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FORMULATING SPEECH TEXTS AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK TO ENHANCE CRITICAL THINKING IN ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION SETTINGS

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ABSTRACT

Critical thinking is a crucial learning outcome in higher education; however, its systematic integration into argumentative writing instruction presents pedagogical challenges, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. Many students struggle to transition from mere descriptive exposition to evaluative reasoning and well-justified conclusions. This study reconceptualizes presidential speech texts as authentic instructional frameworks for enhancing critical thinking in argumentative writing. Through qualitative content analysis and a theory-building approach, six annual state addresses by President Joko Widodo from 2019 to 2024 were examined using the integrated perspectives of the ACER critical thinking framework Knowledge Construction, Evaluating Reasoning, and Decision Making and Toulmin's model of argumentation. The findings reveal a consistent and recurring KC-ER-DM reasoning cycle throughout all speeches, characterized by stable lexical indicators and strategic positional organization. This cycle mirrors the introduction body conclusion format of academic argumentative essays and aligns conceptually with Toulmin's claim grounds warrant configuration. Based on this alignment, the study proposes the AT Model (ACER-Toulmin) as a pedagogically actionable framework that integrates cognitive processes with argumentative structures. The study's novelty lies in transforming presidential speeches from subjects of rhetorical critique into instructional resources that simultaneously scaffold critical thinking and argumentative competence. The findings contribute to EFL writing pedagogy by bridging abstract argumentation theory with authentic discourse and offering a transferable, outcome-oriented model aligned with outcome-based higher education principles. Although limited to a single political context and qualitative design, this study provides a solid conceptual foundation for future empirical research on discourse-based instructional models for critical thinking and argumentative writing across various disciplines and educational settings.

KEYWORDS: critical thinking; argumentative writing; presidential speech; ACER framework; Toulmin model; EFL writing pedagogy

1. INTRODUCTION

The fields facts, Li, (2026) pointed out that enhancing students' capacity for critical thinking and the articulation of well-reasoned arguments is a fundamental objective of higher education, particularly in the domains of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing instruction. At the crucial context, argumentative writing transcends the mere presentation of opinions; it necessitates that students engage in a series of intricate cognitive tasks (Mujtaba et al., 2023). These tasks include the precise definition of a topic or issue, meticulous analysis and evaluation of supporting evidence, and logical derivation of conclusions based on that evidence. Conijn et al., (2023) complete those by adding that these processes require a high degree of intellectual engagement and advanced reasoning abilities.

Despite educators' ongoing efforts to prioritize these skills, many university students continue to encounter substantial challenges in producing argumentative texts that exhibit both evaluative depth and logical coherence, discovered in (Alhalangy & Abdalgane, 2023; Hadi et al., 2021; Sari et al., 2021). Previous studies have highlighted several key findings regarding students' difficulties in crafting evaluative and logically coherent argumentative writing. These studies indicate that the challenges students face are not solely attributable to limitations in their language proficiency or vocabulary knowledge (Mudiono, 2024; Pelenkahu et al., 2024). Rather, Pohan et al., (2025) describe the significant contributing factor is the inadequate integration of critical thinking training into writing instruction. While in fact, many students benefit from focused guidance on writing mechanics, grammar, and language use, they often lack explicit instruction on developing and structuring arguments through critical analysis (Maru et al., 2025).

This instructional gap results in students struggling to move beyond superficial descriptive writing or make simple assertions. Liu et al., (2026) affirm that without sufficient critical thinking support, students find it challenging to construct nuanced and well-supported arguments that demonstrate their evaluative depth. Specifically, they encounter difficulties in critically assessing the strength and relevance of evidence, identifying and addressing counterarguments, and organizing their ideas to reflect a clear and logical progression of thought. These findings indicate the necessity of enhancing writing pedagogy by explicitly incorporating critical thinking skills, as the instructional gap significantly hinders students' progression beyond basic descriptive writing,

confining their academic development to superficial observations rather than fostering deep analytical engagement. In the absence of explicit guidance on critical thinking, students encounter difficulties in evaluating the quality and applicability of evidence, which is essential for constructing persuasive and coherent arguments (Kerman et al., 2024; Wang & Newell, 2025). Their inability to recognize and address counterarguments further diminishes the robustness of their writing, as it prevents them from engaging with alternative perspectives and demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of a topic.

Additionally, Liu et al., (2024) stated that, the lack of support in organizing ideas coherently results in arguments that may be fragmented or lack a clear and logical flow, thereby undermining the overall clarity and impact of the work. These challenges impose the urgent need to reform writing pedagogy by embedding critical thinking instruction as a fundamental component of academic writing courses. By integrating targeted exercises that develop evaluative skills, argument structuring, and counterargument analysis, educators can equip students with the tools necessary to produce nuanced and well-supported academic writing in the future. Such pedagogical enhancements foster deeper intellectual engagement, prepare students to meet higher academic standards, and contribute meaningfully to scholarly discourse (Mallahi, 2024). Ultimately, addressing this gap will enable students to progress beyond simplistic assertions toward more sophisticated and persuasive academic writing that reflects critical evaluative depth. By doing so, educators can better equip students with the intellectual tools required to produce sophisticated academic arguments, which are essential for success in higher education and beyond.

