



# A Corpus-Based Analysis of Cohesion and Coherence in IELTS Test Essays in Pakistan

## Research Article

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## Abstract

This study investigates the challenges faced by Pakistani candidates in achieving higher scores in IELTS test essays, with a particular focus on cohesion and coherence. Observations reveal notable difficulties in structuring and connecting ideas within essays, impacting overall IELTS scores. The research aims to identify linguistic patterns influencing cohesion and coherence, understand specific challenges encountered by Pakistani test-takers, and propose targeted pedagogical approaches for English language instruction in Pakistan. The analysis, based on a mixed-method approach and corpus-based analysis, highlights the prevalence of repetition, challenges with adverbs and prepositional phrases, and the need for vocabulary diversification. Recommendations include vocabulary enhancement workshops, grammar exercises, and explicit referencing instruction. The study concludes with the anticipation that its insights will positively influence English language education and assessment practices, benefiting both educators and test-takers in their pursuit of linguistic proficiency for the IELTS examination.

**Keywords:** challenges, cohesion, coherence, corpus, IELTS test essays, linguistic patterns, pedagogical approaches, writing proficiency



## **1. Introduction**

Achieving higher scores in IELTS essays poses a complex challenge for candidates in Pakistan, marked by difficulties in achieving cohesion and coherence. These challenges manifest in the structuring and connection of ideas within essays, significantly impacting the overall IELTS scores of Pakistani students. Observations indicate a critical need for targeted interventions and support mechanisms to enhance the writing proficiency of these candidates, addressing the specific challenges they encounter in the IELTS examination.

The present study delves into the complex challenges faced by Pakistani candidates striving for higher scores in their IELTS test essays, focusing particularly on cohesion and coherence. Noteworthy difficulties in organizing and linking ideas within essays have been observed, significantly impacting the overall IELTS scores of students from Pakistan. With the overarching goal of identifying linguistic patterns influencing cohesion and coherence, understanding specific challenges unique to Pakistani test-takers, and proposing targeted pedagogical approaches for English language instruction, this research seeks to contribute nuanced insights to both educational practitioners and policymakers.

The study meticulously examines a sample of fifty argumentative essays from individuals undergoing the IELTS test in Pakistan, utilizing a mixed-method approach and employing corpus-based analysis through the AntConc software. The findings highlight prevalent issues such as repetition, challenges with adverbs and prepositional phrases, and the need for vocabulary diversification, quantifying the total lexical cohesion at 6.17% and grammatical cohesion at 4.29%. Despite the study's limitations, including a modest sample size and potential lack of generalizability, the research aims to bridge existing gaps in understanding and provide practical recommendations for improving English language education and assessment practices in Pakistan. Through its comprehensive scope and analytical methodology, this study aspires to be a significant resource for educators, language professionals, and policymakers, offering valuable insights that extend beyond the confines of the IELTS test to inform broader language proficiency assessments and instructional strategies.

### **1.1 Statement of Problem**

Achieving higher scores in IELTS test essays poses a multifaceted challenge for Pakistani candidates, with a prominent focus on cohesion and coherence. It has been observed that students from Pakistan struggle in organizing and linking ideas effectively in their essays, adversely affecting their overall IELTS scores. The identified issues related to cohesion and coherence highlight the necessity for tailored interventions and support systems to improve the writing skills of Pakistani candidates, addressing the specific obstacles they encounter in the IELTS examination.

### **1.2 Purpose of the Study**

This study aims to investigate the details of cohesion and coherence in IELTS test essays within the Pakistani context through a comprehensive corpus-based analysis. The research seeks to identify specific linguistic patterns influencing cohesion and coherence, understand the unique challenges faced by Pakistani test-takers, and inform targeted pedagogical approaches for English language instruction in Pakistan. By contributing insights to enhance assessment practices and bridging the existing research gap, this study aspires to provide valuable information that can positively impact

English language education, IELTS preparation, and assessment practices in Pakistan, benefiting both educators and test-takers in their pursuit of linguistic proficiency.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The research objectives of this study are as follows:

- Examine the written discourse of IELTS test essays in Pakistan to identify specific linguistic patterns contributing to or hindering cohesion and coherence.
- Investigate the unique challenges faced by Pakistani test-takers in achieving effective cohesion and coherence in their essays, considering factors such as language transfer, cultural influences, and educational background.
- Provide insights that can inform targeted pedagogical approaches for English language instruction in Pakistan, offering recommendations to enhance the cohesion and coherence skills of IELTS candidates.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

- What linguistic patterns contribute to cohesion and coherence in IELTS test essays produced by candidates in Pakistan?
- What challenges do Pakistani test-takers face in achieving cohesion and coherence in their IELTS essays, and how do these challenges manifest in their written discourse?
- How can the analysis of linguistic patterns and challenges inform pedagogical approaches for English language instruction in Pakistan, particularly in the context of enhancing cohesion and coherence skills among IELTS candidates?

### **1.5 Limitations of Study**

The study's findings may be influenced by the modest sample size of 50 candidates (25 males, 25 females), impacting generalizability. The study underscores the necessity for a more extensive and diverse sample to draw robust conclusions and insights. It is essential to acknowledge that gender-related biases have been considered, but a larger sample size is crucial for enhancing the external validity of the research. Extrapolating the identified linguistic patterns and challenges beyond the specified Pakistani context should be approached with caution, as the study's focus on this particular region may limit the universality of its applicability to other regions or language proficiency contexts. The analysis is based on a short period in time, and language proficiency and usage can evolve. Longitudinal studies would provide a more dynamic perspective on how linguistic patterns change over time and adapt to evolving educational and societal influences. The study may not account for external factors influencing test performance, such as test preparation methods, test-taker motivation, or individual differences in language learning backgrounds. These variables could impact the identified linguistic patterns.

## **1.6 Delimitation of The Study**

- The study specifically focuses on IELTS test essays produced by candidates in Pakistan. Findings may not be directly applicable to other English language proficiency contexts or regions.
- The analysis is limited to the written discourse of IELTS essays, excluding other test components or genres. The specific focus on essays may not capture the entirety of a candidate's language proficiency.
- The study maintains a binary representation of gender with 25 males and 25 female participants. This binary categorization may not fully account for gender identity nuances and may limit the exploration of potential gender-specific linguistic variations.

## **1.7 Significance of Study**

This study holds significant implications for educators, language professionals, and policymakers, addressing a crucial gap in existing research by providing a focused analysis of cohesion and coherence in IELTS test essays within the specific context of Pakistan. The findings offer valuable insights into the linguistic challenges faced by Pakistani test-takers, informing targeted pedagogical strategies to enhance English language instruction and improve performance in high-stakes assessments such as the IELTS. Beyond its immediate impact on test preparation, the research outcomes have broader implications for curriculum development and assessment practices, not only in Pakistan but also in similar linguistic contexts globally. By emphasizing interventions such as vocabulary diversification, adverb and prepositional phrase usage, collocation exercises, explicit referencing instruction, and conjunction practice, this study provides a comprehensive framework for enhancing the cohesion and coherence skills of IELTS candidates, contributing to the overall advancement of language education and assessment practices.

## **1.8 Scope of Study**

The research centers on the IELTS test, and while the identified insights and pedagogical recommendations may have broader relevance to other English language proficiency assessments, the scope extends to potential impacts on English language education in Pakistan, contributing to the refinement of instructional strategies and assessment practices. It is essential to note that this study is not a comprehensive evaluation of all factors influencing English language proficiency in Pakistan but specifically concentrates on cohesion and coherence within the IELTS essay genre. Future research in this domain could explore regional variations in cohesive device use, track the progression of candidates' skills over time, analyze common errors for targeted interventions, investigate the correlation between cohesive device use and IELTS scoring, assess the effectiveness of teacher training programs, and examine the influence of cultural factors on test-takers' writing patterns. This comprehensive scope aims to contribute to a nuanced understanding of linguistic challenges and instructional needs in the context of IELTS essays produced by candidates in Pakistan.

## **2. Literature Review**

This literature review explores the systemic functional approach to cohesion and coherence in text, drawing on key contributions from scholars such as Halliday and Matthiessen (2013), Cruse (1986), Firth (1957), Sinclair (2004), and Martin (2015). The analysis aims to elucidate distinctive features and characteristics of grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion that contribute to coherence in essays.

The systemic functional approach, as proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2013), provides a theoretical framework for understanding how language functions in context. This perspective emphasizes the interplay between lexicogrammatical choices and meaning-making, offering valuable insights into how cohesion and coherence are achieved in written discourse.

Lexical cohesion, a key aspect within the systemic functional framework, operates through lexicogrammatical systems that transcend clause boundaries. At the reference level, it is evident through reiterations, and at the wording level, it encompasses both reiterations and collocations. Various forms of reiterations, including the use of the same word, synonyms, superordinate terms, and general words, contribute to the establishment of lexical cohesion (Cerban, 2010).

The concept of coherence in text has been subject to scholarly inquiry, with McCagg (1991) highlighting its significance as the logical relationship of ideas and a semantic property of textuality. Coherence, according to McCagg, emerges from the reader's perception of relatedness among a text's propositions and the interplay between the text and the reader's knowledge of the world.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) contribute significantly by exploring factors influencing coherence. They argue that coherence may depend on external factors such as the reader's background and the contextual situation. Additionally, they suggest that coherence can be dependent on textual cohesion. While external factors play a role, Halliday and Hasan posit that a text can achieve coherence even without intersentence cohesion if semantic cues are available for readers to deduce from their background knowledge. This emphasizes that coherence is not solely reliant on explicit cohesive devices connecting sentences but may also rely on the reader's prior knowledge and cultural background.

Further exploration of the relationship between coherence and reader background knowledge indicates that comprehension problems may arise when there is limited understanding of the relatedness between sentences. In such cases, readers heavily rely on a coherent text with explicit signals to compensate for the absence of prior knowledge. This highlights the dual nature of coherence, influenced both by the intrinsic organization of the text and the reader's external knowledge (Alarcon & Morales, 2011).

Widdowson, as cited in Wikborg (1978), contributes to the discussion by emphasizing that a text is coherent when a reader comprehends the function of each succeeding unit in the development of its overall or global meaning. This aligns with the idea that coherence is not only about the logical connection of ideas but also about the sequential understanding of the text's purpose.

The multifaceted nature of coherence is shaped by both internal textual factors and external reader-related elements. It emphasizes the role of semantic cues, background knowledge, and explicit signals

in achieving coherence and comprehensibility in a text. This interplay between linguistic structures and reader engagement underscores the complexity of coherence as a crucial aspect of effective communication.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Methodological Framework**

A mixed-method approach is employed to comprehensively analyze coherence and cohesion in IELTS essays authored by Pakistani candidates. To evaluate coherence, the study focuses on two cohesion devices: lexical cohesion and grammatical cohesion, as introduced by Halliday and Hasan.

### **2.2 Population and Sampling**

#### **2.2.1 Sample Type**

Data collection utilizes the writing genre method, specifically targeting Argumentative Essays crafted by IELTS test takers.

