

Cohesive Devices In English-Language Indonesian Online News: A Discourse Analysis Of The Jakarta Post Articles On The Iran Conflict

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Abstract

This study examines the use of cohesive devices in English-language opinion articles published in The Jakarta Post, Indonesia's premier English-language newspaper. Drawing on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) framework of cohesion in English, the research employs quantitative content analysis to investigate the frequency, distribution, and utilization of cohesive devices across a corpus of ten opinion articles concerning the Iran conflict, published between March and April 2026. The analysis reveals that reference (29.07%, n = 91) and lexical cohesion (29.07%, n = 91) constitute the dominant cohesive strategies, followed by conjunction (19.49%, n = 61), substitution (12.78%, n = 40), and ellipsis (9.58%, n = 30). Within the reference category, anaphoric reference emerges as the most frequently employed sub-type (15.97%), while repetition emerged as the dominant subtype of lexical cohesion. The distribution of cohesive devices indicates a clear preference for referential and lexical strategies in maintaining continuity across the selected articles. These findings contribute to discourse analysis by providing empirical evidence of cohesion patterns in Indonesian English-language journalism and offer pedagogical implications for EAP and ESP instruction.

Keywords: cohesion, discourse analysis, journalistic register, media linguistics, content analysis

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji penggunaan piranti kohesi dalam artikel opini berbahasa Inggris yang dipublikasikan di The Jakarta Post, surat kabar berbahasa Inggris terkemuka di Indonesia. Dengan mengacu pada kerangka kohesi Halliday dan Hasan (1976), penelitian ini menggunakan analisis isi kuantitatif untuk mengkaji frekuensi, distribusi, dan pemanfaatan piranti kohesi pada korpus sepuluh artikel opini mengenai konflik Iran yang dipublikasikan antara Maret dan April 2026. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa referensi (29,07%, n = 91) dan kohesi leksikal (29,07%, n = 91) merupakan strategi kohesi yang paling dominan, diikuti oleh konjungsi (19,49%, n = 61), substitusi (12,78%, n = 40), dan elipsis (9,58%, n = 30). Dalam kategori referensi, referensi anaforis muncul sebagai sub tipe yang paling sering digunakan (15,97%), sedangkan repetisi menjadi sub tipe dominan pada kohesi leksikal. Distribusi piranti kohesi menunjukkan kecenderungan yang jelas terhadap strategi referensial dan leksikal dalam menjaga kesinambungan pada artikel-artikel yang dianalisis. Temuan ini memberikan kontribusi bagi analisis wacana dengan menyediakan bukti empiris mengenai pola kohesi dalam jurnalisme berbahasa Inggris di Indonesia serta menawarkan implikasi pedagogis bagi pengajaran EAP dan ESP.

Kata kunci: kohesi, analisis wacana, register jurnalistik, linguistik media, analisis isi

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INTRODUCTION

The advancement of digital communication technologies has significantly changed the way news is created, disseminated, and accessed worldwide (Sitio et al., 2023; Yasmin et al., 2023). Through online platforms, information about international events can be delivered to audiences almost instantly, making news discourse increasingly influential in shaping public understanding of global issues. Coherent writing enables readers to follow ideas systematically and interpret messages effectively. In

educational contexts, coherent organization has likewise been identified as an essential component of successful English writing because it supports the development of clear arguments and meaningful communication (Safitri & Adani, 2024). Therefore, the organization of language within news texts has become an important concern in discourse studies.

Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, provides a unique setting for examining English-language journalism on international political issues. Among its English-language newspapers, The Jakarta Post has established itself as the leading national newspaper since its establishment in 1983 and continues to serve both domestic and international readers (Dewan Pers, 2023). By reporting global events from an Indonesian perspective while maintaining internationally recognized journalistic standards, the newspaper offers valuable material for linguistic investigation. In addition, its extensive online archive provides an accessible and reliable corpus for empirical research on media discourse.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) define cohesion as the semantic relationships that connect linguistic elements within a text, enabling separate clauses and sentences to function as a meaningful whole. They categorize cohesive devices into grammatical cohesion, including reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction, and lexical cohesion, comprising reiteration and collocation. Together, these resources create continuity of meaning and facilitate readers' comprehension of a text. Despite the emergence of more recent approaches to discourse analysis, Halliday and Hasan's framework remains one of the most frequently adopted models because of its systematic classification of cohesive relations and its applicability across a wide range of discourse types, including journalistic writing.

