

## CONCEPTUALIZING SPEECH TEXTS AS A LEARNING MODEL TO FOSTER CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS IN ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING CLASSES AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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### Abstract

Critical thinking is essential in higher education, particularly argumentative writing. This study addresses the ongoing challenges students face in integrating critical thinking into academic writing, and examines presidential speeches as authentic learning models. The objectives are to (1) identify the elements of critical thinking in President Joko Widodo's annual state addresses (2019–2024), (2) elucidate how these speeches can serve as a foundation for students' argumentative writing, and (3) develop a critical thinking model suitable for higher education writing classes. Employing qualitative content analysis and grounded theory, six speeches were analyzed using the ACER framework: Knowledge Construction (KC), Evaluating Reasoning (ER), decision-making (DM), and Toulmin's model of Claim, Grounds, and Warrant. The findings indicate that all speeches consistently exhibit a KC–ER–DM sequence, reinforced by clear lexical markers, such as *adalah* (is), *namun* (however), and *harus* (must). This triadic structure closely aligns with the introduction, body, conclusion pattern of academic argumentative essays. Further synthesis reveals that KC corresponds to Toulmin's Claim/Grounds, ER to Warrant, and DM to Claim-in-action, culminating in the innovative AT Model (ACER–Toulmin) for teaching critical, well-structured argumentative writing to higher education students. This study reframes presidential speeches as authentic, cognitively rich pedagogical texts that demonstrate the full cycle of critical thinking. This provides concrete heuristics and transferable strategies for higher education writing instruction. Limitations include the exclusive focus on one leader and a fixed timeframe, which may affect broader generalization. Future research should test the AT Model with varied leaders, languages, and academic disciplines to enhance its applicability and deepen the understanding of text-based critical thinking pedagogy.

**Keywords:** critical thinking, presidential speech, ACER, Toulmin, argumentative writing

### Introduction

Critical thinking and writing skills are the ongoing demands of university graduates. Several studies have shown that critical thinking has become a focus in curricula to encourage students to use their minds for observation and reflection, especially in developing arguments for developing writing and higher-order thinking skills (Murtadho, 2021; Salih 2021; Sato 2022). Sudirman et al. (2021) found that integrating critical thinking into writing led to the use of real-life cases, idea development, defending opinions, explaining differences, arguing, and offering solutions with the support of data and sources. In other words, critical thinking greatly helps students organize their arguments and data in writing. It equips students with the ability to analyze complex problems, make informed decisions, and communicate effectively in various professional settings. This clarifies that developing critical thinking skills through writing not only improves academic performance, but also cultivates valuable lifelong skills that are highly sought in the modern workforce.

However, many students also struggle with argumentative writing, as discovered by (Salih 2021; Sato 2022; Yang 2022; Jabeen et al., 2025). This is related to the difficulty in developing a foundation for reasoning, content, and stylistic mismatches and the application of structures. Ideally, every student would master argumentative writing based on critical thinking; however, in reality, this cannot be accomplished by instructors without the right teaching methods, as claimed by (Zhang & Zhang, 2021). Thus, teachers are required to meet this challenge and are urged to find innovative teaching strategies that can facilitate the integration of critical thinking and argumentative writing practices. The use of speech text is a creative and innovative breakthrough.

The use of speech as a teaching tool offers a unique opportunity to expose students to complex ideas and diverse perspectives, while simultaneously enhancing their critical thinking skills. Speeches, delivered at pivotal moments in a nation's history, often address a wide range of national and global issues, providing rich material for analysis and debate. As supported by Burgos-Videla et al. (2025), speeches encapsulate the zeitgeists of their time, reflecting societal challenges, aspirations, and values, thus offering a multifaceted lens through which students can examine historical contexts and contemporary relevance. In the same rhythm, Maru et al. (2023) highlight how rhetorical strategies, particularly repetition, in political speeches serve not only to inform but also to shape public perception and inspire collective responses during critical moments. For instance, in Trump's speeches during the Covid-19 pandemic, repetition was employed to identify the crisis, affirm national strength, and promise concrete solutions, thereby framing the audience's understanding of both the challenges and opportunities.