#### **2.2.2 Sampling Technique**

Convenience sampling is initially employed to gather data from IELTS test takers who are retaking the exam, while simple random sampling is utilized for collecting data from other candidates.

#### **2.2.3 Sample Size with Justification**

A deliberate sample of 50 argumentative essays is taken from IELTS test takers, including 25 males and 25 females who are retaking the test. The intentional selection of candidates retaking the exam aims to assess the specific challenges prompting them to retake the test, providing valuable insights into areas of improvement.

#### **2.2.4 Data Collection Tool**

The primary data collection tool involves the use of Argumentative Essays written by IELTS test takers currently in the process of retaking the examination. This selection ensures that the data reflects the challenges faced by individuals striving to improve their performance.

### **2.3 Data Analysis Tool**

For the analysis of collected data, the AntConc corpus data collection software is employed. This software enables a systematic and comprehensive textual analysis, allowing for an in-depth exploration of linguistic patterns and challenges related to coherence and cohesion in the IELTS essays. The use of AntConc ensures a rigorous examination of the data, providing nuanced insights into the linguistic aspects under consideration.

### 3. Theoretical Analysis

#### 3.1 Lexical Cohesion

To ensure the accuracy and consistency of the analysis, the researcher employed a co-rater to validate the data. In this instance, both the primary rater and the co-rater assessed 50 argumentative essays written by IELTS test takers. The inter-rater reliability, as measured by percent agreement, revealed that for lexical cohesion, the average percentage of agreement is 6.17%. Similarly, for grammatical cohesion, the average percentage of agreement is 4.29%.

Table 1. Lexical Cohesion

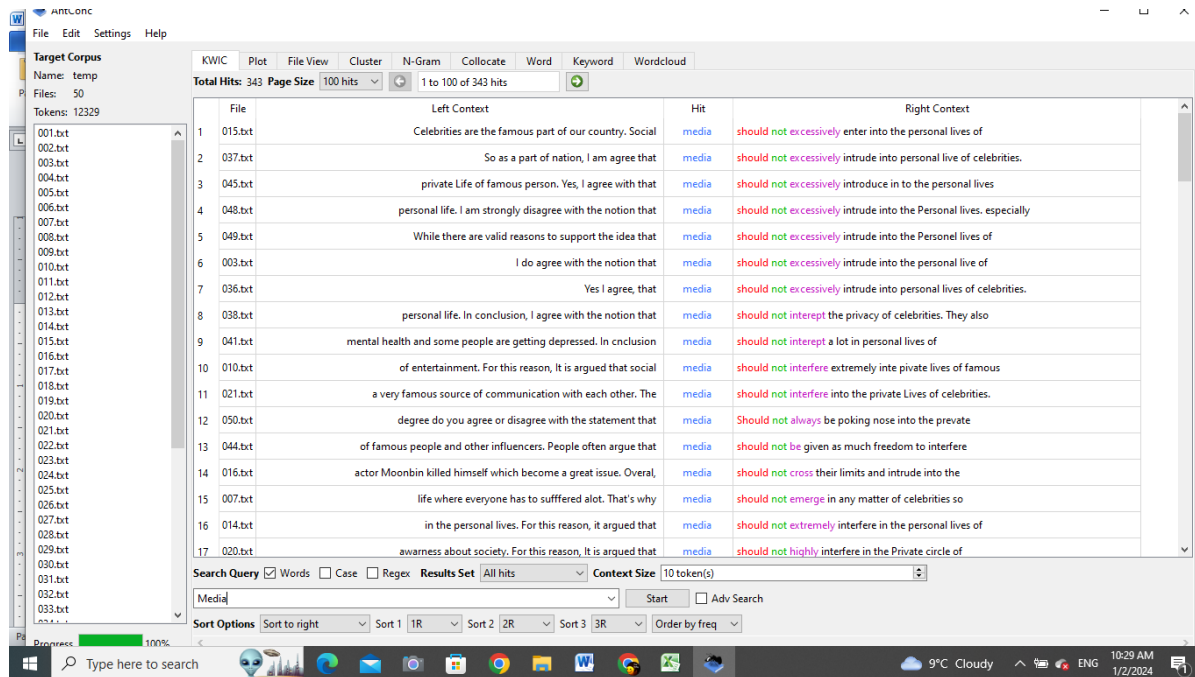
No	Lexical Cohesion	Total	Percentage
1	Repetition	645	5.23%
2	Meronymy	63	0.51%
3	Synonymy	47	0.38%
4	Collocation	6	0.05%
<b>Total</b>		<b>761</b>	<b>6.17%</b>

After employing the corpus analysis on a total of 12,329 tokens, the following repetition outcomes were obtained: 645 instances, constituting 5.23%, were repeated, 63 instances (0.51%) as meronymy, 47 instances (0.38%) as synonymy, and the term "collocation" was utilized six times by Pakistani IELTS test-takers in their argumentative essays, representing 0.05%.

#### 3.2 Repetition

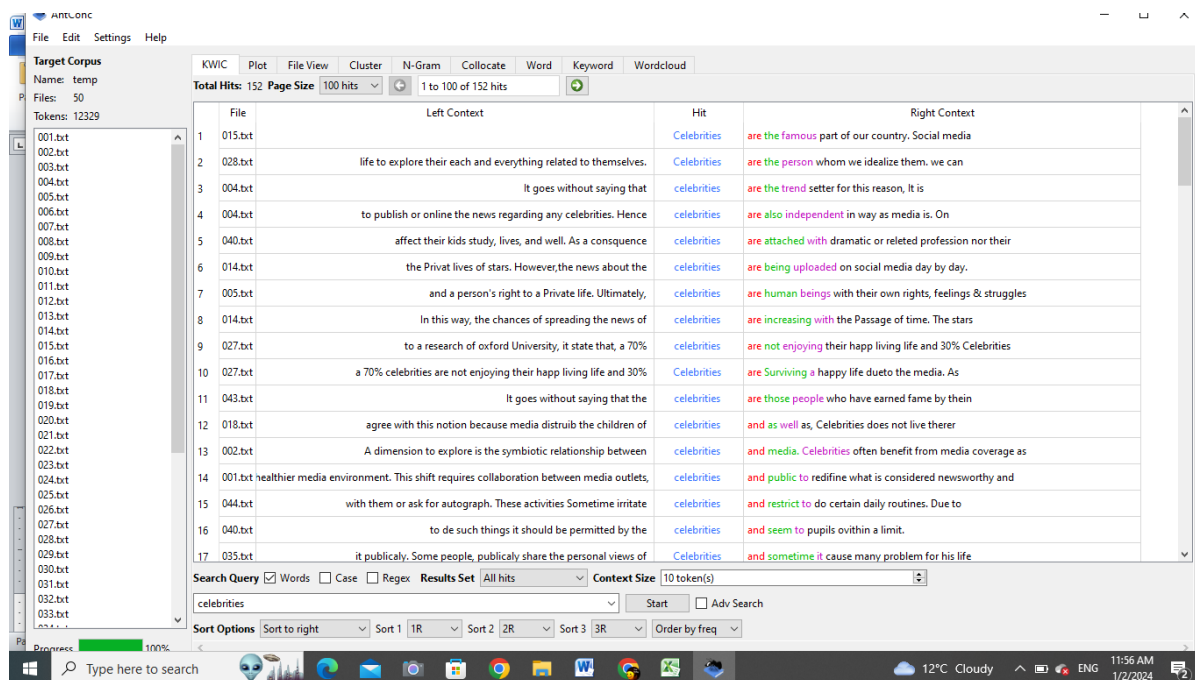
Repetition involves the deliberate recurrence of words, phrases, or structures to tie together different parts of the text. This technique helps establish connections between ideas, emphasizes key points, and enhances the overall flow and unity of the essay. Repetition is used strategically to guide the reader through the logical progression of arguments or narratives, making the essay more coherent and accessible. The study showed that Pakistani IELTS test takers three words frequently used in their essays, "Media", "Celebrities", and "Lives".

Figure 1. Repetition “Media”



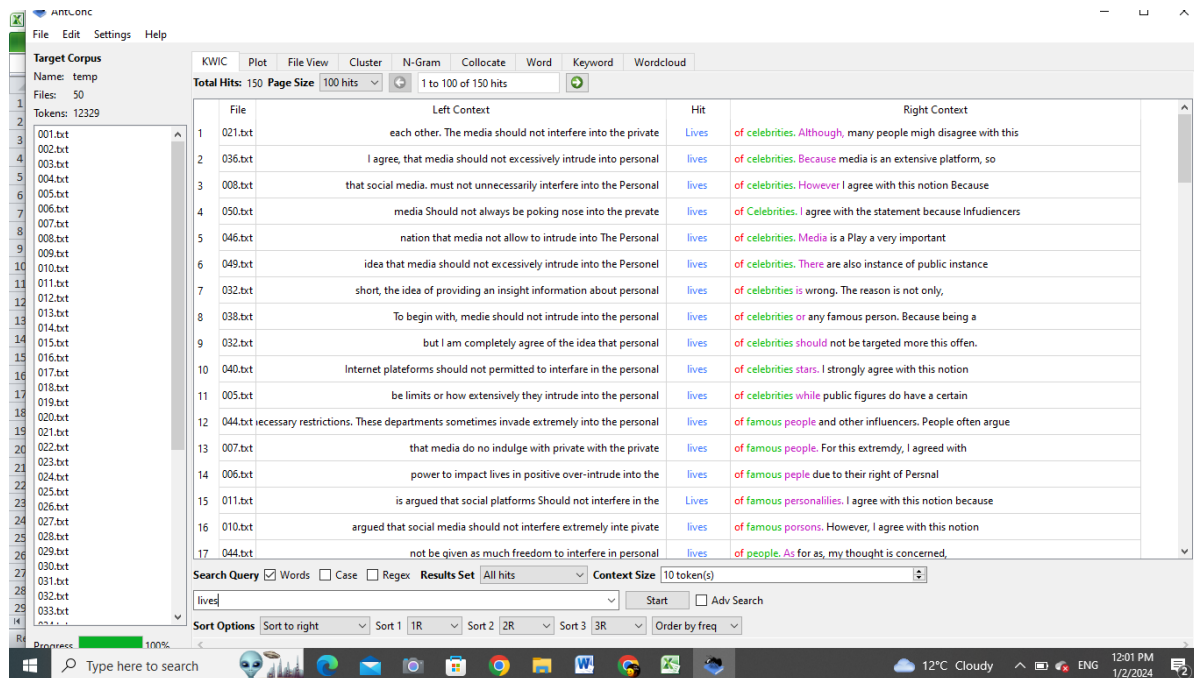
In the corpus of 50 essays written by IELTS test takers, the term "media" appears 343 times among a total of 12,329 tokens, constituting approximately 2.78% of the overall text.

Figure 2. Repetition “Celebrities”



Within a collection of 50 essays penned by IELTS test takers, the term "Celebrities" is utilized 152 times within a total of 12,329 tokens, making up approximately 1.23% of the entire text.