This synthesis of prior research forms the conceptual foundation for the current study's focus on integrating critical thinking with argumentative writing instruction in the following ways: These challenges are not solely attributable to difficulties in language proficiency or vocabulary, described in (Liu et al., 2024). Rather, a critical factor is the insufficient integration of critical thinking training into writing instruction curricula (Maru et al., 2025; Pohan et al., 2025). In numerous instances, students receive instruction in writing mechanics and language usage but are afforded less targeted guidance on developing and structuring arguments through critical analyses. This instructional gap often results in students struggling to progress beyond superficial descriptions or basic assertions to more nuanced and well-supported arguments in their writing (Mallahi, 2024). Aside of that, students may face difficulties in critically evaluating the strength and relevance of

evidence, recognizing counterarguments, and organizing their ideas to demonstrate a clear and logical progression (Hu & Bi, 2025; Saldıray & Doğanay, 2024).

Therefore, it is essential to enhance writing pedagogy by incorporating explicit instruction on critical thinking. Such an approach would better equip students with the necessary tools to construct sophisticated academic arguments, which are crucial for success in higher education and beyond. A persistent challenge in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing pedagogy is the separation of critical thinking from textual production (Y. Li, 2026). Andrae, (2024) confirms that critical thinking is frequently taught as an abstract cognitive skill, whereas writing instruction tends to focus on formal structures and language accuracy. Consequently, students may replicate essay templates without engaging in genuine reasoning or expressing opinions with adequate justification. This disjunction indicates the need for instructional models that integrate cognitive processes with authentic discourse structures.

Presidential speeches, particularly those delivered by political leaders, represent a largely untapped resource for integration research. As significant public discourse, these speeches are crafted to address complex issues, assess various conditions, and justify decisions to a wide-ranging audience, confirmed in (Maru, 2009; Maru et al., 2025). They encapsulate complete cycles of reasoning and decision-making, making them potentially valuable instructional models for argumentative writing tasks. Although previous research has explored political speeches from rhetorical, ideological, and textual analytic perspectives, their potential as educational models for critical thinking in academic writing has not been examined systematically (Maru, 2013; Maru et al., 2018; Maru, Gustine, et al., 2023). This study seeks to address this gap by exploring the potential of reformulating presidential speech texts into instructional frameworks to foster critical thinking in argumentative writing. This study focuses on six annual state addresses delivered by President Joko Widodo between 2019 and 2024. It integrates the ACER critical thinking framework with Toulmin's model, adapted from (Dwikoranto, 2022; Yang, 2022), to investigate the following research question: How are critical thinking processes manifested in presidential speech texts? In what ways do these processes align structurally with academic argumentative writing? How can this alignment be developed into an instructional framework for EFL writing pedagogy? By addressing these questions, this study aims to contribute to discourse-based writing instruction, argumentation pedagogy, and outcome-based higher education practices.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative methodology, emphasizing interpretive content analysis in conjunction with a theory-building perspective (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). By concentrating on authentic discourse, this study aimed to capture the complexity and variability of argumentative practices as they naturally occur, rather than relying on artificially constructed examples. This approach facilitated a detailed examination of how individuals construct, present, and negotiate arguments, revealing the underlying cognitive processes and rhetorical strategies that shape effective argumentation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Furthermore, this study investigated the educational implications of these findings, particularly concerning the teaching of argumentative writing in higher education contexts. By identifying recurrent patterns and their cognitive foundations, this study sought to inform pedagogical approaches that can enhance students' argumentative skills. The insights gained through this qualitative analysis contribute to the development of evidence-based instructional strategies that emphasize critical thinking, coherence, and persuasiveness in academic writing (Maru et al., 2025; Maru, et al., 2023; Maru, et al., 2023). Through this, the qualitative analysis foregrounds how authentic speech texts, carefully engineered with rhetorical repetition, lexical cohesion, and pragmatic moves, can be repurposed as classroom models to teach writers how to craft coherent, persuasive arguments.

2.2 Data Collection

This study constitutes a qualitative inquiry that ultimately relies on documents, texts, and words for its data. Within this framework, the six annual state addresses delivered by President Joko Widodo before the Indonesian House of Representatives from 2019 to 2024 represent a significant corpus for rhetorical analysis. These speeches are meticulously crafted formal texts designed to inform, persuade, and shape public perception. Their high rhetorical intentionality is evident in the deliberate use of language, structure, and themes (Maru, 2013; Maru, et al., 2023). Speech texts served as the primary data source and were predominantly analyzed to achieve the study objectives.

