
The analysis of lexical cohesion in students' narrative writing

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Abstract

Cohesion is a fundamental aspect that contributes to the coherence and clarity of a text. Among its types, lexical cohesion plays a key role in creating semantic connections through words that are related in meaning. Despite its importance, many EFL learners still lack awareness of how lexical cohesion operates in writing, particularly in narrative texts. This study aims to conduct a deeper analysis of the types and functions of lexical cohesion used by eighth-grade students in their narrative writing, highlighting how their use reflects their language proficiency. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, this research analyzed eight narrative texts written by students at a private Islamic junior high school in Cirebon. The data were examined using Halliday and Hasan's (1976) framework, covering six categories of lexical cohesion: repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, meronymy, and collocation. The findings revealed 131 occurrences of lexical cohesion, with repetition being the most dominant (105 instances), followed by collocation (8), synonymy (6), hyponymy (6), antonymy (4), and meronymy (2). The results further indicate that students with high achievement students showed a tendency toward a more balanced use of cohesive devices, while low achievement students relied heavily on repetition. These results suggest that the variation and appropriate distribution of lexical cohesion contribute significantly to the overall quality of students' writing. The study implies that teachers should emphasize the teaching of lexical cohesion to help students develop more coherent, cohesive, and contextually appropriate writing. Future studies are encouraged to include a larger sample and explore other text genres to gain a deeper understanding of students' lexical cohesion use.

Keywords: cohesion; narrative writing; EFL

INTRODUCTION

English, as a global lingua franca, plays a vital role in international communication, education, and academic exchange (Crystal, 2003; Fang, 2017; Seidlhofer, 2011). In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language from elementary to tertiary levels, where students are expected to develop proficiency in four main language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Siregar, 2014). Among these, writing is often perceived as the most complex skill to master because it requires learners to integrate linguistic knowledge, logical organization, and creativity (Byrne, 1988). Writing is not only about producing grammatically correct sentences but also about constructing coherent and



cohesive texts that communicate meaning clearly and effectively to readers (Indriani, 2015).

Cohesion and coherence are two essential aspects that determine the quality of a text. Coherence refers to the logical and conceptual relationships between ideas, ensuring that the text makes sense as a whole (Abdelwahab & Rahmtallah, 2020). Textual coherence allows readers to interpret messages without confusion, making it a crucial element of effective writing (Liu, 2020). In contrast, cohesion deals with the linguistic elements that tie sentences and clauses together through grammatical or lexical relationships. Halliday & Hasan (1976) emphasize that cohesion is achieved through the use of cohesive devices that link one part of a text to another, creating continuity and unity. These cohesive devices are generally divided into two categories: grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion (Zhang, 2023). Grammatical cohesion includes reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction, while lexical cohesion involves relationships between words and meanings that connect one idea to another. The ability to use cohesive devices appropriately reflects a learner's discourse competence, showing how well they can organize and integrate ideas within a written text. Conversely, lack of cohesion often results in disjointed texts that hinder comprehension and disrupt the overall meaning (Liu, 2020). Therefore, developing cohesive writing helps learners produce texts that are more reader-friendly, structured, and contextually appropriate (Oshima & Hogue, 2006).

Lexical cohesion, in particular, plays a vital role in determining how well a text holds together semantically (Rizki et al., 2022). It occurs when lexical items are related through repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, meronymy, and collocation (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). This type of cohesion is central to connecting ideas meaningfully through vocabulary use (Tanskanen, 2006). For instance, repetition reinforces key concepts and maintains topic continuity, synonymy avoids redundancy while enriching vocabulary use, antonymy introduces contrast to clarify meaning, hyponymy is a term that denotes a word or phrase with a specific meaning that falls under a broader category, meronymy refers to the relationship between a word or phrase that represents a part of a whole; and collocation reflects natural word pairings frequently used by native speakers (Raman & Mathew, 2021). The strategic use of varied lexical cohesive devices significantly enhances textual quality and supports readers in following the flow of ideas logically and coherently (Mahlberg, 2006). Conversely, weak mastery of lexical cohesion is often associated with limited vocabulary knowledge, resulting in fragmented, monotonous, or ambiguous writing that may impede comprehension (Crossley, 2020; Niu, 2015).