Figure 3. Repetition “Lives”

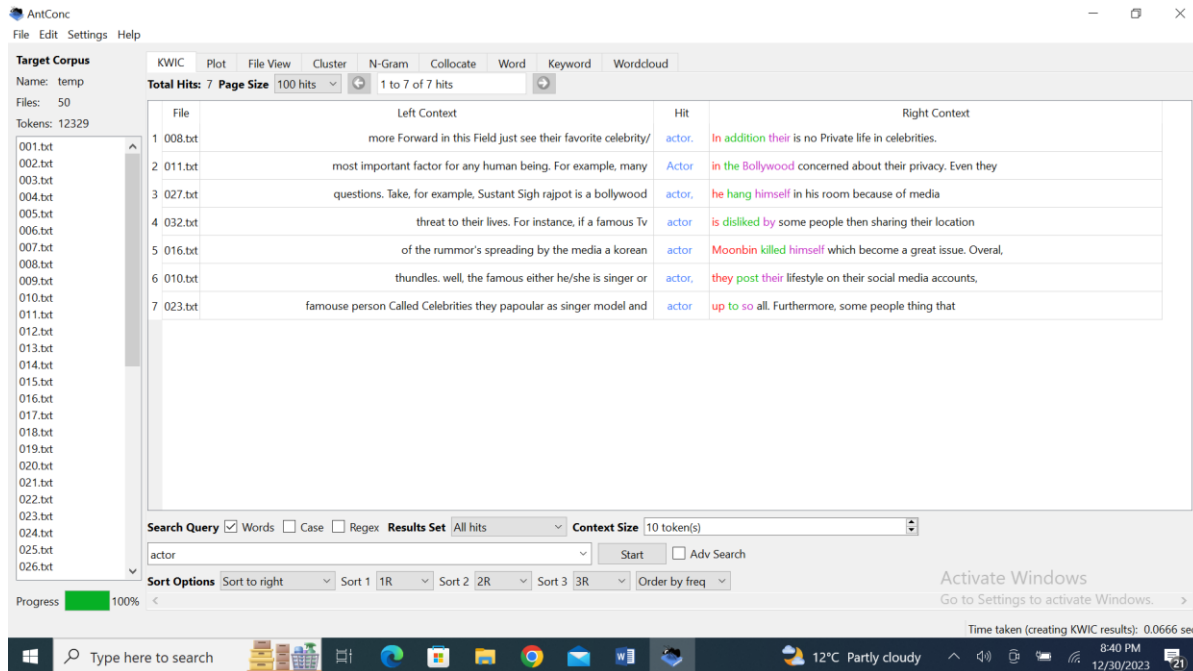


In a compilation of 50 essays written by IELTS test takers, the term "Lives" is employed 150 times out of a total of 12,329 tokens, accounting for around 1.22% of the overall text.

### 3.3 Meronymy

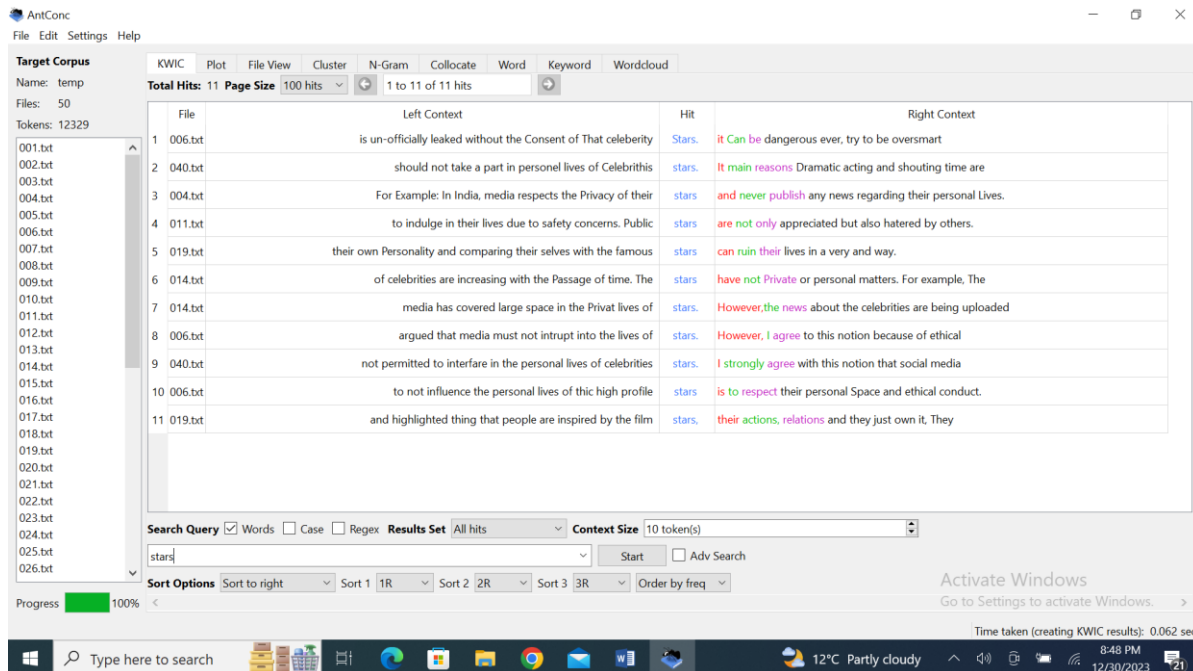
As a cohesion device, meronymy refers to a linguistic strategy in which the use of words or terms creates a cohesive link by establishing a relationship of part-whole or whole-part between them. It contributes to the coherence of a text by connecting elements through their inherent hierarchical or compositional structure. In this context, meronymy aids in maintaining a logical flow and understanding by expressing the relationships between the larger entities (holonyms) and their constituent parts (meronyms) within the discourse. For example, actor, star, stars used in the essay to represent celebrity same social media represented media in the essays.

Figure 4. Meronymy “Actor”



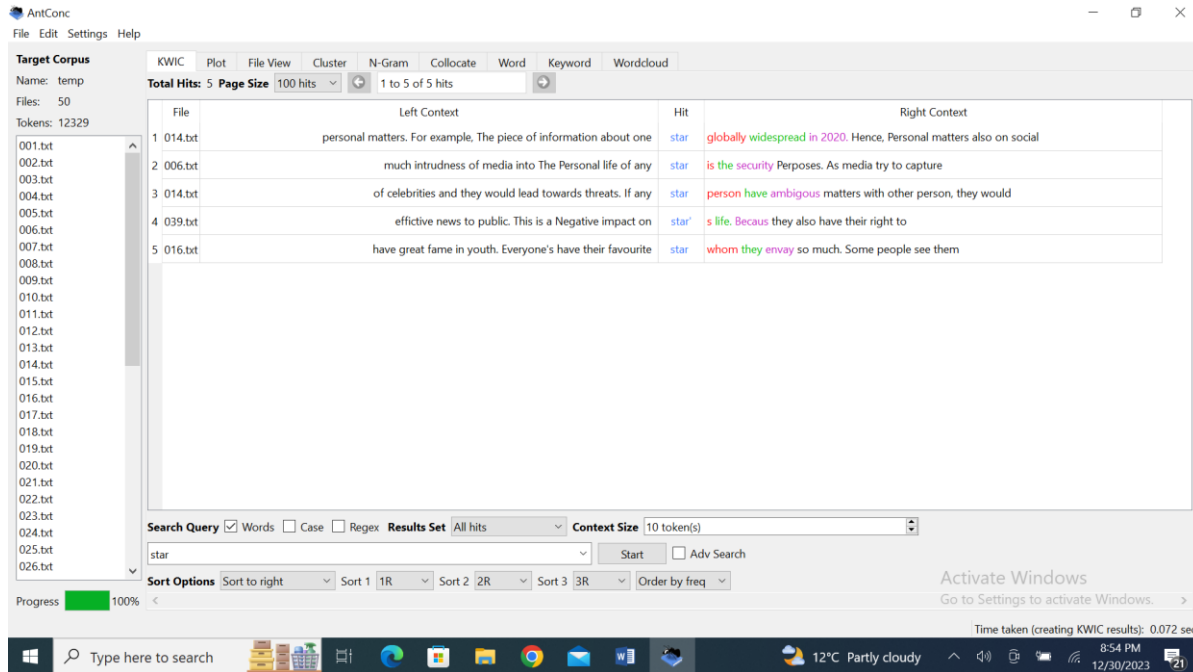
In the essays, the term "actor" is employed as a meronym of "celebrity" on seven occasions, accounting for 0.06% of the total 12,329 tokens.

Figure 5. Meronymy “Stars”



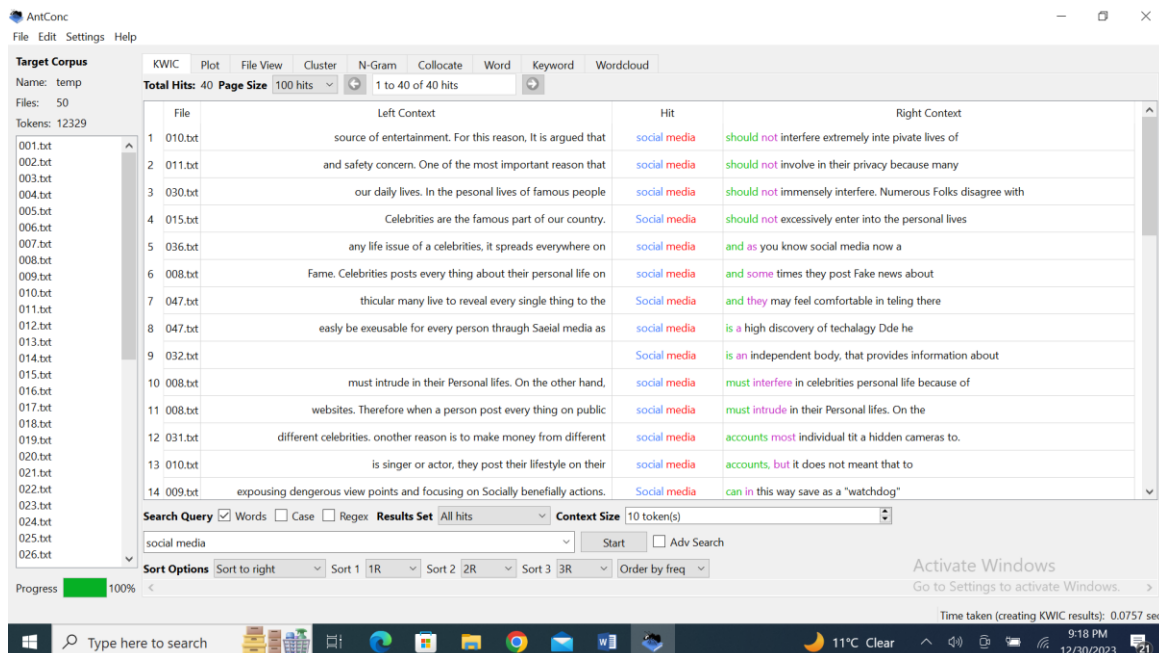
In the essays, the term "Stars" is utilized as a meronym associated with "celebrity" in eleven instances, making up 0.09% of the overall 12,329 tokens.