By engaging with these texts, students can develop the ability to identify key arguments, evaluate evidence, and consider multiple viewpoints, all of which are essential components of critical thinking and effective argumentation. This process encourages students to move beyond surface-level understanding and delve into the nuances of political rhetoric, policy implications, and societal impacts (Maru et al., 2023; Khan, Falahat, et al., 2025). It challenges them to question assumptions, recognize biases, and appreciate the complexity of leadership in diverse democracies. Furthermore, the structured nature of these speeches can serve as a model for students to emulate their own writing, providing insights into the effective organization and presentation of ideas. By examining how concepts are introduced, developed, and supported in these high-stakes addresses, students can gain valuable insight into effective rhetorical strategies. They can observe how language is carefully crafted to inspire, persuade, and unite diverse audiences, and learn to construct more persuasive and impactful arguments in their own academic and professional work. Similarly, Maru et al. (2023) emphasized that speech texts are deliberately crafted through careful linguistic and rhetorical constructions, making them valuable resources for language learning. Speeches use precise and accessible language to effectively communicate ideas that resonate nationally and internationally while also embedding cultural values and social aspirations. This deliberate structuring provides students with models of persuasive communication that extend beyond vocabulary and grammar, allowing them to analyze how arguments are framed, emotions are engaged, and audiences are unified through language.

Moreover, analyzing speeches across different time periods allows students to trace the evolution of political discourse, societal values, and national priorities (Maru et al., 2023). This comparative approach fosters a deeper understanding of historical continuity and change, encouraging students to reflect on enduring principles and shifting paradigms that shape a nation's trajectory. Through critical engagement with these speeches, students not only enhance their analytical skills but also develop a more nuanced appreciation of the complexities inherent in

governance and public leadership; in other words, speech texts were selected based on their systematic construction in terms of structure, language, and content (Maru et al., 2023). Furthermore, in the context of this research, presidential inauguration speeches are used on the assumption that they are multi-disciplinary and multi-national in dimension, which can inspire critical thinking in argumentative writing, as supported by (Walter, 2024; Maru et al., 2023). Thus, this study aimed to reveal the extent to which the use of speech texts can assist in the development of students' critical thinking skills in argumentative writing instruction, including teaching formulations. The results of this study are expected to provide experiences and innovative approaches for critical thinking and argumentative writing instruction across multiple contexts.

Previous research on the integration of critical thinking into argumentative writing has shown that this practice develops abilities, such as analyzing, evaluating, and laying down a reasoning foundation. Furthermore, it has been found to encourage students to develop self-awareness and deeper reflection, and technically, contributes to problem-solving abilities. However, this is not easy. In addition, most existing studies also tend to treat critical thinking and argumentative writing as two separate domains of skill, rather than as integrated practices that can reinforce each other through persuasive discourse that is able to model reasoning patterns while stimulating reflection (Sato, 2022; Teng, 2024; Khan, Falahat, et al., 2025). In addition, bibliometric evidence shows that research using speech texts in EFL learning is still limited, especially in Indonesia, where research productivity on this topic is much lower than global trends (Maru et al., 2023). This condition confirms an important gap: the lack of empirical studies on how speech texts rich in rhetorical strategies and full of social value can be systematically utilized to support critical thinking skills in argumentative writing learning. At this point, the idea of using speech texts to integrate critical thinking in argumentative writing classes presents itself as a potential approach for bridging the aforementioned practical and theoretical gaps. Based on this problem statement, this study aims to find an innovative model for utilizing speech texts to develop students' critical thinking skills in argumentative writing. This promises novelty in the emergence of creative and engaging text-based learning alternatives, which are still very limited. From the above discussion, the research problem can be formulated as follows: 1. What are the elements of critical thinking in presidential texts? 2. How can presidential speech texts be used as a basis for students to write argumentatively using critical thinking elements? 3. What is the most suitable critical thinking model in speech texts for argumentative writing classes?

## **Research Design**

This study was qualitative in nature. Its purpose is to build a complex and holistic picture, analyze words, report findings, and conduct research in a natural setting (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This study relates to the use of speech text in the context of critical thinking instruction in argumentative writing. Data will be collected inductively from speech texts based on their inclusion of critical thinking skills aspects relevant to topics in argumentative essay writing. In other words, this study relied on speech text documents as the primary data source.

**Data Collection.** In qualitative research, the primary data mostly consist of words taken from speech texts, specifically the speeches of President Joko Widodo delivered annually before the House of Representatives (DPR) on August 16, 2019, to 2024. The selection of these speeches is based on several reasons: first, as formal speeches, the texts are carefully constructed in terms of both language and content; second, as presidential speeches, they discuss national and global

issues that are both interesting and challenging for writing activities; and third, they are readily available and accessible online, for instance, speeches adapted from (Burgos-Videla et al., 2025; Maru et al., 2023; Maru et al., 2023). All the data will be transcribed into analysis documents considering their relevance to elements of critical thinking, namely, constructing knowledge, evaluating reasoning, and decision making. The speech texts will be collected and selected based on aspects of critical thinking instruction, as formulated in ACER Knowledge Construction, Evaluating Reasoning, and Decision Making, and then coded according to their categories. Secondary data will consist of references deemed most relevant in supporting the analysis of speech texts to develop critical thinking skills in writing classes.