However, research has shown that many EFL students still struggle to apply lexical cohesion effectively in their writing. Studies by Alotaibi (2015) and Falah (2025) reveal that learners often rely excessively on repetition while neglecting other lexical ties, resulting in limited lexical diversity. This difficulty is reinforced by findings that EFL learners frequently struggle with vocabulary selection, which directly affects their ability to use cohesive devices appropriately, many students rely heavily on repetition due to an insufficient lexical range, which limits their capacity to construct varied and engaging texts (Sejdiu, 2023). Such overreliance on repetition not only weakens the stylistic quality of writing but also reflects restricted vocabulary mastery and underdeveloped textual awareness, as limited knowledge of discourse features often leads students to produce texts with low cohesion (Hyland, 2016). Moreover, previous studies have predominantly focused on lexical cohesion in academic or expository writing at the tertiary level, with relatively few examining its use in narrative writing among junior high school students. This gap leaves unanswered questions about how students across different achievement scores construct meaning

through lexical cohesion and how their proficiency levels influence their lexical choices (Nadesan & Shah, 2020).

Narrative writing, which is central to the junior high school English curriculum (Damayanti et al., 2022), provides an ideal medium for analyzing students' use of cohesion because it requires them to organize events sequentially and convey experiences in a meaningful way. Narrative writing also enables learners to express personal experiences and develop storytelling skills, which are essential for fostering creativity and communicative competence (Knapp & Watkins, 2005). In the Indonesian curriculum, narrative writing is essential for building foundational discourse competence, helping students develop the ability to connect ideas coherently in written form (Fanani, 2018). Understanding how students use lexical cohesion in narrative texts can reveal the depth of their linguistic competence and ability to connect ideas logically. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the types and functions of lexical cohesion used in eighth-grade students' narrative writing and to explore how students with high, middle, and low achievement scores employ these devices in their texts. Therefore, the objectives of this study is to investigate the various types of lexical cohesion employed in students' narrative writing, and to analyze and compare their application among students with high, middle, and low achievement scores.

Most previous research has focused on expository or academic writing at the tertiary level, leaving a gap in understanding how younger EFL learners apply lexical cohesion in narrative texts. This gap is particularly relevant in Indonesia, where narrative writing is part of the national curriculum and serves as a foundation for developing written discourse competence. Investigating learners' lexical cohesion provides valuable insight into their linguistic and cognitive development, particularly in contexts where writing skills are still emerging (Yang & He, 2025). Research on cohesion also helps teachers understand learners' challenges in producing coherent discourse, enabling them to identify areas where instructional support is needed (Eggins, 2007).

Therefore, this study aims to: 1) identify the types of lexical cohesion employed in eighth-grade students' narrative writing, and 2) analyze how their use varies across high, middle, and low achievement levels. Further, the study's significance lies in its contribution to both pedagogy and theory: it offers insights into how lexical cohesion reflects learners' writing proficiency and provides practical implications for teachers to foster varied and meaningful use of cohesive devices.

METHOD

This research employed a descriptive qualitative method to capture natural linguistic patterns in students' writing without manipulation. Eight eighth-grade students were purposefully selected based on their English scores to represent varying levels of writing proficiency. This selection enabled comparison across achievement levels, providing richer interpretation of lexical cohesion use.

Data were collected from students' narrative writing tasks and analyzed using Halliday and Hasan's (1976) framework. To enhance credibility, all analyses were rechecked by a second rater and validated through peer discussion. The data were coded, categorized, and interpreted descriptively to identify dominant cohesion types and their distribution.