Numerous studies have examined the role of cohesion in different forms of discourse. Nuswantara et al. (2019) reported that reference was the most frequently used cohesive device in Indonesian students' academic writing. Batubara et al. (2021) found that reiteration dominated the use of lexical cohesion in The Jakarta Post, whereas Demantik (2018) concluded that the newspaper's letters section demonstrated a high degree of textual coherence comparable to that of native English writing. Similarly, Nijat et al. (2022) and Moslemi et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of cohesive devices in organizing meaning and revealed that their use differs across newspapers with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. These findings collectively demonstrate that cohesion plays a central role in establishing effective communication in written discourse.

Nevertheless, several issues remain insufficiently explored. Existing studies have generally focused on either grammatical cohesion or lexical cohesion independently, rather than examining both categories within a unified analytical framework. Moreover, previous research has largely concentrated on academic writing, literary texts, or general news reports, with relatively limited attention given to English-language journalistic discourse concerning contemporary geopolitical conflicts (Alawerdy & Alalwi, 2022; Faizah et al., 2020). Research specifically investigating the combined use of grammatical and lexical cohesion in Indonesian English-language opinion articles also remains scarce. As a result,

the ways in which these cohesive resources interact to construct coherent discourse in Indonesian journalism have not yet been comprehensively explained.

Based on the background presented above, this study is guided by three research questions: (1) What types of cohesive devices are employed in The Jakarta Post news articles? (2) Which types of cohesive devices are predominantly used in the selected news articles? and (3) What patterns can be observed in the distribution of cohesive devices in the selected articles? Correspondingly, the objectives of this study are to identify the types of cohesive devices employed in The Jakarta Post news articles, to analyze the frequency and distribution of each cohesive device, and to examine the patterns in the distribution of cohesive devices across the selected articles. Ultimately, the findings of this study are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of discourse analysis, practically to the teaching of reading and writing, and empirically to future studies investigating cohesion in media texts and journalistic discourse.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative content analysis design to investigate the use of cohesive devices in English-language opinion articles. Quantitative content analysis is appropriate for this research because it enables systematic, replicable examination of textual features across a defined corpus, facilitating the identification of frequency patterns and distributional regularities (Bryman, 2016). The study is descriptive in nature, aiming to document and interpret cohesive patterns rather than to test causal hypotheses.

Data Source and Corpus Construction

The data source for this study is The Jakarta Post (www.thejakartapost.com), selected for the following reasons: (a) it is widely recognized as a credible and authoritative English-language publication in Indonesia; (b) its online archive is fully accessible without institutional barriers; (c) it publishes opinion articles by identifiable journalists, enabling authorship-based analysis; and (d) it maintains consistent editorial standards that ensure registrational comparability across texts.

The thematic focus of the study is coverage of the Iran conflict (March–April 2026). This topic was selected because it represents a significant geopolitical event that drew extensive international media attention, including coverage by Indonesian English-language media. The conflict involves complex political, military, legal, and humanitarian dimensions, providing a rich discursive domain for the analysis of cohesive strategies. Furthermore, given Indonesia's position as the world's largest Muslim-majority nation, the conflict elicited substantial domestic interest, ensuring robust coverage in The Jakarta Post.

Tabel 1. Corpus of Opinion Articles

Article	Date Published	Author	Title	Word Count
Article 1	21 April 2026	Yvette Tanamal	US Warship Allowed to Pass Through Malacca Strait, Navy Says, Amid Iran War Concerns	730
Article 2	17 April 2026	Yvette Tanamal	Indonesia Evacuates More Citizens From Iran as Fragile Truce Holds	632
Article 3	16 April 2026	Yvette Tanamal	RI Tanker Release in Progress	818
Article 4	14 April 2026	Yvette Tanamal	Sovereignty Concerns Loom Over New Security Pact with US	838
Article 5	9 April 2026	Yvette Tanamal	Indonesia to Repatriate More Citizens From Middle East Amid Ceasefire	589
Article 6	3 April 2026	Yerica Lai	Indonesian Muslim Groups Rally Behind Iran Amid Escalating War	585
Article 7	31 March 2026	Yerica Lai	Indonesia, Japan Agree on Urgent Need for De-escalation in Middle East	588
Article 8	13 March 2026	Yvette Tanamal	Indonesia Delays D8 Summit as Mideast War Rages On	443
Article 9	13 March 2026	Yvette Tanamal	Govt Prepares Contingencies for Haj Amid War in Iran	746
Article 10	9 March 2026	Yerica Lai	Prabowo Walks 'Diplomatic Tightrope' on Iran War	744
TOTAL	9 Mar–21 Apr 2026	2 Authors	10 Articles	6,713

