
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Role of Discourse Practice in Students' Writing at Bosowa University

Muliati¹, St. Asriati. Am², Dahlia D. Moelier³, Syaila Nur Amaliyah⁴, Tamra⁵, and Nurfaisah Sahib⁶

^{1,6}English Language Education Department, Bosowa University, Makassar, Indonesia

²English Language Education Department, Muhammadiyah Makassar University, Indonesia

^{3,4}English Language Literature Department, Bosowa University, Makassar, Indonesia

⁵Information System, Technology Akba Makassar University, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: Muliati, **E-mail:** muliati@universitasbosowa.ac.id

| ABSTRACT

Discourse practice plays a crucial role in shaping students' writing development at Bosowa University through meaningful academic interaction processes. Students were involved in learning and analyzing the uses of language through discourse practice, which involved content, lexical cohesion, and grammatical range. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of discourse practice in writing abilities. This is a qualitative study involving 16 English language students in the second semester of the English language department in the academic year 2024/2025. The total sampling was used for one class. Data collection for this research used writing evaluation, questionnaires, and interviews as the research instruments. The research findings reveal that the role of discourse practice in writing is to help students write coherently. In three phases, students had consistent content, used relevant lexical cohesion, and demonstrated an appropriate grammatical range. Moreover, students were able to shape their writing, which helped them read it more closely, and, therefore, it was easily readable. Therefore, discourse practice plays a crucial role in developing the ability to write and use language. It is recommended that discourse practice be integrated to enhance students' coherence, critical thinking, and the quality of their academic writing.

| KEYWORDS

Role, Discourse Practice, Content, Lexical Cohesion, Grammatical Range, Writing Ability

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

ACCEPTED: 03 January 2026

PUBLISHED: 01 February 2026

DOI: 10.32996/jeltal.2026.8.2.5

1. Introduction

Discourse analysis is the study and analysis of language use. Discourse analysis is used in many different ways, at different times, and in different situations (Hodges, 2008). Discourse analysis is concerned with the textual and contextual communication of messages (Wu, G., 2021; White, 2020). The benefits of discourse analysis include understanding a language, which is certainly beneficial for language learning and language behavior, and for increasing the acquisition of communicative competence.

Discourse practice aligns with Hymes's (1974) definition of language use in certain groups or communities, but it focuses on spoken language. Moreover, discourse practice is not focused on spoken language only but also on written language. It is like describing forms of communication based on the assumptions, practices, and traditions of the same members of groups (Jubhari, 2009). Writing is one of the parts of written language. Moreover, writing abilities are one part of communication that plays a role in students' academic life. The ability to write allows students to use and manage language effectively, which is good and systematic through the thoughts they develop (Al-Mubarak, 2017).

Several items can be used to assess the discourse practice in written language. *They are content, coherence, cohesion, and grammatical range.* Content relates to the substance of writing and the experience of the primary concept (Hyland, K., 2019;

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Graham, S., & Perin, D., 2007). The content paragraph primarily conveys ideas rather than serving a special transition function. Coherence refers to connecting thoughts at the level of the concept, and cohesion refers to connecting thoughts at the level of the phrase (Alsawi, 2016). Basically, Crossley, S. (2016) argued that coherence relates to the rhetorical elements of your writing, including the development and support of your argument, the synthesis and development of reading, organization, and clarification of concepts. Writing cohesion focuses on the grammatical elements of writing.

Applying grammar in language learning is a significant skill. The grammar will be used by speakers and authors for their assignments (Patterson, 1999). Grammar is the set of rules that enable us to combine phrases into larger units in our language. Some words can be combined, not others, and the main part of a language is grammar (Greenbaum & Nelson, 2002). It mediates between, on the one hand, the sound or written symbol scheme and, on the other hand, the sense system. It is easy for learners to use dictionaries to find the pronunciation, spelling, or meaning of words, but without considerable knowledge of grammar, it is still difficult to consult grammar books.