2.3 Data Analysis

Qualitative content analysis was employed as the principal methodological approach, facilitating an in-depth examination of textual data derived from the speeches. This method involved a systematic process of coding and categorizing the content to reveal underlying patterns, themes, and meanings that

aligned with the theoretical frameworks guiding the research (Dwikoranto, 2022; Indarti, 2025). This approach not only aided in organizing the data into coherent themes but also provided insights into the contextual and cultural nuances that influenced the speeches. Through this method, the study was able to establish meaningful connections between textual content and broader research questions, thereby supporting the development of well-grounded conclusions and contributing to the existing body of knowledge within the relevant academic field. The analysis was guided by two complementary theoretical models: the ACER framework and Toulmin's Argument Model, (Dwikoranto, 2022; Indarti, 2025). The ACER framework offers a lens through which to conceptualize critical thinking as a dynamic process encompassing Knowledge Construction (KC), Evaluating Reasoning (ER), and Decision Making (DM). Concurrently, Toulmin's model provides a structural perspective on argumentation by focusing on the components of Claim, Grounds, and Warrant. Through the integration of these frameworks, this study explored the cognitive dimensions of critical thinking alongside the formal structure of argumentative discourse within the speeches. The coding process was iterative and meticulous, involving repeated examination of speeches to identify textual segments corresponding to the elements of the ACER framework. Each identified segment was analyzed for lexical markers and their position within the overall speech structure, allowing for a nuanced understanding of how critical thinking processes were articulated. Subsequently, these ACER-coded elements were mapped onto Toulmin's argumentative components to uncover systematic correspondences between cognitive processes and argument construction in the writing. This dual-framework approach enhanced analytical rigor through theoretical triangulation, enabling cross-speech comparisons and fostering transparent category development in the data analysis. The combination of these methods ensured a comprehensive and robust analysis that captured both the substantive content and structural features of the speeches' critical thinking and argumentation.

3. FINDINGS

This section presents an in-depth analysis of how presidential speech texts operationalize critical thinking through structured argumentative patterns and how these patterns can be transformed pedagogically into an instructional framework for argumentative writing in higher education. Rather than treating findings as descriptive outcomes, this section interprets them as evidence of systematic cognitive design embedded in authentic discourse by employing content analysis.

3.1 Critical Thinking as a Systematic Cycle in Presidential Speeches

The analysis of the six speeches reveals a deliberate and methodical engagement with critical thinking processes, within which each speech consistently follows a structured progression through Knowledge Construction, Evaluating Reasoning, and Decision Making. This sequence highlights that speeches are not mere collections of facts or assertions but are carefully crafted arguments that build logically from the presentation of information to the assessment of its implications, culminating in informed decisions. This pattern reflects an intentional rhetorical strategy aimed at persuading the audience through coherent and reasoned discourse rather than relying on disconnected statements or emotional appeals (ALAMEDA, 2023; Dharmawan et al., 2023).

Moreover, the interdependence of these stages highlights the complexity and depth of presidential communication, emphasizing that decisions articulated in speeches are grounded in prior evaluative analysis rather than being arbitrary or reactionary. This integrated cycle of critical thinking suggests that presidential rhetoric functions as a dynamic reasoning process in which knowledge is actively constructed and scrutinized before guiding policy or action proposals. Consequently, this approach strengthens the credibility and persuasive power of the speeches, positioning them as reasoned arguments that invite the audience to follow a logical pathway from evidence to conclusion, as seen in the following table.

Table 1: Distribution of ACER Critical Thinking Elements in Presidential Speeches (2019–2024)

Year	Knowledge Constructio	Evaluating Reasoning	Decision Making	Total Segments
2019	3	3	3	9
2020	3	3	3	9
2021	3	3	3	9
2022	3	3	3	9
2023	6	6	6	18
2024	3	3	3	9
Total	21	21	21	63

The table illustrates a balanced distribution across the years, indicating stable rhetorical design. The expanded distribution in 2023 signifies contextual amplification rather than structural deviation, thereby reinforcing the robustness of the KC-ER-DM cycle. This analysis demonstrates that President Joko Widodo's annual state addresses consistently enact a complete and recursive cycle of critical thinking, operationalized through Knowledge Construction (KC), Evaluating Reasoning (ER), and Decision Making (DM). This cycle is not incidental; it is rhetorically and cognitively engineered to guide audiences from contextual understanding to evaluative judgment and ultimately to collective or institutional action.

Knowledge Construction serves as the epistemic foundation for speeches. At this stage, the president introduces national identity, global positioning, or situational realities such as pandemic conditions, economic disruptions, and demographic opportunities. These statements do more than inform; they define the parameters of legitimate reasoning within which subsequent arguments are unfolded. From a cognitive perspective, KC reflects analytical thinking, involving categorization, framing, and contextual delimitation.

Evaluating Reasoning emerges as the central argumentative engine in speeches. Here, facts, statistics, and situational constraints are transformed into evaluative judgments using causal logic, comparison, and conditional reasoning. This stage reflects higher-order evaluative thinking, where information is not merely presented but is interrogated. Importantly, ER functions as a discursive space for justification, enabling the speaker to legitimize forthcoming decisions. Decision Making represents the culmination of the critical thinking cycle. The decisions articulated in the speeches are not arbitrary conclusions; they are presented as necessary and rational outcomes of prior knowledge construction and evaluation.

Linguistically, this stage is marked by modality and obligation, signaling a transition from reasoning to action.

From an instructional standpoint, this cyclical structure demonstrates that critical thinking in writing should be taught not as a fragmented skill but as a processual sequence culminating in justified positions. This insight directly informs the pedagogical design of argumentative writing tasks in higher education settings.

