strategies. The study suggested that teachers should increase students' awareness of cohesive devices, provide constructive feedback, and improve instructional approaches.

Other studies further highlight the importance of cohesion in academic learning. Barakatova (2022) found that cohesive ties are essential in achieving coherence in university students' essays, although the relationship between cohesion and coherence may vary depending on the type of discourse. Similarly, Mandarani et al. (2022) emphasized that cohesive devices also support reading comprehension, but their explicit teaching is often lacking. These studies collectively suggest that better instruction on cohesive devices can help students produce clearer, more organized writing and improve their overall understanding of texts.

2.2. Error Analysis

Error Analysis (EA) is a method used to identify, describe, and explain the errors made by learners when using a second language. Al-Khresheh (2016) explains that EA involves the systematic classification of errors found in learners' spoken or written outputs to understand their causes. Hajimia et al. (2020) also note that fear of making mistakes is one of the major challenges in language learning, as learners often associate errors with a lack of mastery of language rules.

However, errors are not always negative; they can serve as valuable learning opportunities. According to Almusharraf and Alotaibi (2021), Error Analysis helps educators view mistakes as part of the learning process rather than as failures. Errors may occur due to carelessness, fatigue, or limited knowledge of the language. As emphasized by Melchers et al. (2019), mistakes are inevitable in language learning and play an important role in helping learners gradually develop fluency and accuracy.

The concept of Error Analysis was first introduced by Corder in 1967, who proposed that learners' errors can be analyzed based on their linguistic and psychological characteristics, their sources (such as interlingual and intralingual influences), and their effects on communication. Using this framework, Mukarromah and Suryanto (2022) examined errors in 100 academic essays written by senior high school students. Their study found that mechanical errors were the most common, followed by omission, addition, substitution, and permutation errors. The researchers recommended using consciousness-raising grammar instruction to help students become more aware of their mistakes and improve their writing skills.

Other studies also highlight common grammatical difficulties among students. Iqbal et al. (2021) found that secondary-level students frequently struggle with grammar, particularly with tense usage, parts of speech, pronouns, and adjectives, suggesting that teachers should create targeted instruction to address these weaknesses. Similarly, Wulandari and Harida (2021) identified common errors related to determiners, nouns, and prepositions, with carelessness being the main cause. These studies emphasize the importance of Error Analysis in helping educators understand students' difficulties and improve grammar instruction to enhance writing accuracy and language proficiency.

Methodologies

3.1. Research Design

This research used a qualitative approach, specifically a content analysis research design. Content Analysis is described as the scientific study of the content of communication (Prasad, 2008), and it falls in the interface of observation and document analysis. It is the study of the meanings, contexts, and intentions contained in messages. Aryani (2016) further added that content analysis is defined as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns, as well as the successful use of content analysis to analyze texts and address problematic authorship in academic papers. Thus, this study integrated a qualitative research design, focusing on content analysis, to explore and analyze the cohesive ties and lexical errors in the background of the study of student researchers.

3.2. Corpora

The researcher gathered a total of 13 backgrounds of the study from qualitative student researchers in the academic year 2024-2025. Braun and Clarke (2019) recommended that qualitative research may include between 10 and 100 sources to achieve data saturation, depending on the scope and nature of the study. Since the present study sought to identify recurring lexical cohesion patterns and errors, saturation was achievable with 13 texts as similar linguistic features emerged across the corpus. Thus, a corpus of 13 texts was considered adequate for qualitative analysis. This study also employed convenience sampling to identify the data sources. This method was chosen for its practicality and efficiency in collecting readily accessible data within a limited timeframe. Golzar et al. (2022) stated that convenience sampling involves selecting participants or data sources that are easily reachable to

the researcher. However, the use of convenience sampling may limit the representativeness of the sample, as the selected texts may not reflect the full range of lexical cohesion patterns and errors present among all student researchers.