As presented in Table 1, the corpus consists of ten opinion articles published in The Jakarta Post between 9 March and 21 April 2026. The selected articles comprise a total of 6,713 words, with individual article lengths ranging from 443 to 838 words. Although covering different events, all articles focus on closely related aspects of the Iran conflict, including the evacuation of Indonesian citizens, regional diplomatic responses, and security cooperation with the United States. The corpus was derived from a systematic search of The Jakarta Post's online archive using Iran conflict-related keywords, which identified 30 opinion articles published between 1 March and 30 April 2026 by four journalists: Yvette Tanamal, Yerica Lai, Deni Ghifar, and Radhiyya Indra. To ensure analytical consistency and facilitate comparison of authorial style, the corpus was subsequently narrowed to the ten articles written by the two most prolific contributors, Yvette Tanamal (n = 5) and Yerica Lai (n = 5), both of whom are staff writers with relatively consistent editorial and stylistic characteristics. Selecting thematically related and contemporaneous opinion articles provided an authentic, contextually coherent corpus for examining the use of cohesive devices in English-language journalistic discourse. The data were analyzed quantitatively by calculating the frequency and percentage of each category and subcategory of cohesive devices. The findings were subsequently presented in tables and interpreted descriptively to identify the dominant patterns of cohesion across the corpus.

Data Analysis

This study adopted Halliday and Hasan's (1976) framework to classify cohesive devices into five categories: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion, each comprising several subcategories. Reference was coded as anaphoric, cataphoric, or exophoric; substitution and ellipsis as nominal, verbal, or clausal; conjunction as additive, adversative, or causal; and lexical cohesion as repetition, synonymy, superordinate, general word, or collocation. All cohesive ties were identified manually by reading each of the ten opinion articles, locating the cohesive markers, tracing their referents or lexical relations where applicable, and classifying them into the appropriate categories and subcategories before being recorded in a coding matrix. To ensure the credibility and consistency of the analysis, the coding results were reviewed and verified by the research supervisor, and any discrepancies were resolved through discussion until agreement was reached.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the analysis of cohesive devices found in ten news articles published in The Jakarta Post. A total of 313 cohesive devices were identified across the ten articles and classified into five major categories based on the framework proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976), namely Reference, Substitution, Ellipsis, Conjunction, and Lexical Cohesion.

The overall distribution of cohesive devices across all articles is presented in Chart 1 below.

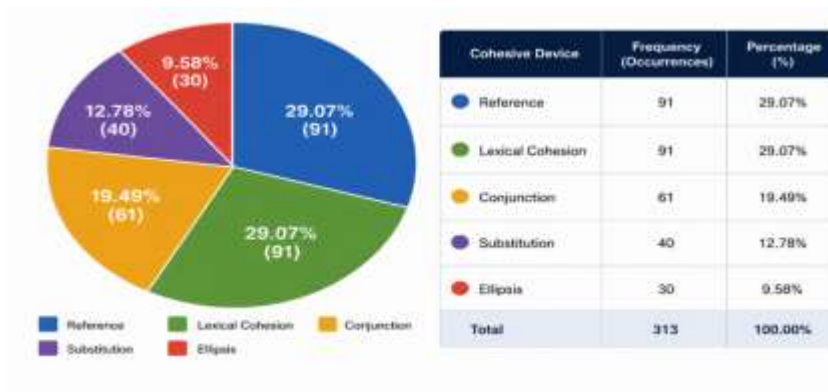


Chart 1. Distribution of Cohesive Devices Per Category

Source: Data analysis result (2026)

As shown in Chart 1, Reference and Lexical Cohesion emerged as the most dominant categories, each contributing 91 occurrences (29.07%) out of 313 total devices identified. Conjunction ranked second with 61 occurrences (19.49%), followed by Substitution with 40 occurrences (12.78%), and Ellipsis with the least frequency at 30 occurrences (9.58%). The findings from each category are elaborated further in the following sub-sections.