3.2 Positional Alignment with Argumentative Essay Structure

Beyond mere frequency, the positional distribution of ACER elements reveals significant structural parallelism between presidential speeches and academic argumentative essays. This alignment indicates that the rhetorical organization of these speeches is not arbitrary but intentionally mirrors the conventional framework of academic writing. Specifically, the speeches follow a progression that reflects the introduction-body-conclusion format, a hallmark of academic essays, thereby facilitating clarity, coherence and persuasive impact. This structural isomorphism highlights how presidential rhetoric employs established academic conventions to effectively communicate and argue its points, enhancing audience comprehension and engagement. Moreover, the consistency of this pattern, as demonstrated in Table 2, indicates a strategic rhetorical design that aligns with the expectations of higher-education writing. By adhering to this canonical structure, presidential speeches achieve a balanced distribution of argumentative elements, where the introduction sets the context, the body develops the argument with evidence and reasoning, and the conclusion reinforces key messages. This mirroring not only strengthens the logical flow of the speeches but also situates them within a broader tradition of formal argumentation, bridging political discourse and academic standards of communication.

Table 2: Positional Distribution of Critical Thinking Elements Across Speech Structure

ACER Element	Beginning	Middle	End
Knowledge Construction	7	9	5
Evaluating Reasoning	7	11	3
Decision Making	5	10	6

The table illustrates the positional distribution that reflects the introduction-body-conclusion structure typical of argumentative academic essays. In the initial sections, Knowledge Construction aligns with the function of an academic introduction: establishing the problem space, defining key concepts, and articulating an initial claim. This stage orients the

audience both cognitively and rhetorically, ensuring that subsequent arguments are grounded in a shared understanding of the issue. The middle sections, dominated by Evaluating Reasoning, correspond to the body paragraphs of argumentative essays. Evidence is processed, causal relationships are articulated, and competing realities are weighed. The

density of evaluative reasoning in this section confirms that argumentative strength resides not in claims alone but in the quality of reasoning that connects claims to evidence. The concluding sections, characterized by Decision Making, parallel the conclusion of an academic essay, where arguments are synthesized into recommendations, solutions, or firm stances. This stage exemplifies the expectation in higher education that students move beyond analysis toward reasoned-judgment. This correspondence substantiates the claim that presidential speeches can function as natural templates for teaching argumentative writing, reducing students' difficulty in structuring essays while simultaneously internalizing critical-thinking processes.

3.3 Lexical Markers as Linguistic Signals of Reasoning Stages

Each stage of critical thinking is characterized by specific lexical markers that function as linguistic

indicators and guide the reasoning process. These markers serve as cognitive signposts within the discourse, enabling the speaker or writer to transition between various phases of analysis, evaluation, and synthesis. By systematically employing these markers, individuals can make their thought processes explicit, thereby facilitating clearer communication and deeper engagement with complex ideas. Furthermore, these lexical markers operate as gateways through which various cognitive operations are realized, structuring argumentation and reflection flow. They assist in organizing information logically, highlighting the relationships between concepts, and signaling shifts in perspective or emphasis. As illustrated in Table 3, the consistent use of these linguistic signals not only supports the development of critical thinking skills but also enhances the coherence and persuasiveness of academic writing itself.

Table 3: Lexical Markers Signaling Critical Thinking Stages

ACER Element	Core Lexical Markers	Argumentative Function
Knowledge Construction	is, constitutes, facing	Framing and defining issues
Evaluating Reasoning	however, crisis, condition	Logical contrast and evaluation
Decision Making	must, will, continue, require	Obligation and resolution

As shown in Table 3, these markers render cognitive operations discernible at the textual level and offer practical heuristics for instructing argumentative writing. Concerning cognitive structure, markers associated with Knowledge Construction, such as "is," "constitutes," and "facing," indicate definitional and framing functions. They guide readers toward the epistemic stance of the text and establish conceptual boundaries for the text. Markers related to Evaluating Reasoning, such as "however," "therefore," "condition," and "crisis," signal contrast, causality, and logical dependency, respectively. These markers explicitly encode reasoning processes, making the evaluation apparent at the linguistic level. Markers associated with Decision Making, such as "must," "will," "continue," and "require," indicate obligation, commitment, and policy direction. These expressions transform reasoning into authoritative stance. Pedagogically, these markers can be operationalized as writing heuristics, enabling students to consciously align their sentence-level choices with paragraph-level functions. This approach addresses a common issue in student writing: the inability to explicitly signal argumentative actions.

3.4 Convergence with Toulmin's Argumentation Model

The systematic convergence observed between the

ACER framework and Toulmin's model of argumentation underscores a profound theoretical alignment that enhances our understanding of argument construction and evaluation processes. Specifically, the Knowledge Construction phase of the ACER framework parallels Toulmin's Claim and Grounds components, wherein the claim represents the central assertion and the grounds provide supporting evidence or data. This alignment highlights the emphasis both frameworks place on establishing a clear, evidence-backed proposition as the foundation of effective argumentation.