3.3. Data analysis

The researcher first examined each collected document to determine how lexical elements contributed to or hindered cohesion within the texts. Each sentence and paragraph in the Background of the Study sections was carefully analyzed to answer the first research question by identifying both lexical cohesion bonds/ties and lexical cohesion errors, classifying them according to Hoey (1991) Patterns of Lexis in Text. This systematic coding process allowed the researcher to consistently trace relationships between lexical items and determine how cohesion was constructed or disrupted across the texts. To address the second research question, the frequency of each error type was tallied and ranked from highest to lowest to identify the most prevalent lexical cohesion issues in the corpus. This process revealed notable strengths and weaknesses in students' use of lexical cohesion. To ensure the accuracy and consistency of the analysis, the coding procedures, interpretations, and analytical notes were regularly reviewed and verified through consultations with the thesis adviser. This iterative validation process helped maintain reliability in the categorization of data and reduced potential subjectivity in interpretation. Lastly, the third research question was addressed by synthesizing the identified error patterns into corrective instructional strategies, developed with the guidance of the thesis adviser, to reduce the recurrence of lexical cohesion-related errors and enhance students' academic writing.

3.4. Data collection procedures

As the first step in the data collection process, the researcher issued a formal letter, signed by her research adviser, to inform the qualitative researchers that their thesis documents—specifically the background of the study—would be used as a corpus for the analysis. After receiving acknowledgement, the researcher read through each selected document, focusing on how lexical elements either contributed to or hindered cohesion within the text. Each sentence and paragraph in the background of the study from the 13 present student researchers enrolled in BSED English was carefully analyzed. These texts were specifically chosen from academic years 2024 to 2025 to ensure the relevance and currency of the data. This close reading was followed by the identification of lexical cohesion patterns and errors using Hoey's (1991) framework. Each cohesive tie or error was described in detail, classified according to its category (e.g., simple and complex lexical repetition, simple and complex paraphrase, substitution, co-reference, etc.), and justified with explanations regarding its contribution or disruption to textual cohesion.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

This study meticulously adhered to the safety and privacy of individuals, particularly as the research involved publicly available data. Student researchers' confidentiality was ensured by not collecting personally identifiable information and by anonymizing their names and their backgrounds in the study. The researcher also engaged in one-on-one consultation with her thesis adviser to discuss her interpretation and analyses. This helped the researcher mitigate personal biases, thereby strengthening the study's overall trustworthiness. Additionally, the research was subjected to review and approval by the Institutional Research Committee (IRC) of St. John Paul II College of Davao, ensuring full compliance with institutional guidelines for responsible academic writing.

Results and Discussion

Lexical Cohesion Categories in Undergraduate Theses

Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of various lexical cohesion categories identified in 13 research rationales. Among these categories, Simple Lexical Repetition was the most dominant, appearing 430 times and accounting for 64% of the total occurrences. This indicates that student researchers frequently repeated the same words or phrases to maintain textual cohesion. The remaining categories—Complex Lexical Repetition, Complex Paraphrase, Substitution, Co-reference, and Deixis—each made up between 5% to 9% of the total, with Co- reference and Substitution tied at 38 occurrences. Their lower frequency may suggest that students are less familiar with or hesitant to use these more nuanced cohesive devices. These categories, although less frequent, play a critical role in enhancing clarity and depth in academic writing.

Table 1. *Lexical Cohesion Categories in the Undergraduate Theses*

Lexical Cohesion Categories	**RESEARCHER**													***f***	**%**
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**		
Simple Lexical Repetition	29	30	39	37	28	23	42	45	23	25	34	19	56	**430**	**64%**
Complex Lexical Repetition	3	7	4	8	6	3	6	4	2	3	5	5	3	**59**	**10%**
Simple Paraphrase	1	3	1	4	4	5	2	3	0	3	1	4	1	**32**	**4%**
Complex Paraphrase	3	2	3	1	1	1	3	3	2	2	2	7	2	**32**	**4%**
Substitution	1	4	5	0	4	1	2	6	2	3	2	5	3	**38**	**6%**
Co-reference	5	3	2	5	4	3	2	2	2	2	1	4	3	**38**	**6%**
Ellipsis	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	**6**	**1%**
Deixis	4	4	2	1	2	3	1	3	1	2	3	5	3	**34**	**5%**
Total	46	55	56	56	49	39	58	66	32	40	50	52	71	**669**	**100%**