**Data Analysis.** To achieve the research objectives, this study used qualitative content and grounded theory analyses. Qualitative content analysis was applied to analyze the speech texts, especially to detect the presence and categorization of elements of critical thinking that students could use in their argumentative writing. At this stage, speech text data are categorized using categories generated inductively through close reading. Some researchers have broadly defined qualitative content analysis to include techniques wherein data are analyzed solely qualitatively, without counting or statistical techniques. This was done with the following procedures: summarizing means that the aim of the analysis is to reduce material in such a way that its essential content remains, thereby creating through abstraction an overall picture of the basic material; explication refers to the object of analysis providing additional material for individually ambiguous text components in order to improve understanding, explanation, and interpretation of the text; and structuring implies that the object of analysis is to filter certain aspects of the material, according to predetermined criteria, or to assess the material according to certain criteria in this case the ACER critical thinking framework of Knowledge Construction, Evaluating Reasoning, Decision Making, which is synchronized with the argumentative writing model proposed by Toulmin (Claim, Grounds/Data, and Warrant) to produce a conceptualization of argumentative writing instruction based on speech texts.

Data validity is maintained through triangulation techniques, which include theory triangulation, using ACER and Toulmin as two complementary analytical frameworks: source triangulation, which compares speeches from year to year to observe pattern consistency, and data triangulation, which utilizes categorization tables, signal words, context, and visual mapping, all organized systematically. This research has certain limitations, including the fact that the analysis focuses on the speeches of President Jokowi, which means that generalization to other speech texts must be conducted with caution. Likewise, the interpretation of signal words and warrants still involves researcher subjectivity, although it is supported by a theoretical framework. The data are limited to six annual speeches (2019–2024); therefore, the contextual representation reflects only a particular period and style.

### **Findings**

The qualitative content analysis conducted in this study revealed several key findings regarding the presidential speeches examined. This qualitative approach allows for a nuanced understanding of the content of speech without relying on numerical or statistical analysis. The following sections delve into specific findings, beginning with an exploration of the primary themes that emerged from the analysis.

#### **1. The Elements of Critical Thinking in the Presidential Speech text**

An analysis of presidential speeches reveals a sophisticated structure that incorporates multiple critical thinking elements. Furthermore, the consistent presence of all three ACER

elements namely Knowledge Construction (KC), Evaluative Reasoning (ER), and Decision Making (DM)—in each speech indicates a deliberate strategy to build a logical and persuasive argumentation.

### 1.1. The ACER Elements in the Speech Text

The categorization results showed that each speech consistently contained all the three elements. There is no speech that relies solely on description (KC) without evaluation (ER), or on decisions (DM) without a preceding knowledge framework. This shows that state speeches are designed not only for one-way communication, but also as a series of coherent arguments. To provide a clearer picture, Table 1 summarizes the number of speech lines that fall into each ACER element category.

**Table 1. Recapitulation of ACER Elements in Jokowi’s Speeches (2019–2024)**

Year	Knowledge Construction	Evaluating Reasoning	Decision Making	Total
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

Table 1 indicates that the number of critical elements is relatively balanced each year, namely, 3–3–3 for 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2024. The speech of 2023 is an exception, with double the amount (6–6–6). This consistency makes it easier for both lecturers and students to observe the same pattern of critical thinking elements each year, while the variation in 2023 enriches the examples available for writing practice. Further analysis shows that this distribution is not coincidental but the result of carefully designed political rhetoric. Each speech is opened with KC to set the problem framework, followed by ER to weigh facts and reasons, and closed with the DM as a political decision. Thus, the argumentative structure of speech naturally follows a comprehensive flow of critical thinking. In writing classes, this pattern can be taught to students as a standard essay framework: opening paragraphs (KC), body paragraphs (ER), and closing paragraphs (DM). In this way, Jokowi’s speeches can be understood not only as political texts but also as models of academic argumentative structures to develop students’ critical thinking skills.

### 1.2 The Position of Critical Thinking Elements in the Speech Structure

In addition to the total numbers, it is important to understand the position of each element within the speech structure. If frequency counts reveal the overall presence of critical thinking elements, then the position or location of each element is also a crucial dimension in terms of profiling its placement at the introduction, body, or conclusion that shapes the argumentative

trajectory and communicative force of the discourse. By analyzing where knowledge construction, evaluative reasoning, and decision-making statements are situated, this study uncovers how speech strategically guides the audience from the establishment of context, through logical assessment, toward decisive closure. Table 2 presents the distributions across the beginning, middle, and end.