Moreover, the Evaluating Reasoning stage within the ACER framework corresponds to Toulmin's Warrant, which serves as a logical bridge connecting the grounds to the claim by justifying why the evidence supports the assertion. This connection underscores the critical role of reasoning evaluation in validating the coherence and strength of arguments. Finally, Decision Making within ACER functions similarly to Claim-in-action in Toulmin's model, reflecting the practical application or enactment of the argument in context. Collectively, these correspondences, as summarized in Table 4, reveal how the ACER framework operationalizes Toulmin's theoretical constructs, providing a robust structure for analyzing and constructing arguments in academic writing.

Table 4: Alignment Between ACER Framework and Toulmin's Model

ACER Element	Toulmin Component	Function
Knowledge Construction	Claim + Grounds	Establishes thesis and evidence
Evaluating Reasoning	Warrant	Justifies inferential links
Decision Making	Claim-in-action	Concludes argument

The integration of critical thinking with Toulmin's argumentation model highlights a dynamic interaction in which these frameworks do not function as isolated or parallel entities but as mutually reinforcing processes. Critical thinking establishes the cognitive foundation necessary for rigorously evaluating claims, evidence, and reasoning, whereas Toulmin's model offers a structured approach for dissecting and constructing arguments through its components: claim, data, warrant, backing, qualifier, and rebuttal. Together, they provide a comprehensive perspective for analyzing and teaching argumentative reasoning, emphasizing not only the form of arguments but also the quality and depth of thought underpinning them.

Presidential speeches serve as an especially effective medium for illustrating this integration, as they inherently embody complex argumentative structures embedded within persuasive rhetoric. These speeches blend appeals to logic, ethos, and pathos while implicitly adhering to the Toulmin framework, rendering them rich instructional texts for teaching argumentative reasoning. Their real-world context and high stakes encourage learners to engage critically with the material, fostering skills in identifying claims, evaluating supporting evidence and recognizing counterarguments. Thus, using presidential speeches as pedagogical tools bridges theoretical models and practical applications, enhancing students' ability to reason and argue effectively in academic and civic discourse.

4. DISCUSSION

This study significantly broadens the conceptualization of critical thinking and argumentative writing by positioning authentic political discourse not only as a subject for rhetorical critique but also as a comprehensive instructional framework. This approach treats political discourse as an active, dynamic model that engages learners cognitively at multiple levels, fostering skills such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation within real-world communicative contexts. By leveraging the complexity and immediacy of political dialogue, the instructional model encourages deeper intellectual engagement and reflective thinking, moving beyond traditional didactic methods that often isolate argumentation as abstract or decontextualized from real life.

Moreover, framing authentic political discourse as a cognitively complete instructional model underscores its potential to integrate various dimensions of learning (Amaliah, 2024); cognitive, social, and linguistic (Dwikoranto, 2022); thereby enriching the educational experience of students (Indarti, 2025). This paradigm supports the development of critical faculties through exposure to genuine argumentative practices, including negotiating perspectives, evidence appraisal, and strategic communication (Maru et al., 2025). Consequently, learners are better equipped to navigate and contribute to complex societal debates, making the instructional model pedagogically robust and socially relevant. This advancement offers a transformative lens for educators and researchers aiming to cultivate sophisticated critical thinking and writing abilities grounded in authentic communication acts.

4.1 Presidential Speech as an Embodiment of Critical Thinking

The findings highlight presidential speeches as a dynamic process of critical thinking, seamlessly integrating knowledge construction (KC), elaborative reasoning (ER), and decision-making (DM) in a continuous cycle. This cycle demonstrates how complex reasoning unfolds in real-time public discourse, in which leaders must not only present arguments but also justify their decisions transparently and responsibly. By consistently embodying the KC-ER-DM cycle, presidential speeches exemplify higher-order cognitive functions applied in authentic contexts, exposing the inseparability of reasoning and accountability in leadership communication. This perspective challenges traditional pedagogical methods that often treat critical thinking as an abstract and decontextualized skill (Maru, et al., 2023). Instead, it suggests that critical thinking should be taught and understood as an inherently contextual and iterative process deeply embedded in real-world decision-making scenarios. Such an approach encourages learners to engage with reasoning as a holistic practice that combines evidence evaluation, reflection, and accountable action, thereby preparing them for more meaningful and applicable critical thinking in complex social and political contexts (Li, 2026; Maru et al., 2018; Maru, et al., 2023).

4.2 The Instructional Integration of ACER and Toulmin's Model of Argumentative Writing

The analysis of President Joko Widodo's state addresses demonstrates that the cycle of critical thinking enacted in these speeches closely corresponds to the canonical organization of argumentative writing in higher education. This correspondence is not superficial or stylistic but cognitive and structural, reinforcing the pedagogical relevance of speech texts as authentic models of academic argumentation. When examined through the integrated lenses of the ACER framework and Toulmin's model of argumentation, presidential speeches reveal a coherent instructional logic that can be systematically translated into writing pedagogy, as follows:

At the level of essay initiation, the introductory phase of academic writing aligns with Knowledge Construction, the first stage of the ACER framework. In this phase, arguments are grounded through articulating key issues, contextual conditions, and overarching claims (Maru et al., 2025). In presidential speeches, this function is realized through the framing of national identity, delineation of socio-political challenges, or positioning of the nation within global contexts. Similarly, in academic essays, introductions are expected to establish a problem space and articulate a guiding claim (Saldıray & Doğanay, 2024). From a Toulminian perspective, this stage corresponds to the formulation of claims supported by initial grounds, providing an epistemic foundation for subsequent reasoning (Indarti, 2025). Instructionally, this alignment clarifies for students that effective introductions are not merely rhetorical openings but structured acts of knowledge construction that define the scope and direction of argumentation.