The least used categories were Ellipsis and Simple Paraphrase, indicating minimal application of more advanced cohesion techniques. The table revealed a strong dependence on repetition as a cohesive link/bond, highlighting the need for students to adopt more varied and advanced lexical vocabularies and strategies to strengthen the quality of their academic writing. Rusdiah and Malombassang (2019) and Saputra and Hakim (2020) similarly reported the absence of ellipsis in student essays, attributing this to learners' limited familiarity with and confidence in using such cohesive devices; consequently, ellipsis received little further analysis in their studies. These findings align with the present results, where ellipsis and other omission-based strategies were also rarely observed. In contrast, the table further revealed a strong reliance on repetition as a cohesive link, suggesting a preference for more explicit forms of textual connection. These patterns suggest that students tend to favor explicit sentence structures over omission-based cohesion, which may reduce fluency and textual cohesion. The limited range of lexical choices may therefore affect the coherence and sophistication of academic texts,

highlighting the role of lexical variety in producing more coherent and well-structured writing. The limited range of lexical choices may affect the coherence and sophistication of academic texts. This suggests that lexical variety plays an important role in shaping how engaging and well-structured written outputs appear.

Figure 1 shows that the frequent use of Simple Lexical Repetition reflects students' tendency to rely on familiar vocabulary when constructing academic texts. Less frequent categories like Ellipsis, Paraphrase, and Substitution require a higher level of language awareness and are often underused due to limited instruction or exposure. The results show that less-utilized cohesion types are rarely employed in student writing. This suggests that students' reliance on more explicit cohesion strategies may shape the level of coherence and refinement in their academic texts.