Reference

A total of 91 instances of reference were identified in the ten articles analyzed. Reference devices were classified into three subcategories: Anaphoric, Cataphoric, and Exophoric references, as shown in Table 2.

Tabel 2. Distribution of Reference Subcategories

Type of Reference	Frequency	Percentage of Total
Anaphoric	50	15.97%
Cataphoric	20	6.39%
Exophoric	21	6.71%
Total	91	29.07%

Anaphoric reference was the most frequent subcategory, with 50 occurrences (15.97% of the total). Anaphoric reference occurs when a pronoun or phrase is used to refer back to a word or idea previously mentioned in a text. Exophoric reference appeared 21 times (6.71%), referring to entities outside the text, such as institutions or well-known figures. Meanwhile, cataphoric reference occurred 20 times (6.39%), where the reference precedes the item to which it refers.

Examples of each type are presented below:

Anaphoric:

1. the warship ... USS Miguel Keith ... it (Article 1)
2. the latest evacuation ... it (Article 1)

Cataphoric:

1. positive signals convened by the Iranian government in mid-March (Article 3)
2. three foundational pillars: mutual national sovereignty ... exercises and operational cooperation (Article 4)

Exophoric:

1. Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Doha (Article 5)
2. Nahdlatul Ulama (Article 6)

The high frequency of anaphoric reference reflects the characteristics of journalistic discourse, which avoids excessive repetition of nouns by replacing them with pronouns or referential expressions. This strategy enhances linguistic efficiency while maintaining topic continuity across clauses in geopolitical opinion texts.

Substitution

A total of 40 instances of substitution were identified in the ten articles analyzed. These were categorized into Nominal, Verbal, and Clausal substitutions, as shown in Table 3.

Tabel 3. Distribution of Substitution Subcategories

Type of Substitution	Frequency	Percentage of Total
Nominal	20	6.39%

Verbal	10	3.19%
Clausal	10	3.19%
Total	40	12.78%

Nominal substitution was the most dominant type, accounting for 20 occurrences (6.39%). It occurs when one noun is replaced by another expression referring to the same entity. Verbal and clausal substitutions each occurred ten times (3.19%), indicating an equal distribution between the two.

Verbal substitution replaces a verb or verbal group with a proform such as *do* or *do so*, while clausal substitution replaces an entire clause with a proform such as *so* or *not*, allowing writers to avoid restating a previously mentioned action or proposition in full.

Examples include:

Nominal:

1. the country (= Iran) (Article 6)
2. the latter (= civil society organizations vs. government) (Article 6)

Verbal:

1. *do so* (= act as mediators) (Article 7)
2. [NU will] mobilize solidarity efforts (Article 6)

Clausal:

1. as was expressed by Din Syamsuddin (Article 6)
2. as noted in the joint statement (Article 7)

The predominance of nominal substitution suggests that the authors of geopolitical opinion articles in *The Jakarta Post* tend to employ nominal variation when referring to the same entity, both to avoid monotony and to emphasize different aspects of that entity.

Ellipsis

Thirty instances of ellipsis were identified in the ten articles analyzed. Ellipsis was classified into Nominal, Verbal, and Clausal ellipsis, as presented in Table 4.

Tabel 4. Distribution of Ellipsis Subcategories

Type of Ellipsis	Frequency	Percentage of Total
Nominal	10	3.19%
Verbal	10	3.19%
Clausal	10	3.19%
Total	30	9.58%

All three types of ellipsis occurred with equal frequency, each accounting for ten occurrences (3.19%). Nominal ellipsis occurs when a nominal element is omitted because it can be recovered from the context. Verbal ellipsis involves the omission of verbs or verbal phrases, while clausal ellipsis occurs when an entire clause or part of a clause is omitted.