Respondents

Participants in the study were selected based on the scores they achieved in English subject because students with different scores reflects different writing abilities. Eight people of eighth grade students were chosen, consisting of three students with the highest scores, two with average scores, and three with the low scores. Using this sample, the researcher aimed to analyze the use of lexical cohesion employed by these students and identify differences in their usage of lexical cohesion. Students with high score are referred to as S1, S2, and S3, middle score referred as S4 and S5, and low score as S6, S7, and S8.

Instruments

The researcher served as the primary instrument by collecting, interpreting, and analyzing the data. Additionally, a supporting instrument, such as a table of lexical cohesion analysis, was used to categorize the lexical cohesion found in students' writing, ensuring a systematic and structured analysis. Furthermore, this research employed an analysis sheet to present the findings and describe the analysis performed on the students' narrative writing using the reference devices developed by Halliday and Hasan (1976). The analysis took the form of a table adapted from Adiantika (2015) as shown below:

Table 1

Narrative Writing Devices Rubric

Lexical Cohesion	S#1	S#2	S#3	S#4	S#5	S#6	S#7	S#8	Total
Repetition									
Synonymy									
Antonymy									
Hyponymy									
Meronymy									
Collocation									
Total									

Procedures

In conducting this research, the researcher selected 8 eighth grade students based on their overall English scores. The data were collected from the narrative writing produced by these students. Each writing sample was carefully read and analyzed to examine the use of lexical cohesion. The analysis focused on identifying various cohesive devices, including repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, meronymy, and collocation. In the final stage, the researcher applied descriptive quantification to classify, count, and analyze the frequency of each cohesive device found in the students' writing. The results were then presented descriptively to highlight the dominant types of lexical cohesion used across different scores, thereby offering a clearer interpretation of the findings.

Data analysis

The data analysis technique utilized descriptive qualitative analysis, which assigned characteristics to the researched variables based on their actual conditions. This analysis was based on the approach used by Yusuf (2021), which followed the method outlined by Mayring (2014). The analysis consisted of two main stages: (1) Categorization, in this stage, units of text with similar characteristics were grouped to identify relevant information. The data were classified into types of lexical cohesion. (2) Abstraction, refers to creating a general description of the research topic by forming categories. The process began with coding, in which the researcher read each text line by line to identify and mark content that

matched the defined categories, while disregarding unrelated material. In the results phase, the researcher interpreted the categorized data, described the characteristics and dimensions of each category, and formulated conclusions in relation to the research questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Types of lexical cohesion and its occurrences

According to Halliday & Hasan (1976), lexical cohesion is divided into two main categories, reiteration and collocation. Reiteration itself consists of several types such as repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, and meronymy. Based on this framework, the presence of lexical cohesion in student's narrative writing is analyzed by identifying these elements. The following is the explanation and example of lexical cohesion in students' narrative writing based on their achievement levels.

Lexical Cohesion in High Score Students

Table 2

The Occurrences of Lexical Cohesion in High Score Students

Types of Lexical Cohesion	S1	S2	S3	Total
Repetition	10	2	20	32
Synonymy	1	-	-	1
Antonymy	1	-	-	1
Hyponymy	2	-	-	2
Meronymy	-	-	-	0
Collocation	2	-	1	3
Total				39

Table 2 shows the total number of lexical cohesions used by high score students. There were 39 instances in total. Repetition appeared 32 times, followed by collocation 3 times, and hyponymy 2 times. Synonymy and antonymy each occurred once, while meronymy was not found in their writing. Below are some examples of each type of lexical cohesion found in their writings.

Repetition

S1 paragraph 1:

When I first **entered** a new **school**, I felt nervous, there I was directed by the principal to **enter** the class for student during the **school** environment.