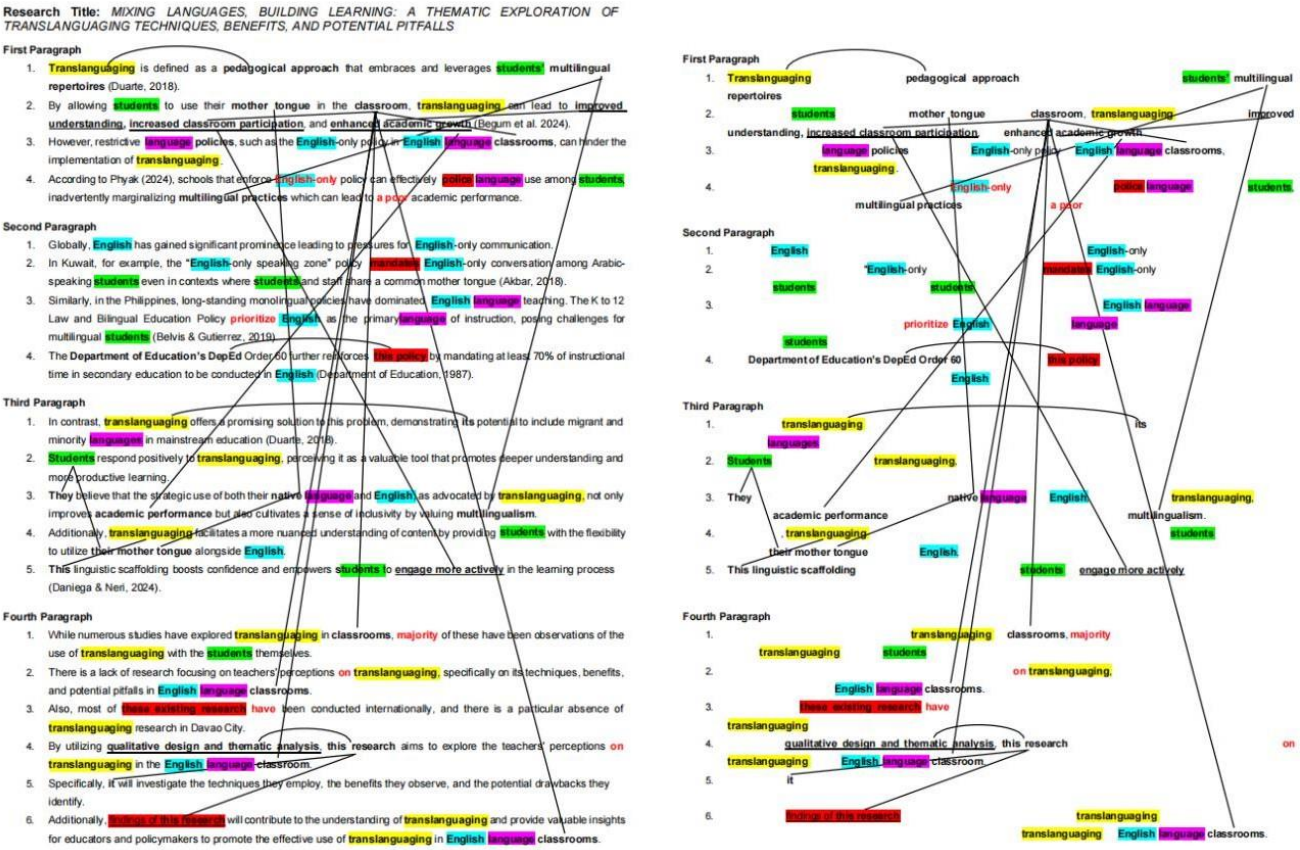

Figure 1. *Simple Lexical Repetition Pattern in Undergraduate Theses*

This category accounted for 17 errors (24%), making it one of the most frequent lexical errors. The usual error that researchers commit is the excessive repetition of their core themes or main topics in the background of the study, with a total of 430 frequencies in the pattern analysis.

As defined by Hoey (1991), simple lexical repetition refers to the repetition of a lexical item within a text with no alteration beyond what is expected from grammatical variations. Figure 1 above shows the full written composition of Researcher #13 (on the left), highlighting the recurring use of specific key terms throughout the study's background, while the image on the right refines the visual pattern by isolating and connecting only the core lexical links, removing unnecessary phrases, and highlighting the text's cohesive structure. This clearer illustration presents how words worked together to maintain the flow of ideas across sentences and paragraphs. Red background highlights marked lexical cohesion errors, while red-colored text points out grammatical issues found in the text.

The text exhibits excessive simple lexical repetition of key terms such as Translanguaging (14 times), English (15 times), students (10 times), and language (10 times). While repetition can reinforce central themes, overuse without additional elaboration may make the text feel monotonous and redundant (Rusdiah & Malombassang, 2019). The term classrooms also appears seven times across multiple sentences, particularly in Paragraph 1 (S2–S3–S4) and Paragraph 4 (S1–S2–S4–S6). The findings indicate that lexical variation contributes to readability and clarity in academic texts. This reflects how word choice influences the overall comprehensibility of written work. Additionally, no instances of ellipsis were identified in the text. The presence of ellipsis could have made some sentences more concise by omitting unnecessary repetition of elements already understood from the context.

Lexical Cohesion Errors in Undergraduate Theses

Table 2 presents the frequency and percentage of lexical cohesion errors identified in the undergraduate theses of 13 student researchers. Among the eight categories, Simple Lexical Repetition and Co-reference were the most frequent error types, each occurring 17 times and making up 24% of the total. These findings suggest that students often repeat words or use referents incorrectly, which can weaken cohesion and clarity in academic writing. The frequent misuse of these basic cohesion tools indicates a need for clearer instruction on maintaining consistency and precision when referring to previously mentioned ideas. This also reflects students' tendency to over-reliance on familiar expressions without considering clarity and variation.