Examples include:

Nominal:

1. [several] international conferences [scheduled in Tehran] (Article 8)
2. 17,000 pilgrims [registering] for the special haj scheme (Article 9)

Verbal:

1. [the D-8] brings together ... largest developing economies (Article 8)
2. [airlines] would steer clear of several high-risk airspaces (Article 9)

Clausal:

1. before [a] new date for the summit is set (Article 8)
2. if [the government deems] the situation ... too unsafe for pilgrims (Article 9)

The equal distribution across the three subcategories indicates that the authors employ omission proportionally at the nominal, verbal, and clausal levels. Ellipsis serves to shorten expressions without sacrificing clarity, thereby making the text more concise and efficient.

Conjunction

Sixty-one instances of conjunction were identified in the ten articles analyzed. Conjunctions were classified into Additive, Adversative, and Causal conjunctions, as shown in Table 5.

Tabel 5. Distribution of Conjunction Subcategories

Type of Conjunction	Frequency	Percentage of Total
Additive	20	6.39%
Adversative	21	6.71%
Causal	20	6.39%
Total	61	19.49%

Adversative conjunctions were the most frequently occurring type, with 21 occurrences (6.71%), followed by additive and causal conjunctions with 20 occurrences each (6.39%). Additive conjunctions link clauses by adding further, parallel information (e.g., and, also, in addition); adversative conjunctions signal contrast or concession between propositions (e.g., but, however, despite, while); and causal conjunctions express reason, result, or purpose (e.g., because, as, due to, so that). This relatively balanced distribution reflects the complexity of argumentation in geopolitical opinion texts, in which authors simultaneously construct contrastive, additive, and causal relationships.

Examples include:

Additive:

1. He added Jakarta also continues to monitor (Article 3)
2. including an interception or attack warning (Article 3)

Adversative:

1. while ensuring the relationship endures (Article 4)
2. Despite the Defense Ministry insisting on national interests (Article 4)

Causal:

1. as the region is seeing an escalation of armed conflict (Article 5)
2. due to high demand (Article 5)

The predominance of adversative conjunctions reflects the nature of geopolitical opinion discourse, which is characterized by competing perspectives. Authors actively contrast different diplomatic positions, policies, and national interests, making adversative conjunctions a prominent rhetorical device in constructing arguments.

Lexical Cohesion

A total of 91 instances of lexical cohesion were identified in the ten articles analyzed. Lexical cohesion was classified into Repetition, Synonymy, Superordinate, General Word, and Collocation, as shown in Table 6.

Tabel 6. Distribution of Lexical Cohesion Subcategories

Type of Lexical Cohesion	Frequency	Percentage of Total
Repetition	30	9.58%
Synonymy	20	6.39%
Superordinate	11	3.51%
General Word	10	3.19%
Collocation	20	6.39%
Total	91	29.07%

Repetition was the most dominant subtype, with 30 occurrences (9.58%). Synonymy and collocation each appeared 20 times (6.39%), followed by superordinate relations with 11 occurrences (3.51%) and general words with 10 occurrences (3.19%).

Repetition refers to the exact recurrence of a lexical item across sentences; synonymy involves the use of a different word with a closely related meaning to refer back to the same idea; superordinate involves the use of a more general class term (e.g., member states) to refer back to more specific instances mentioned earlier (e.g., Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia); general word involves the use of a broadly applicable noun such as situation, issue, or area in place of a more specific term; and collocation refers to the co-occurrence of words that habitually associate within the same semantic or topical field, such as sovereignty, international law, and the United Nations Charter, without necessarily sharing an identical or synonymous meaning.

Examples include:

Repetition:

1. war (×multiple) (Article 6)
2. cooperation (×multiple) (Article 6)

Synonymy:

1. partnership ↔ cooperation ↔ ties ↔ collaboration (Article 7)
2. de-escalation ↔ restraint ↔ peace ↔ stability (Article 7)

Superordinate:

1. Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia ... [hyponyms] → member states [superordinate] (Article 8)
2. regular scheme, special scheme [hyponyms] → haj program [superordinate] (Article 9)

General Word:

1. situation / crisis / conflict (Article 9)
2. areas / sectors / issues (Article 10)

Collocation:

1. diplomatic tightrope / non-aligned / free and active foreign policy (Article 10)
2. condolences / sovereignty / international law / United Nations Charter (Article 10)

The predominance of repetition within lexical cohesion suggests that geopolitical opinion texts in The Jakarta Post employ repeated keywords as a rhetorical strategy to emphasize central issues. Recurrent terms such as warship, ceasefire, sovereignty, evacuation, and haj contribute to thematic cohesion while reinforcing the overall thematic focus of the texts.