The body of the argumentative essay corresponds to the Evaluating Reasoning stage, within which claims are subjected to systematic scrutiny through evidence, logic, and comparative evaluation (Mujtaba et al., 2023). In Jokowi's speeches, this phase is marked by the presentation of empirical data, causal explanations, and conditional reasoning that justifies policy directions. Academic essays enact a similar function by employing analytic strategies such as cause-effect reasoning, contrastive analysis, and evaluation commentary (Hadi et al., 2021). Within Toulmin's framework, this stage is primarily realized through the warrant, which explains how and why evidence supports a claim. From an instructional standpoint, the integration of ACER and Toulmin at this stage is particularly valuable, as it helps students move beyond listing evidence to articulating the inferential logic that connects data to claims. Alshumaimeri and Alshememry, (2024) said that this evaluative phase represents the core of critical

thinking in writing, in which assertions are tested, refined, and justified rather than merely stated.

The concluding section of an essay parallels with the Decision Making stage of the ACER cycle. In presidential discourse, speeches often culminate in definitive policy statements, calls to action, or strategic commitments that synthesize prior reasoning into actionable outcomes. Likewise, Liu et al., (2024) confirm that effective academic conclusions are expected to consolidate arguments into reasoned judgments, recommendations or forward-looking implications. In Toulmin's terms, this stage can be understood as a claim-in-action, in which reasoning culminates in a position that is both logically grounded and purposeful. Cognitively, this phase reflects the creative dimension of higher-order thinking, in which analysis and evaluation are transformed into principled decision-making. Instructionally, this insight challenges students to view conclusions not as summaries alone, but as sites of intellectual responsibility where reasoning leads to justified stance taking.

Analytically, the progression from the introduction through the body to the conclusion reflects both the rhetorical logic of effective communication and the cognitive sequencing of critical thinking (Hu & Bi, 2025). The close alignment between presidential speech structures and academic essay architecture reveals a shared intellectual design, suggesting that political speeches can serve as accessible and cognitively rich scaffolds for teaching argumentative writing. Far from being limited to political messaging, formal state addresses exemplify how arguments are systematically constructed: claims are framed, evidence is evaluated through explicit warrants, and decisions are articulated as reasoned outcomes. By making these processes visible, speech texts allow instructors to bridge abstract argumentation theory and concrete textual practice.

Empirical research on writing pedagogy supports this instructional approach (Y. Li, 2026). Studies have shown that explicit engagement with structured argumentation models enhances students' ability to construct coherent claims and evidence, particularly when these models are grounded in authentic discourse, such as (Andrae, 2024; Apaolaza-Llorente et al., 2025; Pham et al., 2025). The integration of argumentative epistemologies into classroom practice has been found to strengthen critical reasoning, especially when real-world texts serve as exemplars of reasoning in action. Instructional design and teacher scaffolding further mediate these effects, as authentic speech texts make logical structures and inferential processes more transparent to the learners. Collaborative learning environments, supported by authentic examples, also encourage students to practice argumentative "moves" and refine their

reasoning through interactions (Hasan et al., 2025; Supiani et al., 2025).

Simultaneously, critical scholarship cautions against the uncritical transfer of political speech into writing instruction. Researches from (Andrews, 2015; Royer, 2024; Sánchez-Guerrero et al., 2024) indicated that second-language learners may continue to experience rhetorical and cultural challenges, even when exposed to well-structured models, underscoring the need for explicit scaffolding and contextual adaptation. Moreover, the applicability of political speech as an instructional model may vary across disciplines, particularly in STEM contexts, within which argumentation conventions differ. These limitations highlight that the pedagogical value of speech texts does not lie in direct imitation but in guided abstraction and contextualization.

In response, this study proposes the instructional integration of ACER and Toulmin's model through presidential speeches as a flexible, interdisciplinary framework for argumentative writing. By uniting cognitive processes (knowledge construction, evaluation, and decision making) with argumentative

structure (claims, grounds, and warrants), this approach equips students with both conceptual understanding and practical strategies for persuasive reasoning. Such integration simultaneously strengthens critical thinking and argumentative writing, positioning political discourse not as an endpoint of analysis but as a pedagogically productive resource for higher-education writing instruction across contexts.

4.3 The AT Model (ACER-Toulmin) as an Instructional Framework

Based on the convergence of the findings, this study formulates the AT Model (ACER-Toulmin) for argumentative writing instruction. Based on the convergence of findings, this study formulates the AT Model (ACER-Toulmin) as an instructional framework that integrates cognitive processes with argumentative structures. Unlike traditional writing models that emphasize form alone, the AT Model operationalizes reasoning stages within textual architecture, enabling students to internalize both how to think and write argumentatively (Boonnuat & Boonnuat, 2024).