Table 2. *Lexical Cohesion Errors in the Undergraduate Theses*

Lexical Cohesion Categories	**RESEARCHER**													***f***	**%**
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**		
Simple Lexical Repetition	1	3	3	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	4	**17**	**24%**
Co-reference	1	2	2	1	0	3	3	1	1	0	0	0	3	**17**	**24%**
Ellipsis	1	1	0	1	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	**11**	**16%**
Deixis	1	1	2	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	**10**	**14%**
Substitution	0	0	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	**9**	**12%**
Complex Paraphrase	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	**4**	**6%**
Complex Lexical Repetition	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**2**	**3%**
Simple Paraphrase	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**1**	**1%**
Total	5	9	9	6	3	8	7	4	2	2	4	4	10	**71**	**100%**

Following these, ellipses accounted for 16% of the errors, with 11 instances where the error occurred because the researchers either overlooked or deliberately avoided using ellipses, favoring explicit sentence structures over omitting repetitive words. This choice suggests they prioritized clarity or formality over conciseness. Deixis, or the use of context-dependent words like "this" or "that," was the fourth most frequent error, appearing 10 times and accounting for 14%. Errors in Substitution (12%) and Complex Paraphrase (6%) also appeared in several theses, reflecting difficulty in replacing or restating ideas in more sophisticated ways. These types of errors suggest that students struggle to use more specific and contextually appropriate cohesion devices. As a result, their writing may lack the smooth transitions and clear references necessary for strong academic discourse.

Less frequent were Complex Lexical Repetition and Simple Paraphrase, accounting for only 3% and 1% of the total errors, respectively. This low occurrence may imply that students either avoided these strategies or were unaware of how to use them effectively. Overall, the data show that while students attempt to achieve cohesion, many rely heavily on basic or incorrect strategies. This underlines the need for explicit instruction and practice in diverse cohesion techniques to develop students' writing competence.