Figure 6. Meronymy “Star”



Within the essays, the term "Star" is employed as a meronym linked to "celebrity" in five occurrences, constituting 0.04% of the total 12,329 tokens.

Figure 7. Meronymy “Social Media”



In the essays, the expression "Social media" is utilized as a meronym in relation to "Media" in 40 instances, making up 0.32% of the entire 12,329 tokens.

### 3.4 Synonymy

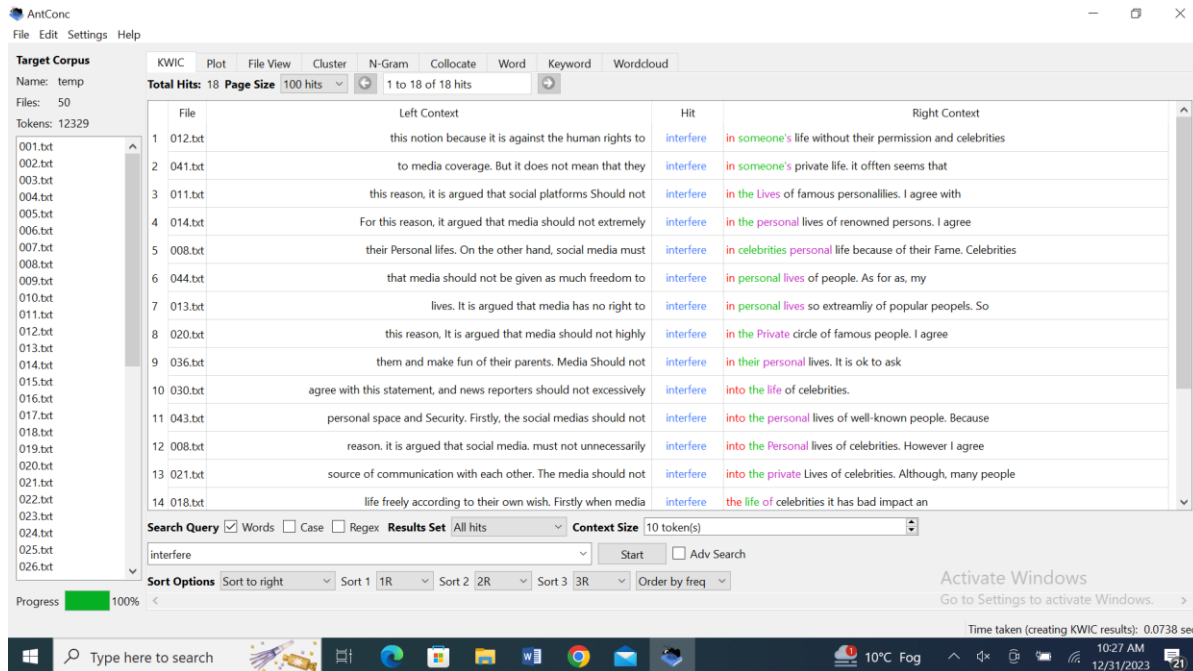
In the context of cohesion, synonymy refers to the linguistic relationship between words or expressions that have similar meanings. Synonyms are words that can be used interchangeably in a given context without altering the overall meaning of a sentence or discourse. The use of synonyms contributes to cohesion in writing by providing variety, avoiding repetition, and enhancing clarity. When writers employ synonyms effectively, they create a smoother and more engaging flow in their text, promoting a cohesive and coherent communication of ideas. For example, intrude and interfere are the synonyms of influence.

Figure 8. Synonymy "Intrude"

File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
003.txt	ree with the notion that media should not excessively	intrude	into the personal life of celebrities. Everyone have their
031.txt	role all over the world. However, now a days media	intrude	into the personal lives of different celebrities. I agree
006.txt	messive. It has power to impact lives in positive over-	intrude	into the lives of famous peple due to their
016.txt	issue. Overall, media should not cross their limits and	intrude	into the other's personal lives not only celebrities
038.txt	omeones private life. To begin with, medie should not	intrude	into the personal lives of celebrities or any famous
049.txt	to support the idea that media should not excessively	intrude	into the Personal lives of celebrities. There are also
037.txt	f nation, I am agree that media should not excessively	intrude	into personal live of celebrities. Media is a platform
036.txt	Yes I agree, that media should not excessively	intrude	into personal lives of celebrities. Because media is an
005.txt	intable, there Should be limits or how extensively they	intrude	into the personal lives of celebrities while public figure:
048.txt	ree with the notion that media should not excessively	intrude	into the Personal lives. especially scsandalls reporting i
030.txt	nal lives. Thus, I strongly agree that media should not	intrude	into celebrities lives. Second, the other element that fo
006.txt	their personal Space and ethical conduct. when media	intrude	into Clebrities lives and try to Post each and
038.txt	we should respect eachother's privacy and should not	intrude	into it. Moreover, if media tries to intevpeit their
016.txt	their idol. They follow them so much. If median got	intrude	into their lives which makes them uncomfortable is not

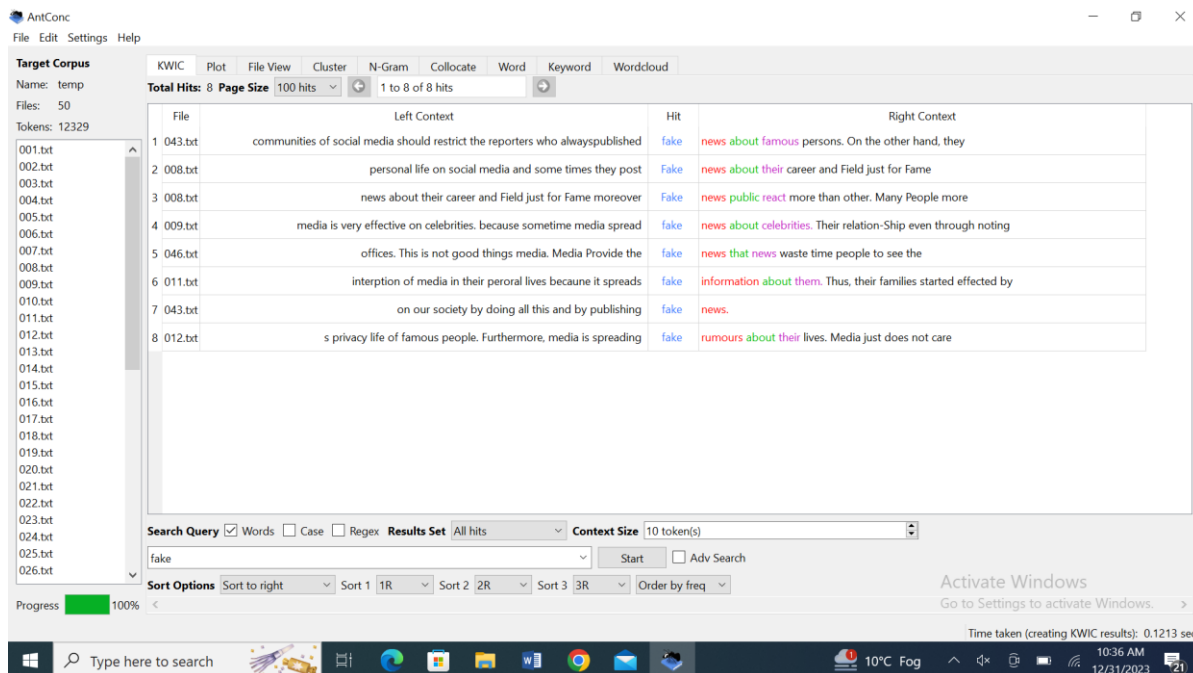
In essays written by IELTS test takers in Pakistan, the term "intrude" was employed 21 times as a substitute for "influence," constituting 0.17% of the total 12,329 tokens.

Figure 9. Synonymy “Interfere”



In the essays crafted by individuals taking the IELTS test in Pakistan, the term "interfere" was utilized 18 instances as an alternative for "influence," making up 0.15% of the overall 12,329 tokens.

Figure 10. Synonymy “Fake”

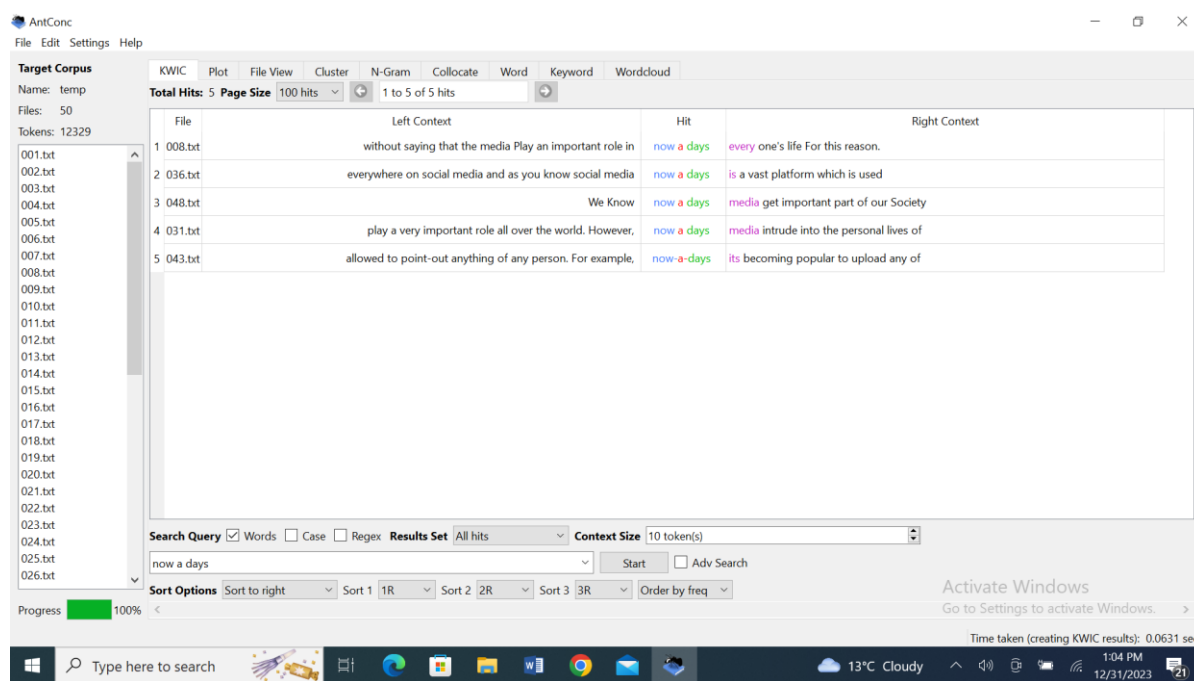


Note: Within essays penned by IELTS examinees in Pakistan, the term "Fake" was utilized 8 times in lieu of "False," making up 0.06% of the total 12,329 tokens.