The sentence contains two repetitions namely "enter" and "school." The repeated word "enter" emphasizes the writer's experience of moving into a new environment. First, arriving at the school, and second, being guided into the classroom. Although both use the same verb form, they represent different stages of the orientation process, showing the writer's sense of progress and adaptation. The second repeated word, "school," maintains coherence by anchoring the setting. The first refers to the institution, while the second, in "school environment," places the event in a broader context. Thus, repetition here is not

redundant, it strengthens continuity and highlights the importance of setting in the narrative's orientation stage.

Synonymy

S1 paragraph 1 and 2:

We know each other and **communicated** with other student.

We **chatted** with each other and also had snacks together.

In this example, the student uses the verbs "communicated" and "chatted" to describe similar actions involving verbal interaction. These words are lexical synonyms that share the meaning of engaging in conversation but differ in tone and formality. "Communicated" is more formal and implies purposeful interaction, while "chatted" is informal and suggests casual, friendly talk. The use of these two verbs in close proximity shows the student's effort to vary vocabulary, which enhances lexical cohesion through synonymy. This variation prevents unnecessary repetition and maintains semantic connection between ideas. Although the shift in formality may seem inconsistent, it indicates the student's developing awareness of lexical cohesion and attempts to use diverse expressions to convey similar meanings.

Antonymy

S1 paragraph 3:

At first I thought there was **women's** futsal, it turned out it was only for **men**.

The words "women's" and "men" form an antonymic pair based on gender classification, representing two opposite categories. The contrast highlights the difference between the writer's expectation and the actual situation. The writer initially assumed that a futsal activity was available for female students but later found it was only for males. This use of antonymy expresses contrast and clarification, strengthening the narrative's coherence by emphasizing the writer's change in understanding. Through this opposition, the student effectively conveys a shift in perspective and supports the logical flow of the story.

Hyponymy

S1 paragraph 2:

During class there was a distribution of **cleaning tools**, I was to bring [sic] a **broom** and someone bring a **soft mop**, **chamois**, **glass cleaner** and all.

The phrase "cleaning tools" acts as a hypernym, while the listed items "broom, soft mop, chamois, and glass cleaner" are its hyponyms, representing specific examples of the general category. This hierarchical relationship shows how general and specific terms work together to create clarity and detail in the narrative. The use of hyponymy enhances cohesion by linking a broad concept with its specific components, helping readers grasp the full context of the situation. By introducing the general term first and then specifying the items, the writer develops the idea logically, contributing to the text's semantic organization and coherence.

Collocation

S3 paragraph 3:

And in day 1 school [sic] there is teachings [sic] **physical exercise** but I no have [sic] shirt so I no participate [sic] **physical exercise**.

The phrase “physical exercise” functions as a collocation because it is a natural and commonly used word combination in both academic and everyday contexts to refer to school-based physical activities. Using this collocation makes the text clearer and easier to understand, as readers immediately recognize it as referring to formal physical activities within the school setting.

Lexical cohesion in middle school students

Table 3

The Occurrences of Lexical Cohesion in Middle Score Students

Types of Lexical Cohesion	S4	S5	Total
Repetition	22	2	24
Synonymy	-	1	1
Antonymy	-	-	0
Hyponymy	-	2	2
Meronymy	-	1	1
Collocation	3	1	4
		Total	32

Based on Table 3 above, the total frequency of lexical cohesion occurrences in students with middle scores is 32 times. Repetition is the most dominant type, appearing 24 times. Following that, collocation appears 4 times, then hyponymy appears 2 times. Synonymy and meronymy each appear 1 time, while no antonymy was found in their writings. Below are several examples of each type of lexical cohesion.

Repetition

S4 paragraph 1:

I am student [sic] **transfer** in junior high school Muhammadiyah. I **transfer** [sic] from boarding school Arjawinangun.

The verb “transfer” is repeated to emphasize the writer’s status as a new student. The first instance identifies her as a transfer student at Muhammadiyah Junior High School, while the second provides context by mentioning her previous school. This repetition serves to clarify and emphasize the transition the writer experienced. Rather than being redundant, it enhances the coherence of the narrative by linking her past and present educational contexts and reinforcing the theme of change and movement between institutions.