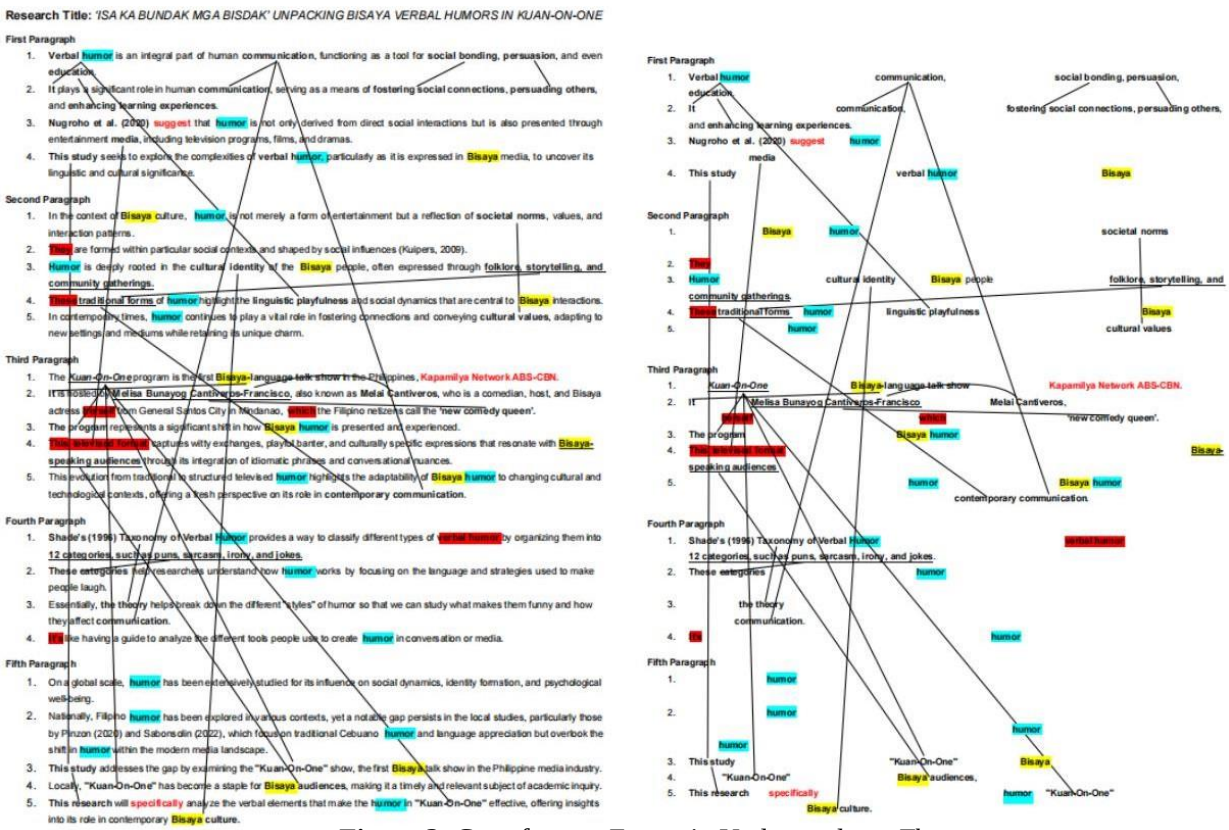

Figure 2. *Co-reference Errors in Undergraduate Theses*

In Figure 2, like Simple Lexical Repetition, Co-reference errors also occurred 17 times (24%), making it one of the common errors as well. These errors occurred when pronouns or noun phrases had uncleared or ambiguous antecedents, leading to confusion and reduced reference precision. In P2: S2 of Researcher #3's text, the sentence *They are formed within particular social contexts [...]* contains an ambiguous pronoun (they) without a clear antecedent. Similarly, in P3, S2, the phrase *Mindanao, which the Filipino netizens call [...]* misuses the relative pronoun. These errors weaken the clarity of the text because readers may struggle to identify what or whom the pronouns refer to. As a result, the overall coherence of the writing is affected, making the ideas less precise and harder to follow.

Excerpt 1: Paragraph 2, Sentence 1 and 2 in Researcher #3's background of the study

> *"In the context of Bisaya culture, humor is not merely a form of entertainment but a reflection of societal norms, values, and interaction patterns.* ***They*** *are formed within particular social contexts and shaped by social influences (Kuipers, 2009)."*

The pronoun *they* in Excerpt 1 appears to lack a clear and grammatically appropriate antecedent in the previous sentence. The main subject identified is singular—humor—so using the plural pronoun they to refer to it is grammatically incorrect. While the sentence also mentions societal norms, values, and

interaction patterns, which are plural, these elements function only as part of the description of humor rather than as the main focus of the sentence. Because of this, it becomes unclear whether they is intended to refer to humor or to these plural elements. If it refers to humor, the number agreement is incorrect; if it refers to norms, values, and interaction patterns, the reference is still ambiguous since these were not the grammatical subject. This lack of a clear and direct antecedent results in confusion and weakens the overall clarity of the sentence.

Excerpt 2: Paragraph 3, Sentence 2 in Researcher #3's background of the study

> *"It is hosted by Melisa Bunayog Cantiveros- Francisco, also known as Melai Cantiveros, who is a comedian, host, and Bisaya actress herself from General Santos City in Mindanao,* ***which*** *the Filipino netizens call the 'new comedy queen'."*

The relative pronoun which is typically used to refer to things, animals, or ideas, meaning non-human antecedents, and it commonly introduces a non-restrictive clause for inanimate objects or concepts. In this case, however, Melai Cantiveros is a person, not an inanimate object or concept, making the use of which inappropriate. Instead, the correct pronoun should be whom because it refers back to Melai Cantiveros as the object of the action—the one being called the new comedy queen. Using which in this context creates a grammatical error, while whom ensures proper reference and accuracy.

Article Error

Article error is the most frequently observed grammatical error, accounting for 10 frequencies (18%) of all errors. This includes (1) missing articles; (2) unnecessary articles; or (3) incorrect articles, which led to confusion and affected the clarity and grammatical correctness of the writing. These errors often occurred when students failed to apply the rules for definite and indefinite articles. As emphasized by Ramzan et al. (2022), language instructors provided explicit instruction on the correct use of articles, prepositions, and subject-verb agreement, supported by contextualized examples and systematic practice.