Patterns in the Distribution of Cohesive Devices

Looking at the data in Chart 1, it can be concluded that the analysis revealed several notable patterns in the distribution of cohesive devices across the selected articles. First, Reference (29.07%) and Lexical Cohesion (29.07%) together accounted for 58.14% of all cohesive ties identified, indicating that these categories constitute the primary cohesive resources employed by the writers. Second, Conjunction represented the third most frequent category with 19.49% of the total occurrences, suggesting its important role in organizing relationships among ideas. Third, Substitution and Ellipsis occurred less frequently, accounting for 12.78% and 9.58% respectively. These findings demonstrate a distributional pattern characterized by the dominance of referential and lexical cohesion, supported by conjunctions and complemented by less frequent use of substitution and ellipsis.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that the opinion articles on the Iran conflict published in The Jakarta Post employ a rich and balanced configuration of cohesive devices to construct unified journalistic discourse. The identification of 313 cohesive ties distributed across five categories supports Halliday and Hasan's (1976) proposition that cohesion operates through multiple semantic relations that collectively contribute to textual unity. The discussion below is organized according to the three research questions guiding the study.

1. Types of Cohesive Devices Employed in the Jakarta Post Articles on the Iran Conflict

The first research question sought to identify the types of cohesive devices employed in the selected articles. The findings indicate that all five categories proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976), namely Reference, Substitution, Ellipsis, Conjunction, and Lexical Cohesion, are present in the corpus. This finding demonstrates that the opinion articles rely on a comprehensive range of grammatical and lexical cohesive resources to connect ideas and maintain continuity throughout the discourse. A comparable breadth of cohesive categories was reported by Sitio et al. (2023), whose analysis of three

Jakarta Post editorials similarly identified all five cohesive categories, though with varying frequencies across argumentative and informational registers. Demantik (2018) likewise observed the co-occurrence of grammatical and lexical cohesive mechanisms in English journalistic letters columns, concluding that the simultaneous deployment of multiple cohesive types is a hallmark of coherent media texts. At the cross-linguistic level, Yasmin et al. (2023) confirmed that Pakistani English newspaper articles employ all major cohesive categories identified by Halliday and Hasan (1976), with conjunctive cohesion playing a particularly structuring role in news opinion discourse.

The presence of all five categories confirms Halliday and Hasan's view that textual unity is achieved through the interaction of multiple cohesive mechanisms rather than through a single linguistic feature. Reference devices establish connections between textual elements, substitution and ellipsis reduce unnecessary repetition, conjunctions create logical relationships among propositions, and lexical cohesion reinforces thematic continuity through lexical relations. The use of these diverse cohesive resources suggests that the writers employ sophisticated discourse strategies to present complex geopolitical issues in a coherent and accessible manner. This finding resonates with Uru et al. (2021), who in a state-of-the-art review of EFL cohesion research concluded that coherent written texts characteristically draw on multiple cohesive categories simultaneously, with no single mechanism sufficient on its own to sustain discourse unity across extended texts. Nuswantara et al. (2019) further demonstrated through corpus analysis that proficient Indonesian writers integrate referential and conjunctive devices in a complementary manner, a pattern also observable in the present corpus where reference, conjunction, and lexical cohesion collectively account for over 77% of all cohesive ties identified.

2. Predominant Cohesive Devices in the Selected Articles

The second research question examined which cohesive devices were most frequently employed in the corpus. The findings reveal that Reference and Lexical Cohesion were the dominant categories, each accounting for 29.07% of the total cohesive ties identified. This finding is consistent with Sitio et al. (2023), who found that reference, particularly anaphoric reference, constitutes one of the most frequently used cohesive devices in journalistic discourse. A parallel finding was reported by Batubara et al. (2021), whose analysis of Jakarta Post news columns revealed that lexical cohesion, especially reiteration through synonymy and repetition, dominated the cohesive profile of both opinion and reportage articles. The prominence of reference and lexical cohesion in media texts is further supported by Moslemi et al. (2020), whose cross-cultural corpus study of English political newspaper articles confirmed that local English media outlets prioritize simple repetition and co-specification as primary cohesive strategies, mirroring the pattern observed in The Jakarta Post opinion articles analyzed in the present study.