Synonymy

S5 paragraph 3:

Then there was someone with a **strange face** and **scary face**, namely Ayse.

The phrases “strange face” and “scary face” function as synonyms in this context, both describing the student named Ayse. The use of synonymy strengthens the characterization by emphasizing the negative and frightening impression of Ayse’s appearance. By expressing a similar meaning with different words, the writer maintains continuity of ideas while enhancing the emotional intensity of the description, making the portrayal more vivid and cohesive.

Hyponymy

S5 paragraph 2:

Some of them promoted organization such as HW, TS, IPM.

The word “organization” acts as a hypernym that encompasses specific items such as “HW, TS, and IPM,” which serve as its hyponyms. These acronyms refer to particular student organizations categorized under the broader term. The use of hyponymy structures information hierarchically by presenting a general concept followed by its specific examples. This strategy enhances lexical cohesion by linking related terms within the same semantic field and reflects the writer’s effort to classify similar entities under one category.

Meronymy

S5 paragraph 3:

When we entered our respective classes, many people were fighting for seats.

The word “seats” represents a physical part of the larger entity “classroom,” making it an example of meronymy, a lexical relationship in which one term denotes a part of a whole. The use of “seats” highlights a specific and tangible aspect of the classroom environment, reflecting students’ interaction within that space. This relationship supports lexical cohesion by connecting the part (seats) to the whole (classroom), thus enhancing the spatial and situational clarity of the narrative. The use of meronymy also helps anchor the setting in concrete detail, allowing readers to visualize the environment where the social action (fighting for seats) occurs.

Collocation

S4 paragraph 1:

I cry because I can’t do science lessons.

The phrase “science lessons” is a common collocation in academic contexts, naturally combining to refer to a school subject and its instructional period. This collocation creates a conventional and contextually appropriate expression that clearly conveys the idea of learning science as a structured subject in school.

Lexical cohesion in low score students

Table 4

The Occurrences of Lexical Cohesion in Low Score Students

Types of Lexical Cohesion	S6	S7	S8	Total
Repetition	11	14	24	49
Synonymy	-	3	1	4
Antonymy	-	2	1	3
Hyponymy	1	-	1	2
Meronymy	-	-	1	1
Collocation	-	-	1	1
			Total	60

Based on Table 4, a total of 60 lexical cohesion devices were identified in the writings of low score students. Repetition was the most dominant type, appearing 49 times, indicating a strong dependence on repeated words to maintain coherence. Synonymy occurred 4 times,

followed by antonymy 3 times and hyponymy 2 times. Meronymy and collocation were the least frequent, each appearing once. The following section presents examples of each type of lexical cohesion found in the students' narrative writing.

Repetition

S6 paragraph 1 and 2:

I approach him for get to know, I'm **introduce** myself and he **introduce** himself.

I see 2 teachers and they **introduced** themselves, they name is Mrs. Novi and Mr. Yusron, they teach religious lessons, after they **introduce** themselves, continued by students.

The word "introduce" is repeated four times across paragraphs 1 and 2. This repetition maintains the continuity of the topic related to the introduction process on the first day of school. In paragraph 1, "introduce" refers to the student's action of introducing himself to a new friend, while in paragraph 2, it describes the teacher's action of introducing themselves to the students. Thus, the repetition serves as a cohesive link connecting both contexts, emphasizing that introductions were made by both students and teachers.

Synonymy

S7 paragraph 2 and 3:

I gathered the **courage** to ask.

I started to be **brave** enough to talk.