**Table 2. Positions of ACER Elements (Aggregate 2019–2024)**

Element	Beginning	Mid	End
<b>Knowledge Construction</b>	7	9	5
<b>Evaluating Reasoning</b>	7	11	3
<b>Decision Making</b>	5	10	6

Table 2 shows that Knowledge Construction (KC) appears most frequently at the beginning (seven times) and in the middle (nine times). This appears to be related to the president’s tendency to frame the issue at the start of each speech before moving further. Students can imitate this pattern by opening their essays with a description of the problem, a definition of key concepts, or an introduction to the context. Evaluating Reasoning (ER) is dominant in the middle section, appearing eleven times. In this section, the president compares the ideal conditions with reality, presents economic or social data, and explains cause-and-effect logic. It is clear that the middle section of an essay is the best place for evidence-based arguments. Decision Making (DM) is more evenly spread between the middle (ten times) and the end (six times). The speech’s climax is typically closed with a decision or a collective call to action. This is relevant to essays, that prescribes the conclusion should ideally contain recommendations, conclusions, or a final decision, just as the president ends his speeches with "must," "will," or "continue." This positional pattern shows that Jokowi’s speeches mirror the universal rhetorical flow of beginning with information, following with analysis, and ending with a decision.

### 1.3 Lexical Markers

The next finding was the identification of marker words (lexical markers) that consistently signal each ACER element. An important dimension of the analysis concerns the identification of lexical marker-specific words or phrases that consistently signal the presence of each ACER element within presidential speeches. These markers are not merely stylistic choices but also serve as linguistic cues that guide audiences through stages of knowledge construction, evaluative reasoning, and decision-making. Their recurrence across multiple speeches suggests a deliberate rhetorical strategy that reinforces both the clarity and argumentative coherence. From a critical perspective, lexical markers operate as microstructures of discourse, encoding the logical and cognitive functions that underpin persuasive communication. For instance, words such as *adalah* or *menghadapi* signal definitional and contextual framing, corresponding to knowledge construction, whereas markers such as *namun* or *syaratnya* introduce logical contrast and conditional reasoning associated with evaluative judgment. Similarly, directive terms such as *harus* or *akan* signal decision-making move discourse from evaluation toward prescriptive closure. In rhetorical terms, these markers perform a scaffolding role, ensuring that arguments unfold in a structured and recognizable sequence. Pedagogically, the consistent presence of these markers provides students with accessible heuristics for structuring their own argumentative writing,

bridging the gap between abstract critical thinking frameworks and practical linguistic realization. Thus, the analysis of lexical markers demonstrates how presidential speeches communicate political intent and exemplify the mechanics of critical thinking in action.

**Table 3. Lexical Markers for ACER Elements in Jokowi’s Speeches**

Element	Core Marker	Example of Quotation + Line
Knowledge Construction	adalah (is, constitutes, facing, opportunity, capable)	“Indonesia (“Indonesia is a great home...” (2019, L19); “215 countries are facing the pandemic...” (2020, L25)
Evaluating Reasoning	namun (however, but, crisis, forces, condition)	“ “The worst economic crisis...” (2020, L27); “There’s only one condition—it must be
Decision Making	must, will, continue, require	“We must leave behind the old ways...” (2019, L32); “The government will continue...” (2024, L70)

As shown in Table 3, this lexical analysis reinforces the finding that the president’s speeches can be read as texts that teach critical thinking. Words such as *adalah* and *menghadapi* function as introductions to the problem framework (KC), whereas words such as *namun* or *syaratnya* serve as logical transition markers (ER). In the closing sections, words such as *harus* and *akan* indicate firm decisions (DM). This implies that knowledge of these markers can be used as a heuristic tool for writing. For example, if students want to write an introductory sentence, they can use a structure with *adalah*. If they want to state an evaluation or contrast, they can begin with *namun* or *tetapi*. Words such as *harus* or *akan* are appropriate for conclusions and decisions.