The predominance of anaphoric reference supports Yasmin et al.'s (2023) argument that journalistic texts utilize referential expressions to maintain topic continuity efficiently without excessive repetition of noun phrases. In the articles analyzed, anaphoric references enable writers to

sustain the continuity of entities such as countries, political leaders, diplomatic institutions, and international organizations that remain central throughout the discussion of the Iran conflict. This pattern is corroborated by Nijat et al. (2022), who demonstrated that in BBC news editorials, anaphoric pronoun chains are systematically deployed to track the identities of key political actors and institutional agents across paragraph boundaries, thereby reducing lexical load while preserving informational continuity. Liu (2021) further confirmed in a study of Chinese EFL students' argumentative essays that reference and conjunction together constitute the most structurally significant cohesive categories, with anaphoric reference bearing the primary burden of entity tracking in information-dense discourse, a conclusion directly applicable to the geopolitical opinion register examined in this study.

Similarly, the dominance of lexical cohesion, particularly repetition, supports Hoey's (1991) assertion that lexical repetition serves as a fundamental organizing principle in discourse, a pattern also confirmed in Sitio et al.'s (2023) analysis of Jakarta Post editorials. Recurrent lexical items such as war, sovereignty, evacuation, ceasefire, and cooperation help reinforce key themes and maintain readers' attention on the central issues under discussion. The significance of repetition as a thematic anchoring strategy in political media discourse is underscored by Moslemi et al.'s (2020) finding that simple repetition is the most frequently occurring lexical cohesive device in local English-language newspapers, functioning as a rhetorical mechanism to foreground ideologically salient terms. Batubara et al. (2021) similarly observed that repetition dominated the lexical cohesion profile of Jakarta Post news columns, particularly in opinion articles where thematic keywords were reiterated across successive paragraphs to build argumentative momentum. Within the conjunction category, adversative conjunctions emerged as the most frequently occurring subtype. This finding aligns with Yasmin et al.'s (2023) description of newspaper opinion texts as inherently argumentative genres in which writers frequently contrast competing viewpoints and diplomatic positions. The use of adversative conjunctions such as *despite*, *although*, *but*, and *while* reflects the complex and often contradictory nature of geopolitical discourse. Alawerdy and Alalwi (2022) further confirmed in their experimental study that adversative conjunctions occupy a disproportionately prominent position in persuasive writing, as they allow writers to acknowledge counter positions while simultaneously reasserting their primary argumentative stance, a rhetorical function particularly well-suited to opinion journalism on contested geopolitical topics.

3. Patterns Observed in the Distribution of Cohesive Devices

The third research question focused on identifying patterns in the distribution of cohesive devices across the selected articles. Several notable patterns emerged from the findings. First, Reference and Lexical Cohesion jointly accounted for 58.14% of all cohesive ties identified, indicating that these two categories constitute the primary cohesive resources employed in the corpus. This pattern suggests a strong tendency for writers to maintain continuity through referential tracking and lexical reinforcement.

Second, Conjunction represented the third most frequent category, accounting for 19.49% of all cohesive devices. Within this category, adversative conjunctions occurred slightly more frequently than additive and causal conjunctions. This pattern reflects the argumentative nature of opinion discourse, where writers frequently contrast perspectives, policies, and diplomatic positions. The finding is consistent with Yasmin et al.'s (2023) description of newspaper opinion genres as texts characterized by contrastive and evaluative relationships. Sanosi (2024), in a corpus-based study of conjunction use in academic writing, similarly observed that adversative conjunctions are systematically overrepresented in evaluative and argumentative genres relative to informational or descriptive genres, lending further support to the present finding that adversative conjunctions are the dominant conjunctive resource in geopolitical opinion journalism.

Third, Substitution and Ellipsis occurred considerably less frequently than the other categories, accounting for 12.78% and 9.58% respectively. This pattern suggests that while these devices contribute to textual economy, they play a less prominent role in organizing journalistic discourse than reference, lexical cohesion, and conjunction.