The words "courage" and "brave" function as synonyms, both expressing the emotional strength needed to initiate communication. Although they differ in form, "courage" as a noun and "brave" as an adjective, they share a similar meaning related to overcoming fear or hesitation, reflecting the writer's emotional development from shyness to confidence. This use of synonymy contributes to lexical cohesion by maintaining continuity in the writer's internal struggle and gradual transformation. It also emphasizes variation, which enhances the narrative flow and avoids redundancy, showing the writer's attempt to express the same psychological state in multiple ways to add depth to the text.

Antonymy

S7 paragraph 3:

I felt **hesitant** to become **brave** enough to speak in front of others or chat other friends.

In this sentence, the words "hesitant" and "brave" form a lexical antonymy, representing opposite emotional states, "hesitant" meaning uncertain or lacking confidence, and "brave" indicating confidence and courage. However, this contrast does not show a complete transformation but rather reveals the writer's internal conflict, expressing a desire to be brave while still struggling with hesitation. The use of antonymy highlights the contrast between the writer's present emotional state and their aspiration, adding psychological depth to the narrative and helping readers understand the writer's struggle with self-confidence in social interactions.

Hyponymy

S8 paragraph 3:

In this school there are many **extracurricular** such as **IPM, HW, futsal**, etc.

The word "extracurricular" functions as a hypernym that refers to a general category of school activities conducted outside regular academic classes. The specific examples which

is “IPM, HW, and futsal” serve as hyponyms, representing distinct types of extracurricular programs offered at the school. This lexical relationship shows the writer’s ability to organize information by grouping specific items under a broader concept.

Meronymy

S8 paragraph 1:

When I arrived at the **class** me [sic] and Fathir were not at the same **table** he was in front of me in the back [sic].

The word “table” functions as a meronym, representing a specific part of the larger setting which is the classroom. Like “seats,” tables are essential elements within classrooms, and their mention establishes a part-whole relationship that reinforces spatial and contextual coherence. The use of “table” helps the writer describe the classroom layout, particularly the students’ positions. This meronymic reference allows readers to visualize the scene more clearly by grounding the interaction between the writer and Fathir in a tangible environment. Thus, the use of meronymy enhances descriptive detail and strengthens the coherence of the narrative.

Collocation

S8 paragraph 3:

After that the bell rang for a break and we **took a break** for +- 1 hours.

The phrase “took a break” functions as a collocation, where the verb “take” naturally co-occurs with the noun “break” to indicate a short period of rest from regular activity. This pairing is widely used in both spoken and written English, contributing to the naturalness and fluency of the text. The use of this collocation enhances lexical cohesion by following conventional language patterns, making the meaning clear and easily understood. In this context, it refers to a scheduled break time during the school day, supporting the narrative’s flow and sequence of events.

The findings reveal that repetition dominated all groups, suggesting students’ limited lexical range. High achievers displayed more lexical variation (e.g., synonymy, hyponymy), while lower achievers relied heavily on repetition to maintain coherence. This pattern aligns with [Alotaibi \(2015\)](#) and [Falah \(2025\)](#), who note that overreliance on repetition signals developing lexical competence. Interestingly, one low achiever (S8) demonstrated awareness of all cohesion types, suggesting that writing ability may not directly correlate with academic scores but rather with individual lexical experimentation.

Discussion

This section discusses the findings based on the research questions and their alignment with relevant theories.

Lexical cohesion in high score students

Students with high scores (S1, S2, S3) mostly relied on repetition in their writing. Only S1 showed variation, using 5 out of 6 types of lexical cohesion which is repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, and collocation in a balanced way. According to [Alotaibi \(2015\)](#), writing quality is not determined by the number of cohesive devices but by their variation and appropriate distribution. S2 used repetition only twice, suggesting limited writing ability. Meanwhile, S3 relied heavily on repetition (20 times) with only one instance of collocation, making the text monotonous and redundant, as [Falah \(2025\)](#) also noted that excessive repetition can weaken writing quality. Thus, only S1 used lexical cohesion in a

varied and balanced manner, while the writings of S2 and S3 were less cohesive despite their high academic scores.