### 3.5 Collocation

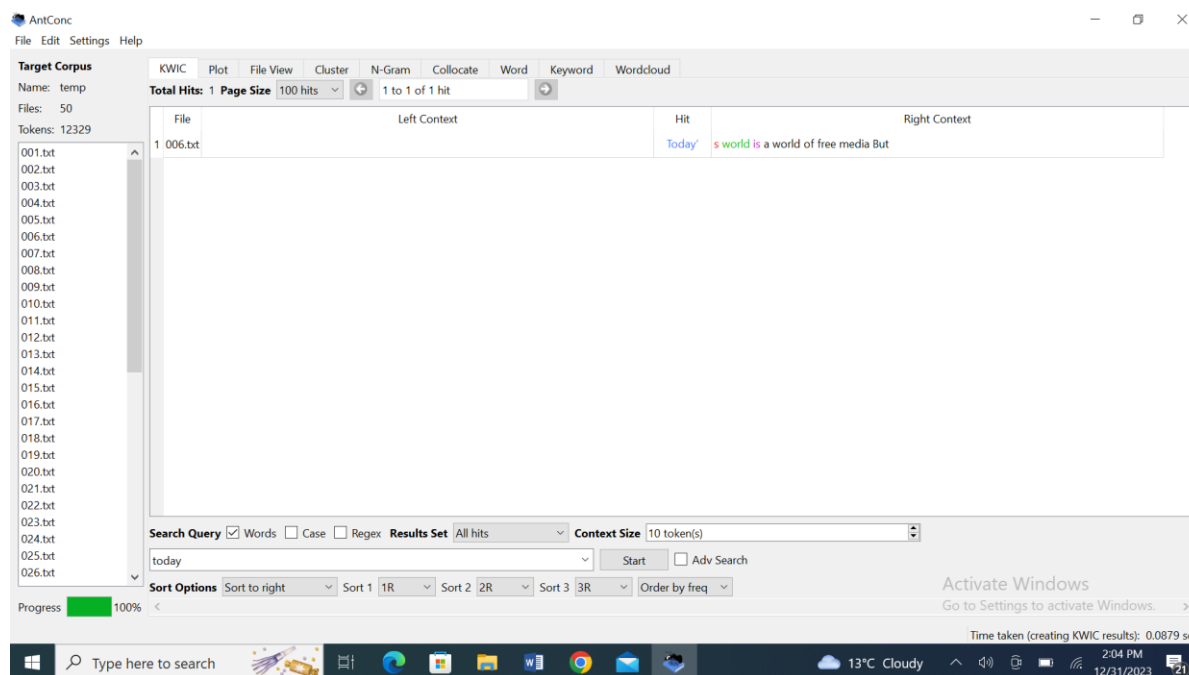
In the context of cohesion, collocation refers to the habitual juxtaposition of certain words or phrases in a way that reflects a natural and preferred association between them. Collocations are word combinations that commonly occur together and have become established through usage. They contribute to the overall coherence of a text by enhancing its fluency and natural flow. In language, collocation plays a crucial role in creating meaning and conveying specific nuances, as certain words tend to collocate with others in predictable patterns. Understanding and using collocations effectively can significantly improve the cohesion and communicative strength of written and spoken language. Pakistani IELTS test takers used very rare collocations in their argumentative essays.

Figure 11. Collocation “Now a days”



In essays composed by IELTS exam participants in Pakistan, the collocation "Nowadays" was used 5 times, comprising 0.04% of the overall 12,329 tokens.

Figure 12. Collocation “Today”



In essays written by IELTS test takers in Pakistan, the collocation "Today" appeared once, making up 0.01% of the total 12,329 tokens.

### 3.6 Grammatical Cohesion

Grammatical cohesion refers to the use of grammatical elements and structures to create a sense of coherence and connection within a text. It involves the proper arrangement of words, phrases, and clauses to ensure that the ideas within a sentence or across sentences are logically connected. This enhances the flow of information and aids in conveying a clear and cohesive message. Pakistani IELTS test takers used more grammatical cohesion as compare to Lexical cohesion.

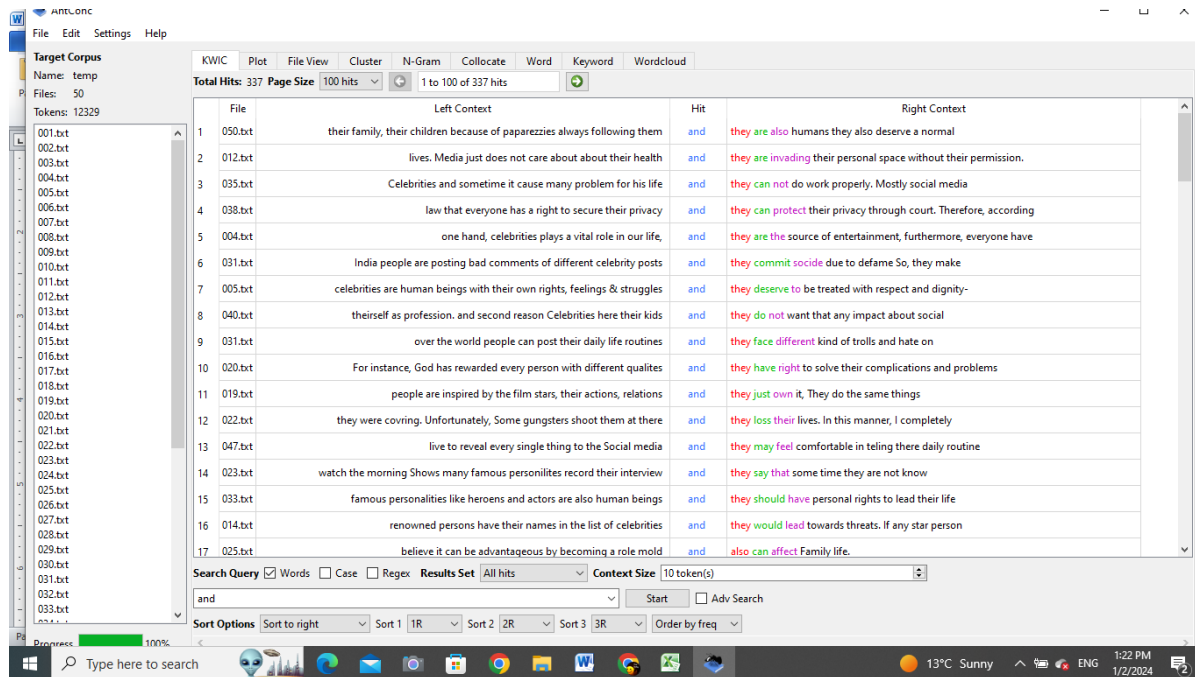
Table 2. Grammatical Cohesion

No	Grammatical Cohesion	Total	Percentage
1	Conjunction	459	3.72%
2	Adverb	61	0.49%
3	Prepositional Phrase	9	0.07%
4	Referencing	264	2.14%
Total		793	6.42%

### 3.7 Conjunction

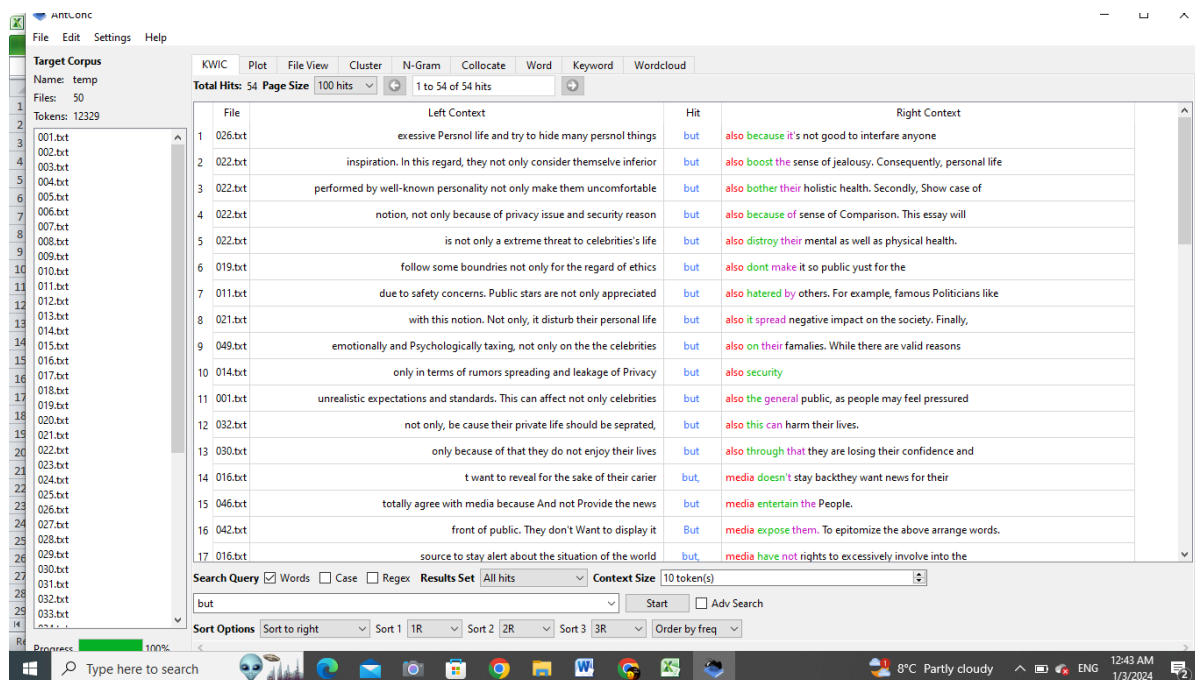
Conjunctions contribute to the overall cohesion of a text by establishing relationships between different parts, making the narrative or argument more comprehensible and organized. They help create a smooth and coherent flow of information within a sentence or across multiple sentences. “And”, “But”, and “Or” are the used by Pakistani IELTS test takers.