The research question is (1) How is the students' writing at Bosowa University within the role of discourse practice? (2) What is the effectiveness of the role of discourse practice to students' writing at Bosowa University? The Objective of the research is to examine how students write at Bosowa University within the role of discourse practice and to determine the effectiveness of this role on students' writing at Bosowa University. The study is expected to provide new insights into Discourse Practice, especially in written language. Theoretically, the benefits of this research become a source of information for answering and resolving problems related to the role of discourse practice in students' writing ability. In practice, the benefits of this research can enhance the writer's knowledge of discourse practices in teaching and learning. Other than that, this research can be used as a reference in science education and to improve the knowledge of the readers and further researchers in Discourse.

2. Literature Review

Research in academic literacies increasingly conceptualizes writing not just as a linguistic product, but as a socially embedded practice involving interaction, context, and power relations. According to Lymer, G., Lindwall, O., & Greiffenhagen, C, 2024, and Yang, M., 2023, in academic literacies, there has been a shift from viewing texts as isolated linguistic objects to viewing them as *discourse practices*, where writing is integrated into educational interactions such as supervision, peer feedback, and institutional dialogue. These practices influence how students produce texts and learn writing skills.

A key theme in research on discourse practice is how classroom interaction and writing supervision practices support or constrain students' ability to produce coherent texts (Sedova, K. et al., 2019; Sahlender, M., 2024). For example, studies have shown that *supervision interactions* contribute to students' development as academic writers by shaping their understanding of genre expectations, coherence strategies, and disciplinary conventions that are part of discourse practices in higher education.

Several pedagogical studies confirm that *explicit discourse-oriented teaching* improves students' writing skills. One example from research on rhetorical strategies in academic texts identifies interactive metadiscourse — such as transitions, evidential markers, and metatextual markers — as key *discourse practices* that help students guide readers through complex academic arguments. Teaching these strategies helps learners produce texts that are more cohesive, contextually appropriate, and rhetorically effective.

Most ESL learners agreed that writing is difficult. Learners lack vocabulary knowledge and have difficulties with syntax, morphemes, and grammar. Most of them make mistakes in basic tenses, articles, prepositions, verbs, sentence structure, and coherence (Bilal et al., 2016).

Writing is a collection of patterns most closely focused on words and phrases, but may also refer to longer texts with prescriptions for cohesive connections and structures within and between paragraphs, independent of the type of text. The correctness of the letter, word, phrase, and text formation determines good writing. However, it has become increasingly acknowledged in recent times that texts vary, at least in terms of patterns larger than phrases. This idea can be found alongside the view that writing is a collection of text types shaped by social reasons (Ivanic, 2004).

The role of discourse practice in students' writing has gained increasing attention in language education research, particularly within the framework of genre-based pedagogy and academic literacy development. Discourse practice refers to the ways learners engage with, construct, and negotiate meaning through socially situated language use. It emphasizes that writing is not merely the production of grammatically correct sentences but a process of participating in specific discourse communities with particular conventions, purposes, and expectations.

Drawing on systemic functional linguistics, scholars such as Gebhard et al. argue that language functions as a resource for meaning-making, shaped by context (2013). From this perspective, students' writing competence develops when they understand how linguistic choices relate to field (content), tenor (social relations), and mode (channel of communication). In

classroom contexts, Lu (2025) and Kessler & Casal (2024) argue that discourse-oriented instruction often includes modeling genre structures, analyzing authentic texts, collaborative writing, and explicit discussion of rhetorical patterns. These practices enable students to recognize how coherence, cohesion, argumentation, and stance are constructed within particular genres. Research indicates that when learners actively engage in discourse practice—through peer feedback, revision cycles, and reflective dialogue—they demonstrate improved organization, critical thinking, and audience awareness.

Furthermore, discourse practice supports the development of voice and identity in writing. By participating in meaningful communicative tasks, students move beyond formulaic writing and begin to position themselves as legitimate contributors to academic discourse. This is particularly relevant in English as a Second or Foreign Language contexts, where students may struggle to align their linguistic resources with disciplinary expectations.

3. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore the role of discourse practice in students' writing development at Bosowa University. A descriptive case study approach is used to gain an in-depth understanding of how discourse practices influence students' written texts within an academic context. Data collection for this research used writing evaluation, questionnaires, and interviews as the research instruments. Students wrote their daily activities as part of the writing evaluation, and 10 questionnaires were given to gather more information about discourse practices in writing. Moreover, the researchers conducted an interview to provide additional information and strengthen the results from the writing evaluation and questionnaires. The data are analyzed using thematic analysis of the content, lexical cohesion, and grammatical range in students' writing. The participants consist of undergraduate students enrolled in writing courses at Bosowa University.

4. Results and Discussion

Writing Evaluation

This session presents the results of the writing evaluation, which highlighted discourse practices in written language. The parts assessed in student writing the daily activities were content, lexical cohesion, and grammatical range.

Table 1. Writing evaluation

	Content	Lexical Cohesion	Grammatical Range
Respondent 1	Did not completely	Using correct lexical cohesion	Some of the sentence using wrong tense
Respondent 2	Did not completely	Did not use good lexical cohesion	Most of the grammar was wrong
Respondent 3	Good content	Lexical cohesion was correct	Good grammar
Respondent 4	Almost completely	Less lexical cohesion	Less grammar
Respondent 5	Perfect content	Good lexical cohesion	Good grammar
Respondent 6	Less content	Less lexical cohesion	Less grammar
Respondent 7	Good content	Good lexical cohesion	Good grammar
Respondent 8	Good Content	Good lexical cohesion	Good grammar
Respondent 9	Good content	Less lexical cohesion	Using the wrong tense
Respondent 10	Did not completely	Good lexical cohesion	Using the wrong tense
Respondent 11	Good content	Less lexical cohesion	Good grammar
Respondent 12	Good content	Good lexical cohesion	Some grammatical mistakes
Respondent 13	Good content	Good lexical cohesion	Some grammatical mistakes
Respondent 14	Good content	Good lexical cohesion	Good grammar
Respondent 15	Good content	Good lexical cohesion	Using the wrong tense
Respondent 16	Did not completely	Less lexical cohesion	Less grammar

Questioners

Data retrieval using a questionnaire aims to determine whether discourse practice is effective in improving students' writing skills. The results of students in the second semester of the English Department at Bosowa University showed that:

Table 2. Percentage of the questioners

	SD	D	A	SA	Total
S1	15,8 %	10,5 %	15,8 %	57,9 %	100 %
S2	11,1 %	-	77,8 %	11,1 %	100 %
S3	5,6 %	11,1 %	66,7 %	16,7 %	100 %
S4	-	50 %	27,8 %	22,2 %	100 %
S5	11,1 %	-	72,2 %	16,7 %	100 %
S6	5,6 %	16,7 %	55,6 %	22,2 %	100 %
S7	5,6 %	11,1 %	50 %	33,3 %	100 %
S8	-	22,2 %	66,7 %	11,1 %	100 %
S9	5,6 %	11,1 %	44,4 %	38,9 %	100 %
S10	5,6 %	16,7 %	44,4 %	33,3 %	100 %

Note:

S: Statement

SD: Strongly Disagree

D: Disagree

A: Agree

SA: Strongly Agree

The table presenting the percentage distribution of respondents' answers across the four Likert-scale categories—SD (Strongly Disagree), D (Disagree), A (Agree), and SA (Strongly Agree)—for statements S1–S10 indicates several notable trends. Respondents demonstrated a clear tendency to select “Agree” (A) and “Strongly Agree” (SA) for most of the statements. This pattern is reflected in the consistently higher percentages observed in the A and SA categories across nearly all items, suggesting a generally positive perception of the statements presented. However, Statement S4 exhibited a contrasting pattern compared to the other items. Specifically, 50% of respondents selected “Disagree” (D), 27.8% selected “Agree” (A), and 22.2% selected “Strongly Agree” (SA), while none selected “Strongly Disagree” (SD). The predominance of responses in the “Disagree” category indicates a relatively high level of disagreement with Statement S4, highlighting it as an outlier among the ten statements.