Lexical cohesion in middle score students

S4 from the middle score group, still showed a strong reliance on repetition, which appeared 22 times, and only 3 instances of collocation. This overuse of repetition made the text monotonous and less engaging. It also indicated a dependence on basic cohesive strategies instead of exploring more diverse lexical connections. In contrast, S5 used lexical cohesion more effectively and variably, employing 5 out of 6 types which is repetition, synonymy, hyponymy, meronymy, and collocation. S5 also used meronymy, which was rarely found in other students' writing. Therefore, among the middle scores, only S5 demonstrated variation in using lexical cohesion.

Lexical cohesion in low score students

S6 from the low score group still relied heavily on repetition with 24 occurrences and only one instance of hyponymy. S7 showed better variation by using 3 types which is repetition, synonymy, and antonymy, indicating an effort to use more diverse vocabulary. S8 was the only one who used all six types of lexical cohesion among all students, although repetition still dominated with 24 occurrences. This shows some imbalance, but also a positive attempt to apply various lexical devices, including meronymy, which was rarely used by others. Thus, even though S8 was categorized as low score, their writing showed emerging awareness and development in lexical cohesion.

From the analysis above, it can be seen that Students 1, 5, and 8 used more variation in lexical cohesion compared to others. Most of the remaining students depended heavily on repetition. Interestingly, S8 despite being in the low score group was the only one who applied all types of lexical cohesion. This finding suggests that students' English achievement scores do not always reflect the quality of cohesion in their writing. Some low score students showed greater lexical variation than higher ones. On the other hand, high score students tend to rely more on repetition because it is a safer and simpler way to maintain coherence, which reduces lexical variety. As [Alotaibi \(2015\)](#) states, writing effectiveness depends more on the balance and variety of cohesive devices than on their frequency. Similarly, [Falah \(2025\)](#) notes that excessive repetition often results in weak and monotonous writing, which may reflect limited vocabulary mastery.

These findings underscore that frequency alone does not determine writing quality; balanced and purposeful use of cohesive devices contributes more to textual coherence and readability. Teachers, therefore, should guide learners toward conscious selection of lexical ties through writing tasks emphasizing variation, substitution, and paraphrase.

CONCLUSION

Drawing from the result, the findings of this study show that the use of lexical cohesion among eighth-grade students varied notably across achievement levels. Importantly, students' achievement scores did not always align with the quality or diversity of lexical cohesion in their writing. Repetition was the most dominant device, accounting for more than 80% of all instances. Only a few students specifically S1 (high achiever), S5 (middle achiever), and S8 (low achiever) were able to use a wider range of lexical cohesion types. Notably, Student 8, despite belonging to the low score achievement, successfully applied all six types of lexical cohesion.

This study contributes to the EFL learning context by providing empirical evidence of how students employ lexical cohesion in narrative writing. The findings reveal that most students depend heavily on repetition, which, while helpful for maintaining continuity, but limits lexical variety and reduces overall writing quality. These results offer valuable implications for teachers in designing instruction that promotes not only the recognition but also the effective use of various cohesive devices. Encouraging students to apply synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, meronymy, and collocation more purposefully can help them enrich their writing, strengthen coherence, and express ideas more clearly. Furthermore, the fact that even low score students demonstrated the ability to use multiple types of lexical cohesion suggests that explicit teaching and consistent practice can significantly enhance writing proficiency across different achievement levels.

However, this study has several limitations. The sample size was small and limited to one school, which affects the generalizability of the results. The study also focused only on narrative writing, excluding other genres that may use different cohesion strategies. In addition, the number of students in the middle score group was only two, which may not adequately represent the entire group. Future studies should include more participants, different text types, and quantitative validation to generalize findings. Teachers should adopt classroom strategies that train students to employ a range of cohesive devices for more effective communication.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Author 1: Conceptualization, Data gathering and analysis, Writing. **Author 2:** Validating, Reviewing, and Editing.

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