Figure 13. Conjunction “And”



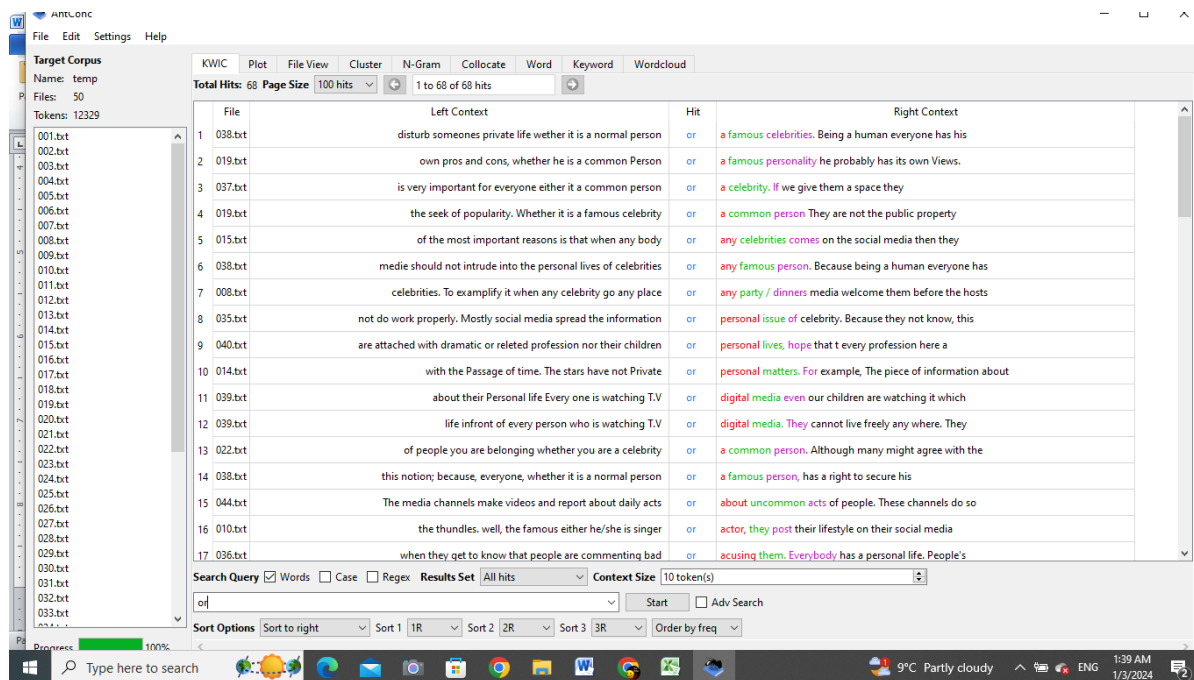
In a set of 50 essays crafted by IELTS test takers, the conjunction "And" is utilized 337 times among a total of 12,329 tokens, constituting approximately 2.73% of the entire text.

Figure 14. Conjunction “But”



Within a compilation of 50 essays composed by IELTS test takers, the conjunction "But" is employed 54 times out of a total of 12,329 tokens, making up approximately 0.44% of the overall text.

Figure 15. Conjunction “Or”

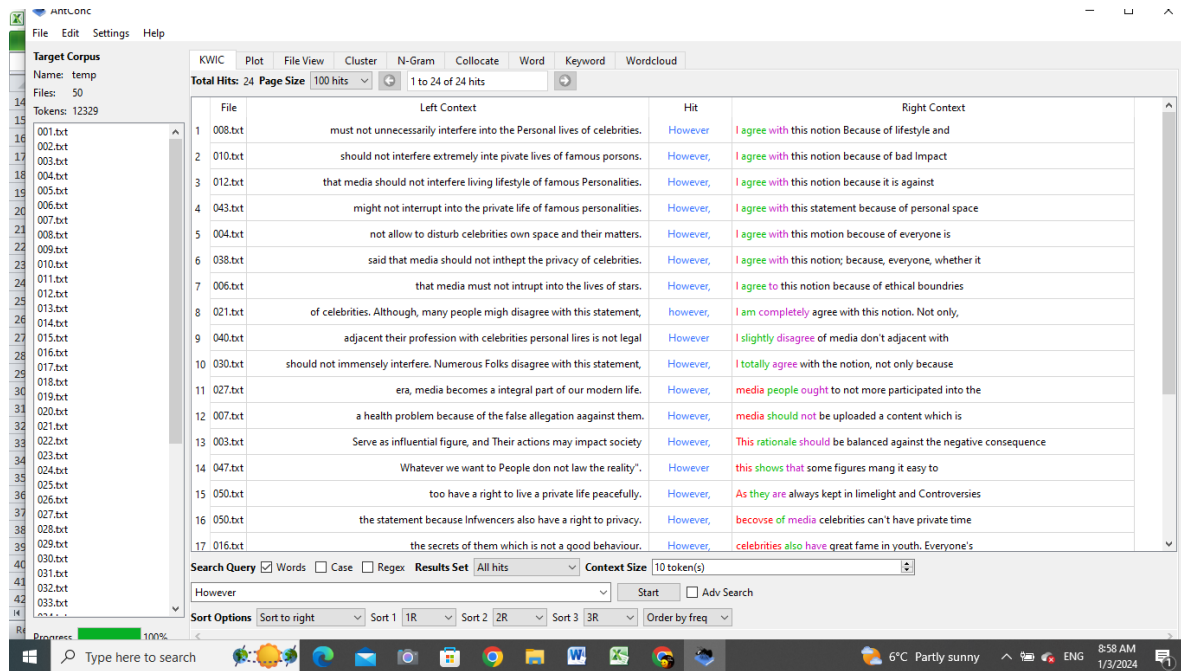


In a collection of 50 essays written by IELTS test takers, the conjunction "Or" is utilized 68 times within a total of 12,329 tokens, constituting approximately 0.55% of the entire text.

### 3.8 Adverb

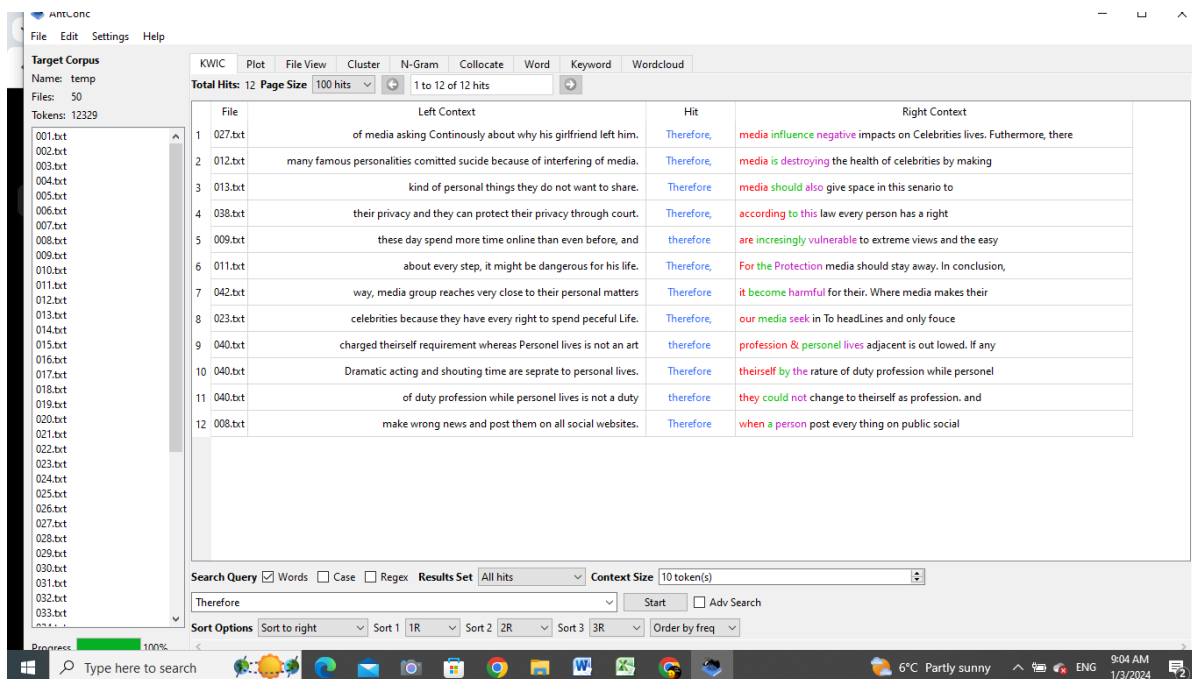
In the context of cohesion, an adverb is a type of word that functions to connect or relate different parts of a text, helping to create a smooth and coherent flow of information. Adverbs are often used to indicate the relationship between actions, events, or ideas within a sentence or between sentences. They play a crucial role in signaling the logical connections and transitions between various elements in a text. IELTS test takers in Pakistan employ adverbs such as "However," "Therefore," "Moreover," "Furthermore," and "Thus" in their responses to make cohesion and coherence.

Figure 16. Adverb “However”



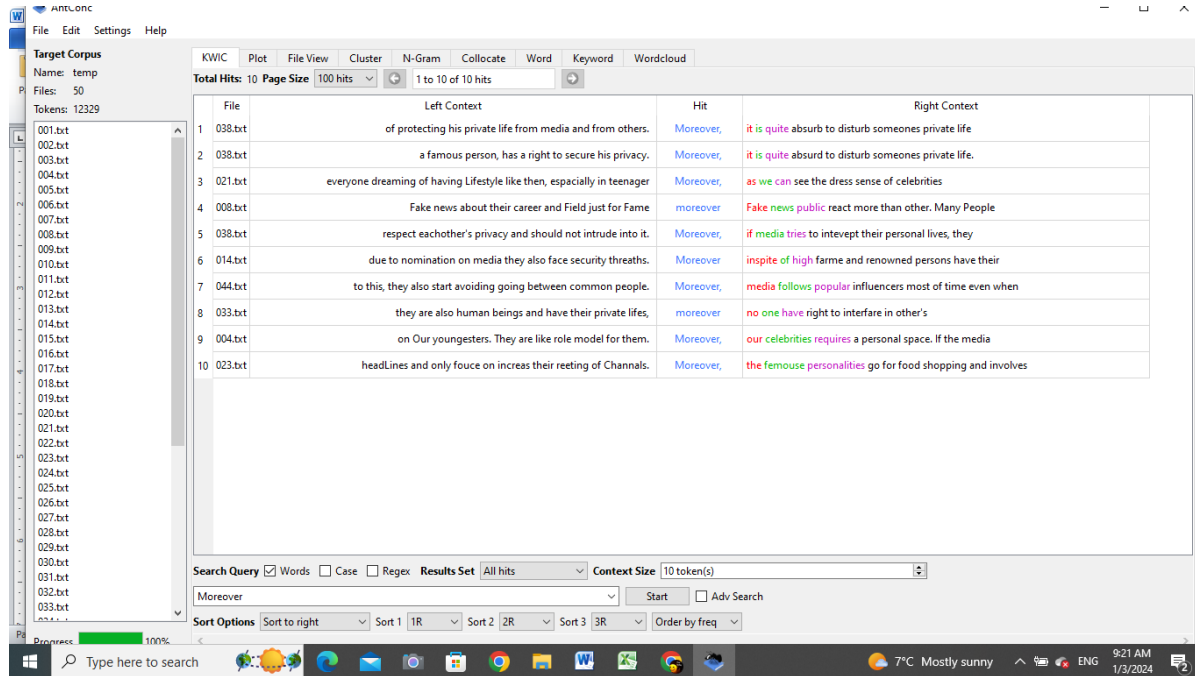
Amongst a compilation of 50 essays written by IELTS examinees, the adverb "However" appears 24 times out of a total of 12,329 tokens, constituting roughly 0.19% of the entire text.