Finally, the relatively balanced occurrence of cohesive devices across the corpus suggests a degree of consistency in the use of cohesive resources within The Jakarta Post opinion articles. This observation supports Sitio et al.'s (2023) argument that texts belonging to the same news outlet and genre often exhibit predictable linguistic and organizational patterns. Nuswantara et al. (2019) made a similar observation in their corpus study of Indonesian students' essays, noting that institutional context and shared genre conventions shape cohesive preferences in systematic ways. Collectively, these findings indicate that the distribution of cohesive devices in the corpus is characterized by the dominance of reference and lexical cohesion, the supportive role of conjunctions, and the comparatively limited use of substitution and ellipsis.

From a pedagogical perspective, these patterns provide useful insights for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction. The predominance of reference and lexical cohesion suggests that these cohesive resources deserve particular attention in the teaching of reading and writing, as they represent the most frequently employed mechanisms in authentic journalistic discourse. This aligns with Xie and Lv (2022), who demonstrated that explicit exposure to cohesive input materials measurably strengthens learners' lexical cohesion in their own writing, suggesting that authentic news texts such as those examined in this study can serve as effective pedagogical input for raising learners' cohesion awareness. Alawerdy and Alalwi (2022) further showed in an experimental study with Saudi EFL university students that explicit instruction of conjunctions as cohesive devices significantly improved paragraph writing quality, confirming that targeted cohesion instruction yields measurable gains in writing coherence. Yusuf et al. (2024), in their study of cohesive devices across vocational ESP genres in Indonesia, similarly concluded that systematic integration of cohesion instruction into ESP curricula improves students' ability to deploy contextually appropriate referential and lexical cohesive strategies in professional and academic writing tasks. These findings

collectively suggest that incorporating authentic journalistic texts into EAP and ESP reading programs, alongside focused instruction in referential tracking and lexical cohesion strategies, represents a pedagogically sound approach for improving learners' discourse competence in English-medium communication contexts.

4. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. First, the corpus is limited to ten opinion articles from a single news outlet; therefore, generalizability to other English-language journalistic contexts in Indonesia should be approached with caution. Second, the study focused primarily on quantitative distribution without extensive qualitative analysis of the pragmatic and ideological functions of cohesive devices in broader discourse contexts. Third, the analysis did not incorporate computer-assisted corpus linguistic methods that might reveal patterns invisible to manual analysis.

Future research is recommended to: (a) expand the corpus to include multiple media outlets and thematic domains; (b) integrate qualitative approaches to examine the pragmatic functions of cohesive devices in constructing argumentation; (c) employ computational tools for large-scale pattern analysis; and (d) conduct comparative studies between English and Indonesian texts addressing similar topics to identify cross-linguistic differences in cohesive conventions. Additionally, longitudinal studies tracking cohesive patterns across different phases of a continuing conflict could illuminate how journalistic discourse evolves in response to changing geopolitical circumstances.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the use of cohesive devices in ten opinion articles on the Iran conflict published in The Jakarta Post. The findings confirmed the presence of all five categories of cohesive devices proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976), with Reference and Lexical Cohesion emerging as the most dominant categories, each accounting for 29.07% of the total occurrences. The predominance of referential and lexical ties indicates that textual continuity in the selected articles is achieved primarily through referential tracking and lexical reinforcement. These findings contribute to discourse analysis by providing empirical evidence of cohesion patterns in Indonesian English-language journalistic discourse and are consistent with previous studies (Batubara et al., 2021; Demantik, 2018; Sitio et al., 2023). The study further extends existing research by focusing on opinion articles concerning geopolitical conflict, where anaphoric reference and lexical repetition play a prominent role in organizing discourse (Hoey, 1991; Liu, 2021; Moslemi et al., 2020; Yasmin et al., 2023). From a pedagogical perspective, the findings suggest that English language instruction, particularly in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP), should place greater emphasis on developing learners' awareness and use of referential and lexical cohesion through authentic journalistic texts, as previous studies have shown that explicit cohesion-focused instruction enhances

students' reading, writing, and professional communicative competence (Alawerdy & Alalwi, 2022; Xie & Lv, 2022; Yusuf et al., 2024).

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