Table 5: The AT Model for Argumentative Writing Pedagogy

Phase	Cognitive Process (ACER)	Argument Structure (Toulmin)	Student Writing Focus
1	Knowledge Construction	Claim + Grounds	Issue definition and context
2	Evaluating Reasoning	Warrant	Evidence analysis and justification
3	Decision Making	Claim-in-action	Conclusion and recommendation

The AT Model offers a comprehensive approach by integrating cognition with textual structure, which equips students with writing skills and critical thinking abilities. By focusing on how students process and organize their thoughts, the model guides them to internalize the principles of argumentative writing. This dual emphasis ensures that learners develop a deeper understanding of how to construct coherent and logical arguments while simultaneously mastering the mechanics of effective written communication (Maru et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the integration of the model facilitates a seamless transition from cognitive processes to written expression, enabling students to transform complex thoughts into coherent and organized writing. Wang and Newell, (2025) affirm that this approach empowers learners to become more autonomous writers, capable of critically analyzing content, evaluating evidence, and communicating their ideas effectively. Consequently, the AT Model fosters both intellectual rigor and writing proficiency, which are essential for academic success and beyond. This perspective is corroborated by numerous studies that have examined the impact of political discourse on teaching argumentative writing and critical thinking. Several studies have acknowledged these propositions. Critical Discourse

Analysis of Political Speeches: An analysis of Barack Obama's speeches highlights the use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to understand how language conveys ideology and power, aligning with the objective of teaching students to construct evidence-based arguments (Andrews, 2015; Davies & Barnett, 2015). This analysis can assist students in developing logical and contextually relevant arguments in their writing skills. Speaker-Audience Interaction: Another study on political speeches examines rhetorical techniques and interactions that can serve as models for teaching students to effectively structure logical arguments (Hasan et al., 2025; Sánchez-Guerrero et al., 2024; Supiani et al., 2025). This knowledge supports the creation of evidence-based, argumentative writing. Rhetorical Strategies in Political Rhetoric: Research on emotive language in political discourse has demonstrated how emotions, persuasion, and rhetoric can be employed to teach students effective argumentation in essays (LIU et al., 2026; Pohan et al., 2025). Diplomatic Discourse and Ideologies: A discourse analysis of China's official speeches provides insights into the use of thematic strategies to influence international perceptions, illustrating how political speeches can be utilized to teach evidence-based writing (Maru et al., 2025; Maru, et al., 2023; Maru, et

al., 2023). Emotion and Metaphor in Political Discourse: This research explores metaphor-rich, emotion-inducing strategies in political rhetoric, which are crucial for understanding the pragmatics of rhetoric and can serve as models for constructing written arguments (Evans et al., 2020). Yet, a few other scholars have argued otherwise. Fear Appeals in Political Rhetoric: A study of fear-inducing content in political speeches revealed variability in rhetorical methods, suggesting that while speeches can exemplify argumentative structure, their content may not always align with educational objectives (Ali, 2023; Evans et al., 2020; Yigitbilek, 2022). Cultural Specificity in Political Rhetoric: Research focusing on culturally specific elements of British political rhetoric indicates that political speeches may require adaptation when used in diverse educational settings (Hussain et al., 2021; Pohan et al., 2025). Thus, the novel aspect of this synthesis lies in the use of presidential speeches as authentic models to teach evidence-based, logical, and contextual argumentative writing. By aligning with higher education goals, this approach not only enhances students' critical thinking but also prepares them for active engagement in public discourse. This approach bridges practical examples with educational theory, fostering an environment in which students can critically engage with public rhetoric while honing their argumentative writing skills. It serves as a practical tool for transforming theoretical understanding into applied learning in the classroom.

4.3. Speech Texts as Authentic Instructional Frameworks for Critical Thinking and Argumentative Writing

In contemporary writing pedagogy, the incorporation of authentic texts is widely acknowledged as an effective strategy for enhancing student engagement, critical literacy, and advanced reasoning skills (Pham et al., 2025). These texts are esteemed not only for their real-world origins but also for their capacity to reflect the complexity, context, and significance of communication beyond the classroom setting. In this context, presidential speeches, particularly state addresses, constitute a form of genuine discourse that is particularly advantageous for cultivating critical thinking in argumentative writing instruction.

President Joko Widodo's speeches meet the criteria for authentic instructional texts in several analytically significant ways. First, they address pressing national and global issues, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, demographic shifts, resource management, and fiscal policy development. These topics are not only socially significant but also inherently argumentative, necessitating the presentation of claims, evaluation of

competing conditions, and justification of policy choices. Consequently, they provide a valuable context for instructing students on how to position arguments within real-world problem areas, rather than relying on abstract or artificial prompts (Y. Li, 2026).