Figure 17. Adverb “Therefore”



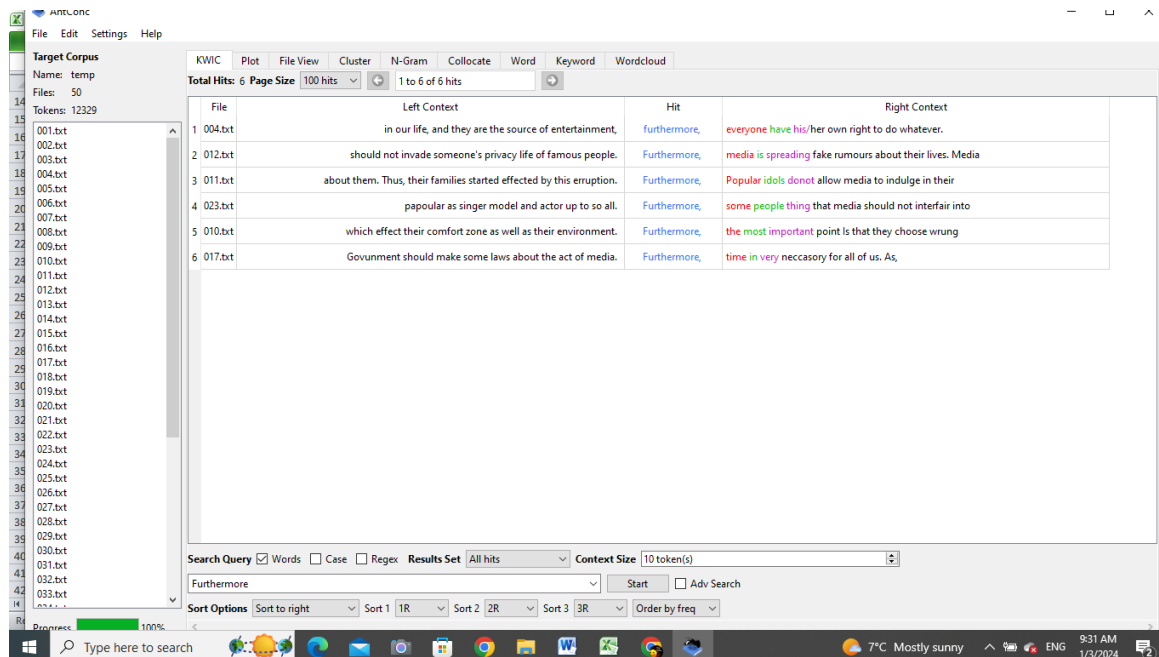
In a collection of 50 essays authored by IELTS test takers, the adverb "Therefore" is present 12 times within a total of 12,329 tokens, accounting for approximately 0.10% of the entire text.

Figure 18. Adverb “Moreover”



Within a set of 50 essays composed by IELTS candidates, the adverb "Moreover" appears 10 times among a total of 12,329 tokens, making up roughly 0.08% of the entire text.

Figure 19. Adverb “Furthermore”



In a compilation of 50 essays written by IELTS participants, the adverb "Furthermore" is found 6 times within a total of 12,329 tokens, constituting approximately 0.05% of the entire text.

Figure 20. Adverb “Thus”

File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
1 007.txt	cover it because it was the decision of his own.	Thus	media must be respect any person if the person
2 006.txt	over involment of media or over tralling on Social media.	Thus,	media must not over involve into the celebrities lives.
3 026.txt	they can disturb their career because both are totally different,	thus	media should stop involment in celebrities persnol life when
4 011.txt	their peroral life because it spreads fake information about them.	Thus,	their families started effected by this eruption. Furthermore, Popular
5 032.txt	sharing their location may provide a chance to attack him	Thus,	their lives matter and it Should be respected. In
6 014.txt	celebrity has own enemy and he was scumbed to death.	Thus,	due to absence of security celebrities have to Suffer.
7 030.txt	Inhabitants has been not getting entertainment in their personal lives.	Thus,	I strongly agree that media should not intrude into
8 024.txt	daily routine life because people wants to know about themselves.	Thus,	it is important for themselves. Secondly, they get knowledge
9 047.txt	inlormalion against them and many black mall them in future.	Thus	there may be some Cealicaundnierg ears a but many

In a collection of 50 essays authored by IELTS test takers, the adverb "Thus" is encountered 9 times among a total of 12,329 tokens, making up roughly 0.07% of the entire text.

### 3.9 Prepositional Phrase

A prepositional phrase is a grammatical construct that consists of a preposition, its object, and any associated modifiers. It plays a crucial role in connecting different parts of a sentence or text by providing additional information about the relationships between various elements. Prepositional phrases often contribute to the overall coherence of a text by specifying details such as time, location, direction, or manner. Few IELTS test takers in Pakistan incorporate prepositional phrases in their essays; for example, they utilize the phrase "For instance."

Figure 21. Prepositional Phrase “For Instance”

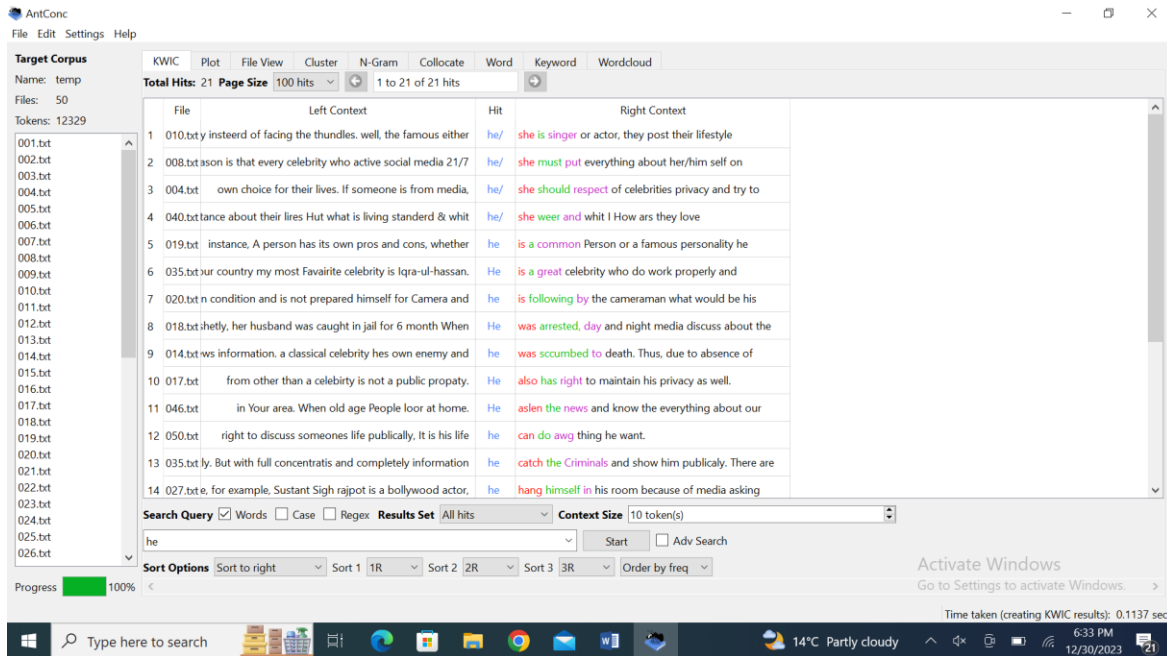
File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
1 019.txt	the celebrity side so that they can earn more views.	For instance,	A person has its own pros and cons,
2 020.txt	has a right to enjoy his life. way of solution.	For instance,	God has rewarded every person with different qualities
3 010.txt	in their private life that is uncomfortable situation for them	For instance,	if they are involved in something difficult situation,
4 038.txt	lives, they can officially file a court case against media.	For instance,	in many countries, it is a basic law
5 026.txt	their own lives to do whatever they want to do,	for instance,	some of them hiding their face with mask
6 012.txt	and they are invading their personal space without their permission.	For instance,	whenever a celebrity goes outside paparazzi and media
7 014.txt	have ambiguous matters with other person, they would suffer it.	For instance,	According to news information, a classical celebrity hes
8 032.txt	and their locations may pose a threat to their lives.	For instance,	if a famous Tv actor is disliked by
9 010.txt	not meant that to hurt them, but Commenting bad words.	For instance	last year an actress was trolled by media

Among a set of 50 essays written by IELTS examinees, the prepositional phrase "For Instance" appears 9 times within a total of 12,329 tokens, constituting approximately 0.07% of the entire text.

### 3.10 Referencing

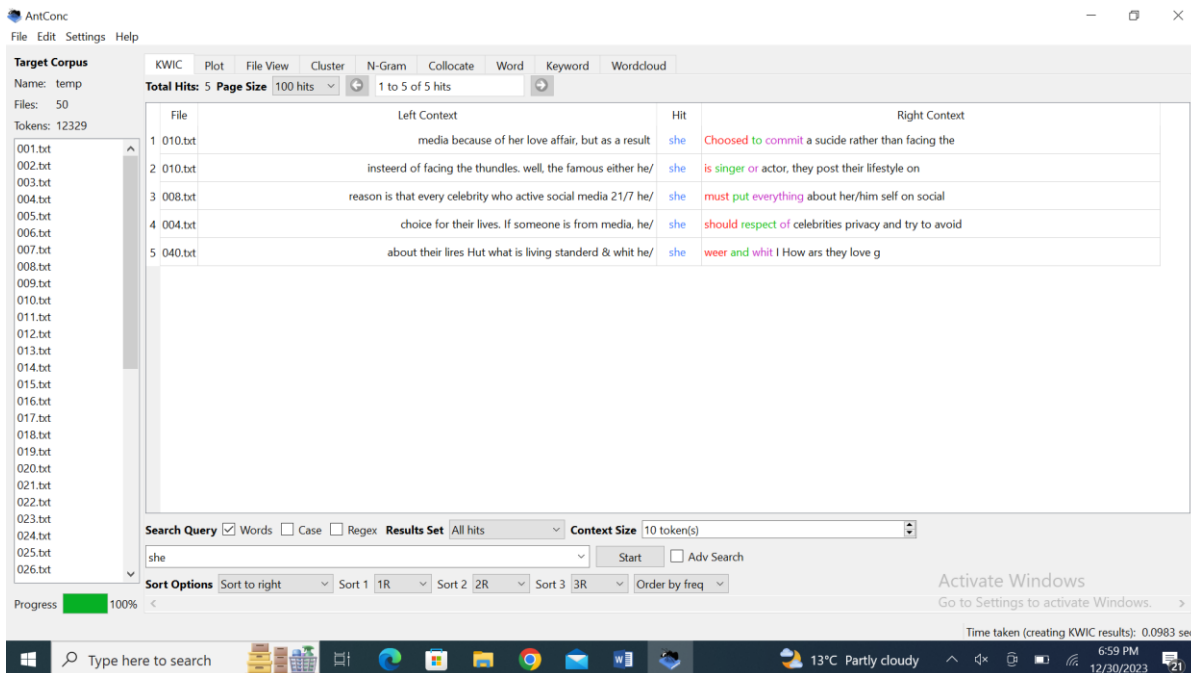
In the context of cohesion devices, referencing in writing involves using language to circle back to a previously mentioned person or object, thus avoiding redundancy. This is accomplished by substituting specific terms, such as replacing "the taxi driver" with pronouns like "he," or transitioning from "two girls" to the pronoun "they." Additionally, reference is created through formulaic sequences like "as stated previously" or "the aforementioned." These techniques serve to enhance the overall coherence of the text.

