

Cohesive Devices in Academic Writing: A Data-Driven Guide Informed by Students' Academic Essays

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Abstract

This paper presents a data-driven approach to improving academic writing through the effective use of cohesive devices, drawing on authentic examples from 112 student essays collected as part of a university-wide writing competition at "Fan S. Noli" University, Korça, Albania. Within the framework of the "Research Expertise from the Academic Diaspora (READ) Program, funded by the Albanian-American Development Foundation (AADF), it was developed a guide which provides a comprehensive taxonomy of cohesive devices—logical, grammatical, and lexical—supported by detailed explanations, error analysis, and pedagogical strategies. By combining theoretical insights with practical exercises and annotated student writing samples, the guide not only addresses common challenges in cohesion but also offers targeted instruction to enhance clarity, coherence, and argument structure in academic essays. Intended for both English language majors and students across disciplines, this resource contributes to raising academic writing standards through a learner-centered, corpus-informed methodology.

Keywords: learner data-driven; writing Instruction; cohesive devices; error analysis; higher education