Excerpt 3: Paragraph 1: Sentence 4 in Researcher #13's background of the study

> *[…] enforce (an) English-only policy can […]* (missing article: *an* after enforce)

> *[…] can lead to* ***a*** *poor academic […]* (unnecessary article: *a*)

Grammar plays a crucial role in ensuring clarity and precision in academic writing. Several instances of incorrect or missing articles were identified. In Paragraph 1, Sentence 4, the phrase enforce English-only policy lacks an article before English-only policy, making the sentence grammatically incorrect. The corrected phrase should enforce an English-only policy to adhere to proper noun phrase construction, enhancing the clarity and following proper grammatical rules for article usage.

Additionally, in Paragraph 1, Sentence 4, the phrase can lead to a poor academic performance includes an unnecessary article before poor academic performance. Removing a makes the phrase grammatically sound: it can lead to poor academic performance. This correction improves grammatical accuracy by ensuring the proper use of articles with uncountable nouns.

Corrective Instructional Strategies for Lexical Cohesion Errors

Table 3 presents a summary of the most frequently identified writing errors in the analyzed texts, together with their frequency of occurrence and corresponding corrective strategies. The purpose of this table is to highlight the main linguistic challenges faced by students and to provide pedagogical recommendations to address them effectively. The errors are categorised into three major types: simple lexical repetition, co-reference errors, and article errors. The frequency count (*f*) indicates how often each error occurred, offering insight into which areas require greater instructional attention. By combining quantitative data (frequency) with practical corrective strategies, the table not only identifies problematic patterns in students' writing but also serves as a guide for targeted teaching interventions aimed at improving vocabulary range, grammatical accuracy, and overall coherence in written texts.

Table 3. *Summary of Common Writing Errors, Frequency, and Corrective Strategies*

Error Type	***f***	**Corrective Instructional Strategy**
Simple Lexical Repetition	430	Encourage the use of synonyms, paraphrasing tools, and varied expressions through vocabulary exercises and writing prompts.
Co-Reference Errors	17	Teach pronoun-antecedent agreement and substitution structures (pronouns/demonstratives) through peer editing and contextualized feedback.
Article Errors	10	Provide explicit instruction on definite/indefinite articles using flowcharts, fill-in-the-blank drills, and sentence correction.

Simple Lexical Repetition

The data reveal three primary areas of concern in student writing: the most prevalent pattern error is Simple Lexical Repetition, which occurred 430 times. This error is the overuse of the same word or phrase in close proximity, leading to monotonous, redundant prose. Researcher #13 repeated the word "Translanguaging" 14 times, highlighted in bright yellow (refer to Figure 1). Similarly, Researcher #3 repeated "humor" 19 times, with 18 turquoise highlight and 1 red highlight on P4, S1 (refer to Figure 2) within their Background of the Study.

The results highlight how restricted vocabulary use and repetitive word choices can limit students' ability to convey ideas clearly and appropriately in academic writing. This suggests that lexical variety plays an important role in strengthening clarity, coherence, and overall effectiveness of written texts. AI-powered paraphrasing tools can help improve readability and simplify complex ideas, making texts more engaging (Miranda, 2022).

These tools generally preserve the main ideas of a text, with more advanced tools like QuillBot and Ginger Writer offering better sentence-level corrections, while others such as Spinbot and SmallSEO may produce errors or awkward phrasing (Fitria, 2025). However, some tools may weaken the overall coherence or alter details. The data reflect ongoing issues in clarity, accuracy, and tone, which may be addressed through careful review of written output. In addition, structured language activities—such as matching terms, using synonyms, and organizing concepts—help learners, especially future educators, strengthen vocabulary and effectively apply it in both understanding and producing language (Vasylieva & Kholodniak, 2025).