The data show that most respondents responded positively (A and SA) to almost all statements, except S4, which showed a higher level of disagreement than the other items. This suggests that statements S1–S3 and S5–S10 were well received by respondents, while S4 requires further attention or evaluation. The data indicate that the majority of respondents expressed positive perceptions, as reflected in the predominance of *Agree (A)* and *Strongly Agree (SA)* responses across nearly all statements. However, Statement 4 (S4) exhibited a comparatively higher level of disagreement than the other items. This finding suggests that Statements 1–3 and 5–10 were generally well received and aligned with respondents' perspectives, whereas Statement 4 warrants further examination and critical evaluation to better understand the underlying factors contributing to the divergent responses.

Interview

Findings show that student writing quality varied significantly in linguistic skills and content development. The majority of respondents (1, 4, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, and 16) performed well, with a fair to high level of grammatical accuracy and only a few minor or recurring errors. Students were able to express their ideas clearly and coherently, although the use of connectors and cohesive devices was limited or inappropriate in some places. Paragraph structure was generally good, and the ideas conveyed were accurate and analytical, although some writing lacked comprehensiveness or depth.

Two respondents (5 and 8) performed very well, with high grammatical accuracy and only a few minor errors. The paragraph structure was excellent, complex sentences were fluent, and cohesive devices were well controlled. Their ideas were clear, comprehensive, and analytical, demonstrating a strong understanding of the topic. Several respondents (9 and 12) performed well, with a fair and appropriate level of grammatical accuracy, but still contained basic and recurring errors. Idea development

tended to be simple, lacking depth, and sometimes lacking in comprehensiveness. Cohesion and coherence were evident, but still limited. Meanwhile, respondents 2, 6, and 15 demonstrated very limited performance, both in terms of grammar and content development. They had numerous grammatical errors that interfered with comprehension, the text and paragraph structure were unclear, and the ideas developed were very simple and lacked detail. Most students had a good understanding of the topic and were able to convey their ideas analytically, but they still had general weaknesses in the use of cohesive devices, variations in complex sentence structures, and consistent use of tenses.

Discussion

Students' writing ability, viewed through the lens of discourse practice, shows notable improvement. The findings indicate that most students achieved good results in their writing tasks, particularly in composing texts about daily activities. This suggests that students were not only able to generate ideas relevant to the topic but also to organize and present them effectively in writing.

The writing task, which focused on describing daily activities, provided a meaningful and familiar context for students to express their experiences. As a result, students were able to articulate what they do daily with clarity and relevance. Their texts reflected an appropriate understanding of the topic, as the majority of students successfully constructed content that was consistent and aligned with the task requirements. This demonstrates that discourse practice supports students in developing topic-focused and purposeful writing. Furthermore, the implementation of discourse practice enabled students to apply essential components of written discourse, including content development, coherence, cohesion, and grammatical range. In terms of content, students were able to elaborate their ideas systematically rather than presenting fragmented or unrelated sentences. Regarding coherence, their writing showed logical progression, with ideas arranged in a sequence that made the text easy to follow. Cohesion was also evident, particularly through lexical devices such as repetition, synonyms, and related vocabulary, which connected sentences and maintained thematic continuity.

In addition, students demonstrated an emerging ability to use a range of grammatical structures appropriate to the task's genre and purpose. Although minor errors may still have occurred, these did not significantly interfere with meaning. Overall, the findings suggest that discourse practice is effective in improving students' writing performance. It helps students construct meaningful content, connect ideas logically, and employ linguistic features that contribute to well-structured and coherent written texts.

Conclusion

Discourse practice is an effective pedagogical approach for improving students' writing performance. By emphasizing meaningful organization of ideas and appropriate linguistic features, discourse practice supports students in producing more structured, cohesive, and communicative texts. Therefore, incorporating discourse practice into writing instruction can be considered a valuable strategy for enhancing students' written language competence.

Funding: This research received no external funding

ORCID iD <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-5859-5480>

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