Figure 22. Referencing “He”



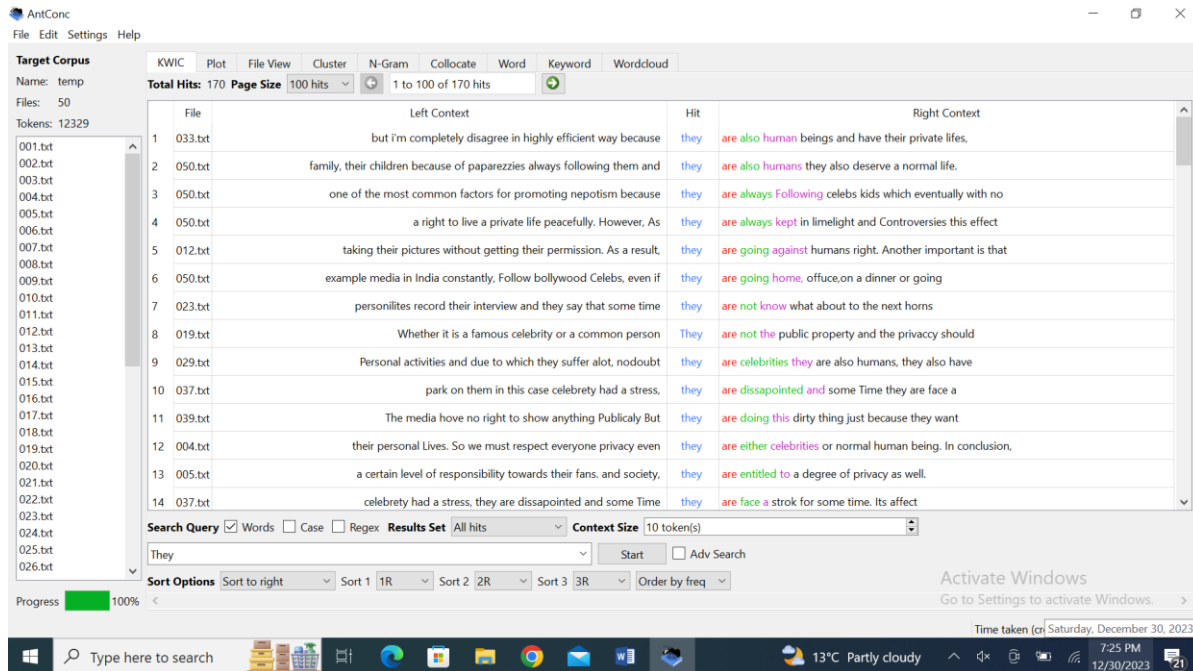
He is used by Pakistani IELTS test takers in their argumentative essay 21 times out of 12,329 tokens which is 0.17% of total.

Figure 23. Referencing “She”



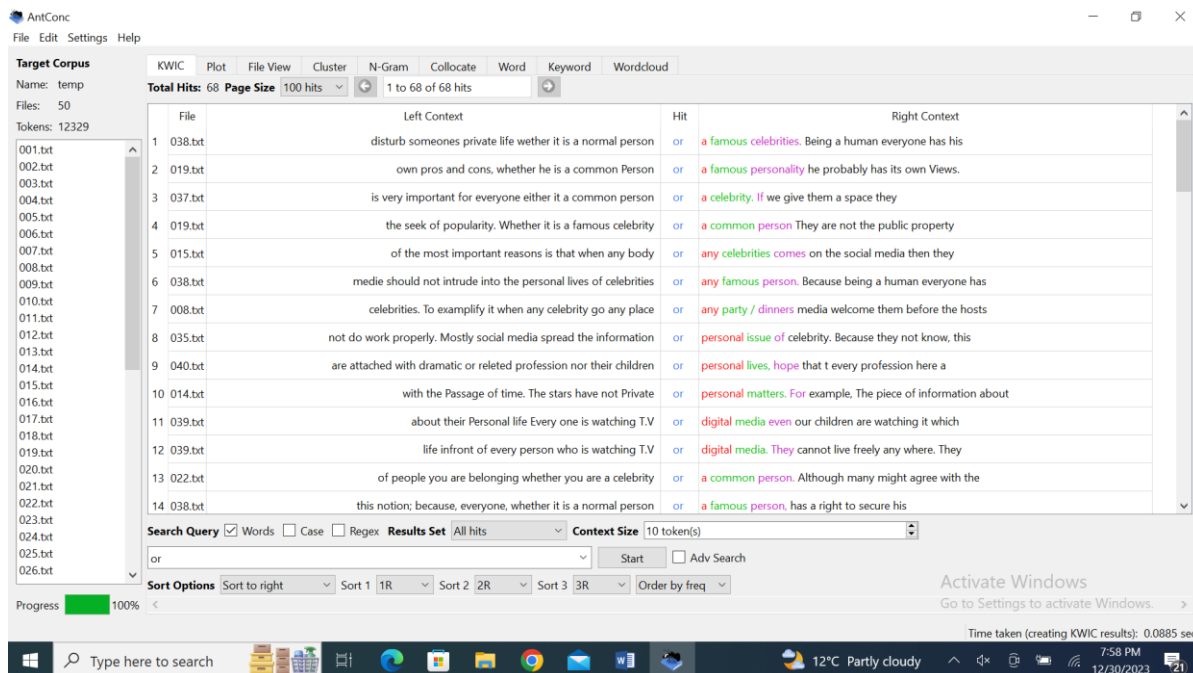
In the argumentative essays of Pakistani IELTS test takers, she appears in 0.04% of the total 12,329 tokens, specifically five times.

Figure 24. Referencing “They”



Within the argumentative essays crafted by Pakistani IELTS examinees, "the" is present in 1.38% of the overall 12,329 tokens, amounting to a specific count of 170 occurrences.

Figure 25. Referencing “Or”



Within the argumentative essays written by Pakistani IELTS candidates, the term "or" is utilized in 0.55% of the entire 12,329 tokens, precisely occurring 68 times.

#### **4. Discussion**

The analysis of linguistic patterns in IELTS essays produced by candidates in Pakistan reveals several cohesive devices. In terms of lexical cohesion, repetition is the most prominent pattern, accounting for 5.23% of the total. Repetition involves the reuse of words or phrases and contributes to coherence by reinforcing key concepts and creating a sense of unity in the text. Meronymy (0.51%) and synonymy (0.38%) are also observed, demonstrating the use of related terms and synonyms to establish connections between ideas. Collocation, though less frequent at 0.05%, indicates the strategic pairing of words to enhance semantic cohesion. In the realm of grammatical cohesion, conjunctions (3.72%) emerge as a primary device, linking clauses and sentences to maintain a logical flow. Referencing (2.14%) is another significant pattern, employing pronouns or other referencing elements to connect back to previously mentioned concepts. Adverbs (0.49%) and prepositional phrases (0.07%) contribute to cohesion by indicating relationships between ideas and providing additional context.

Pakistani test-takers face challenges in achieving cohesion and coherence in their IELTS essays. The relatively low percentages in collocation, adverbs, and prepositional phrases suggest potential difficulties in incorporating these cohesive devices. Limited use of collocation may hinder the effective pairing of words, impacting semantic cohesion. Challenges with adverbs and prepositional phrases may result in less precise expression of relationships between ideas. Moreover, the moderate use of meronymy and synonymy indicates that while some candidates successfully employ these lexical cohesion strategies, others may struggle to diversify their vocabulary effectively. Overreliance on repetition may lead to redundancy if not used judiciously.

Understanding the linguistic patterns and challenges provides insights for enhancing English language instruction in Pakistan, particularly in the context of IELTS preparation. Pedagogical approaches should focus on: **Diversifying Vocabulary:** Encourage the use of synonyms and varied lexical choices to reduce repetition and enhance lexical cohesion. **Emphasizing Adverb and Prepositional Phrase Usage:** Provide targeted exercises and examples to improve the incorporation of adverbs and prepositional phrases, allowing candidates to express relationships more precisely. **Collocation Exercises:** Design activities that promote the effective pairing of words in context, enhancing semantic cohesion. **Explicit Teaching of Referencing:** Offer guidance on using referencing elements like pronouns and cohesive devices to link ideas across sentences and paragraphs. **Practice in Conjunction Usage:** Incorporate exercises that reinforce the appropriate use of conjunctions for logical connections within essays.

To enhance the cohesion and coherence skills of IELTS candidates in Pakistan, several targeted interventions can be implemented. First, vocabulary enhancement workshops should be organized to encourage the use of synonyms and diverse word choices, ultimately minimizing repetition. Grammar and cohesion exercises focusing on adverbs, prepositional phrases, and conjunctions can provide candidates with hands-on practice in incorporating these elements for improved coherence. Collocation practice sessions should be integrated into language instruction to help candidates understand effective word pairings and their contribution to semantic cohesion. Additionally, explicit instruction on referencing techniques, emphasizing the appropriate use of pronouns and

other cohesive devices, will strengthen candidates' ability to link ideas throughout their essays. Providing model essays with varied cohesive devices can serve as examples for candidates to emulate in their writing. Lastly, incorporating peer review and feedback sessions allows candidates to exchange essays, identify cohesion patterns, and receive constructive input on enhancing coherence.

Future research endeavors in the realm of IELTS essays produced by candidates in Pakistan could explore several avenues. A comparative analysis of essays from different regions can reveal potential regional variations in the use of cohesive devices, informing more targeted and region-specific instructional approaches. Longitudinal studies tracking the progression of candidates' cohesion and coherence skills over time would provide insights into how linguistic patterns evolve with increased exposure to English language instruction. An analysis of common errors made by candidates in using cohesive devices can guide the development of interventions to address specific challenges. Investigating the correlation between the effective use of cohesive devices and IELTS scoring can shed light on the impact of cohesion on overall essay quality. Furthermore, exploring the effectiveness of teacher training programs in equipping instructors with strategies to teach cohesive devices, and assessing how well these strategies are implemented in the classroom, can contribute to more effective pedagogical approaches. Finally, examining the potential impact of cultural factors on the choice and frequency of cohesive devices used by test-takers will provide valuable insights into how cultural nuances may influence writing patterns.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study has addressed the multifaceted issue of achieving higher scores in IELTS test essays among Pakistani candidates, emphasizing the critical role of cohesion and coherence. Through an extensive analysis of linguistic patterns and challenges, the study has illuminated the specific difficulties faced by Pakistani test-takers, particularly in the areas of vocabulary diversification, the strategic use of cohesive devices, and the avoidance of repetition. The suggested interventions, drawn from the findings, offer practical strategies for enhancing English language instruction and IELTS test preparation in Pakistan. These recommendations, including targeted vocabulary workshops, grammar exercises, and the explicit teaching of referencing, aim to empower candidates to overcome challenges and elevate their writing proficiency. As this research contributes valuable insights to the existing knowledge base, it is anticipated that the outcomes will have a positive impact on both educators and test-takers, fostering improvements in English language education and assessment practices in the Pakistani context.

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