Second, the speeches exhibit a systematic cognitive-rhetorical structure, consistently adhering to the Knowledge Construction-Evaluating Reasoning-Decision Making (KC-ER-DM) cycle identified in the findings. This structure is supported by recurring lexical markers that signal transitions from contextual framing to evaluative reasoning, and ultimately to prescriptive action (Li, 2024). Such structural clarity enables students to comprehend how arguments are not merely presented but are progressively developed through distinct stages of reasoning. Notably, this cycle closely resembles the structure of academic argumentative essays; introduction, body, and conclusion; thereby allowing speech texts to serve as transferable instructional models for academic writing tasks.

Third, the speeches resonate with students' real-life experiences as citizens, as the policies and decisions discussed directly impact their social, economic, and educational circumstances. This relevance to their context enhances educational value by boosting students' motivation to critically engage with the material (Ajani & Matiyenga, 2025). By analyzing and imitating these speeches, students not only refine their skills in crafting evidence-based arguments but also develop civic awareness and thoughtful participation in public discourses. Thus, teaching argumentative writing extends beyond mere skill development to encompass critical citizenship and ethical reasoning (Maru et al., 2025). Collectively, these attributes make presidential speeches effective instructional tools that blend topical relevance, structural precision and contextual immediacy. Their use in writing instruction demonstrates how political rhetoric can serve as both persuasive communication and a cognitive framework for fostering critical thinking skills (Pohan et al., 2025). By illustrating how knowledge is structured, evidence is assessed, and decisions are justified, speech texts provide tangible examples of evidence-based, logical, and socially relevant argumentation that aligns with higher education learning goals.

From a content analysis perspective, the study further reveals that ideological stance, lexical choices, and alignment between speaker and audience within speech texts offer valuable resources for teaching argumentative construction. Previous research has shown that strategic rhetoric, emotional appeals, practical reasoning, and metaphorical language enhance persuasive impact and argumentative

coherence in political speeches (Darmawansah et al., 2024; Kerman et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2024). When critically examined, these elements help students understand not only how arguments persuade, but also why certain rhetorical strategies are effective in specific contexts (Ajani & Matiyenga, 2025). This aligns with broader research on argumentation, which highlights the interplay between logical reasoning, linguistic expression, and audience engagement. Simultaneously, critical scholarship cautions against the uncritical use of political texts in educational contexts to avoid indoctrination. Research has highlighted that populist rhetoric may employ fear tactics or polarizing strategies and that political discourse is often culturally and ideologically specific (Hasan et al., 2025; Sánchez-Guerrero et al., 2024). These concerns underscore the need for critical mediation by educators. Presidential speeches should not be viewed as neutral models to be copied without question but as texts to be analyzed, assessed, and contextualized. This approach ensures that students learn both the strengths and limitations of political rhetoric as a model of argumentation.

This study advocates the utilization of presidential speeches as reflective and guided teaching frameworks, as opposed to rigid templates. By integrating authentic public discourse with structured educational models such as the AT Model (ACER-Toulmin), educators can promote deeper critical engagement, enhance students' capacity to reason with evidence, and develop transferable argumentative skills that are essential for academic success and civic participation. This approach is consistent with the broader objective of higher education, which is to produce graduates who are not only proficient writers but also critical thinkers capable of making reasoned judgments in complex social situations (Andrews, 2015; Davies & Barnett, 2015).

5. CONCLUSION

The present study elucidates that presidential speech texts represent a systematically organized and cognitively rich form of discourse, encapsulating a comprehensive cycle of critical thinking through Knowledge Construction, Evaluating Reasoning, and Decision Making. Through a qualitative content analysis of six annual state addresses delivered by President Joko Widodo from 2019 to 2024, the findings indicate that these speeches consistently adhere to a structured reasoning trajectory, closely paralleling the canonical organization of academic argumentative essays. This alignment is further substantiated by the convergence between the ACER

framework and Toulmin's model of argumentation, wherein claims, grounds, warrants, and claims-in-action are realized as integrated cognitive-rhetorical processes.

Building on this convergence, the study introduces the AT Model (ACER-Toulmin) as a pedagogically actionable framework for teaching argumentative writing in higher education, particularly within EFL contexts. The novelty of this study lies in reconceptualizing presidential speeches not merely as objects of rhetorical analysis but as authentic instructional frameworks that simultaneously scaffold critical thinking and argumentative competence. By grounding writing pedagogy in real-world discourse, the model bridges abstract argumentation theory and practical writing instruction, aligning with outcome-based higher education principles and contemporary demands for critical literacy.

Despite these contributions, several limitations must be acknowledged. The study focuses on a single political figure and national context, which may limit the generalizability of its findings. Additionally, while the analysis demonstrates strong theoretical and structural alignment, it does not empirically test the instructional effectiveness of the AT Model in classroom settings. The qualitative nature of the study also limits claims regarding learning outcomes or student performance gains. Future research should therefore extend this work by implementing the AT Model in diverse instructional contexts, including experimental or mixed-methods designs that assess its impact on students' argumentative writing quality and critical thinking development. Comparative studies across political systems, languages, and disciplinary domains particularly STEM fields would further refine the model's transferability. Such inquiries would strengthen the evidence base for integrating authentic public discourse into higher education writing pedagogy and advance the development of critically informed, context-sensitive instructional frameworks.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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