Co-reference Errors

Co-reference errors involve ambiguous antecedents; for example, Researcher #3 used the plural pronoun "they" to refer to the singular noun "humor," and the relative pronoun "which" to refer to a person (Melai Cantiveros) instead of using "whom." The findings highlight the importance of pronoun-antecedent agreement and accurate substitution in maintaining textual cohesion, suggesting the value of explicit instruction and opportunities for peer review. Teaching pronoun–antecedent agreement and substitution structures (such as pronouns and demonstratives) through peer editing and contextualized feedback helps students understand how to maintain clarity and consistency in their writing. In this approach, students review each other's work to identify unclear or incorrect pronoun references, such as mismatched number (singular vs. plural) or ambiguous antecedents. This allows students to see how pronouns function within real contexts, improving their ability to choose accurate referencing and maintain coherence in their writing. Over time, this method not only corrects grammatical mistakes but also develops students' critical thinking and editing skills, leading to clearer and more effective communication.

Bautista et a. (2025) suggested the GAME (Gamified Activities for Mastery Enhancement) intervention led to a substantial improvement in Grade 9 students' mastery of pronoun–antecedent agreement, increasing the mean score from 47.3% in the pre-test to over 80.5% in the post-test, with a statistically significant difference ($t = 19.4$, $p < 0.001$) and a very large effect size ($d = 2.74$), indicating strong instructional impact; in addition to enhanced grammatical proficiency, students reported higher motivation, engagement, collaboration, and retention, although the findings should be interpreted with caution due to potential novelty effects, the absence of a control group, and the study's limited sample scope.

Article Errors *(for Grammatical Error)*

Similarly, Article Errors—such as missing or unnecessary uses of "a," "an," or "the"—were identified in Researcher #13's work (e.g., "enforce English-only policy"). Pasaribu et al. (2021) emphasized that EFL students frequently commit errors in using English articles due to limited understanding of their functions, with article errors accounting for 165 cases (12.58%) in thesis writing, predominantly involving the omission of "the" (31.51%) and "a/an" (20.61%), while addition and misuse errors occurred at similar rates; the findings further indicate that targeted error identification and regular sentence-writing practice can effectively reduce grammatical and sentence-structure mistakes.

The application of definite and indefinite articles can be taught through structured activities such as flowcharts, fill-in-the-blank exercises, and sentence correction tasks. Also, explicit instruction, systematic practice, and cooperative learning models are vital in improving students' use of articles and narrative writing skills (Ramzan et al., 2022), while increasing their engagement, behavior, and overall participation (Khair et al., 2022). The prevalence of grammatical errors underscores the role of structured guidance and feedback in helping students develop greater control of grammatical structures and produce more effective academic writing.

Conclusions

This study was conducted in response to the persistent need to enhance coherence and clarity in academic writing among student researchers. Through a comprehensive content analysis of lexical cohesion patterns and errors, the study identified recurring cohesion ties, lexical cohesion errors, and grammatical errors in the Background of the Study sections of undergraduate theses. These patterns and errors were found to affect the organization, coherence, and communicative effectiveness of academic

writing. Based on these findings, instructional criteria and corrective strategies were developed to address the identified weaknesses and support students' writing development. More importantly, the study contributes to writing pedagogy by providing educators with evidence-based insights into common cohesion-related difficulties, allowing them to design more targeted writing instruction and interventions. The findings also contribute to teacher education by increasing BSED English students' awareness of effective cohesion practices, thereby helping prepare future educators to produce and teach coherent, well-structured academic texts.

Recommendations

For Educators. Educators are encouraged to integrate the corrective instructional strategies proposed by this study into their teaching practices to assess students' writing skills and language proficiency. Through the consistent application of these approaches, educators can create a more interactive and supportive learning environment that fosters confident, competent, and effective writers.

For Researchers. Researchers may use the findings of this study as a reference for further investigations on lexical cohesion and academic writing. The identified lexical cohesion patterns, errors, and instructional strategies may serve as a foundation for developing and evaluating interventions aimed at improving students' writing proficiency.

For Future Studies. Future researchers may explore the effectiveness of AI-powered paraphrasing and grammar-checking tools in helping students identify and correct lexical cohesion errors. They may also employ quantitative or mixed-method research designs to provide additional empirical evidence and develop more targeted instructional strategies. Furthermore, future studies may extend the analysis to other forms of writing, such as journalistic and technical writing, and involve students from different academic disciplines to examine how lexical cohesion functions across various contexts and professional settings.

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