In summary, President Widodo’s speeches contain critical thinking elements that are complete, consistent, and systematic. The elements include Knowledge Construction (KC), which appears at the beginning and in the middle of speeches with markers such as *adalah*, *menghadapi*, *peluang*, *mampu*; Evaluating Reasoning (ER,) is dominant in the middle with markers such as *namun*, *krisis*, *memaksa*, *syaratnya*; and Decision Making (DM), which appears mainly in the middle and the end of the speech with markers such as *harus*, *akan*, *melanjutkan*, *mewajibkan*. This discovery indicates that the speech structure goes along with the conceptual model that teachers intend to apply in argumentative writing classes. The presence of lexical markers suggests the vitality of teachers’ role in assisting students in identifying and foreshadowing their aspects of critical thinking that they would like to highlight and detect as well. I

## **2. Presidential speeches serve as a basis for students writing argumentative essays incorporating elements of critical thinking**

### **2.1. Presidential Speeches as a Source for Argumentative Models**

President Joko Widodo's speeches, particularly his annual state addresses delivered between 2019 and 2024, operate not merely as instruments of political communication as speeches usually do, but also as structured texts that exemplify the potential of scaffolding critical thinking. A close reading of these speeches reveals a recurring triadic pattern of Knowledge Construction (KC), Evaluating Reasoning (ER), and decision-making (DM), each positioned to perform distinct rhetorical and cognitive functions. This structural aspect closely parallels the canonical framework of argumentative essays in higher education, which typically unfolds by establishing a definitional or contextual premise, moving into an analytic interrogation of evidence, and culminating in a reasoned summation or prescriptive recommendation (Y. Wang & Li, 2022; Rattanawiboonsom et al., 2025). The lines of the speeches appear as the construction of an argumentative model that is expected to be acquired in writing class. The analysis carried out on the lines suggests a variety of possible ways for generating ideas to write and develop as a reflection of the argumentative model on the basis of critical thinking frames. The selected speeches reveal this tendency. For instance, in the 2019 address, the President began with a clear act of knowledge construction, declaring that "*Indonesia adalah rumah besar kita bersama*" (Indonesia is our common home) (L19). This definitional claim frames the discourse and corresponds to the introductory thesis paragraph of an academic essay. A similar opening occurs in the 2020 speech, where Jokowi situates the nation within a global crisis by stating "*Sebanyak 215 negara...sedang menghadapi masa sulit*" (A total of 215 countries are facing difficult times) (L25), thus again foregrounding context as the foundation of argumentation.

As the speeches progress into their midsections, evaluative reasoning consistently emerges. For example, in 2020 Jokowi asserts that "*Krisis perekonomian dunia juga terparah dalam sejarah*" (The global economic crisis is also the worst in history) (L27), an evaluative judgment that introduces comparative and causal logic. Similarly, in the 2022 address, the statement "*Syaratnya satu, harus dihilirkan dan diindustrialisasikan di dalam negeri*" (The condition is one: it must be downstream and industrialized domestically) (L58) exemplifies reasoning that moves beyond description toward stipulate logical prerequisites. These lines mirror the analytic body paragraphs of academic essays, wherein evidence is interrogated, contrasted, and linked to causal or conditional reasoning.

Finally, decision-making statements consistently appear in the latter portions of speech, signaling closure through prescriptive directions. In 2019, Jokowi insists "*Tidak ada jalan lain...selain meninggalkan cara-cara lama*" (There is no other way... but to abandon old methods) (L32), a decisive policy stance that encapsulates the trajectory of the speech. In 2024, he declared "*Pemerintah akan melanjutkan program Makan Bergizi Gratis*" (the government will continue the Free Nutritious Meal program) (L70), offering a concrete policy conclusion. These perform the functional equivalence of conclusion paragraphs in argumentative essays, posing recommendations or resolutions to draw.

These patterns of KC–ER–DM emergence at the six speeches are reinforced by aggregation in the distributional pattern, which can be synthesized as follows: Knowledge Construction appears most frequently in the opening (7 instances) and mid-sections (9 instances), Evaluating Reasoning peaks in the middle sections (11 instances), while Decision Making is concentrated in the middle (10 instances) and at the conclusion (6 instances). This sequential distribution reflects a deliberate rhetorical design, moving from contextual framing (KC) to evaluative analysis (ER) and finally to prescriptive closure (DM). Such an alignment with the structure of argumentative writing

demonstrates that these speeches, with primarily political roots, also embody a transferable argumentative template for students to follow and practice.

Thus, the addresses can be interpreted as pedagogical models of scaffolding higher-order thinking, as they are built in the structure of the critical thinking frame. They illustrate how effective rhetorical lines engage in a full cycle of critical thinking: establishing a knowledge base, subjecting it to analytic scrutiny, and deriving decisions grounded in reason. For students in higher education, particularly within the domain of argumentative writing, these speeches offer authentic examples of how ideas can be organized (Benetos & Bétrancourt, 2020), substantiated (Zhang & Zhang, 2021), and resolved in ways that are directly analogous to the expectations of academic discourse (Maru et al., 2023; Khan, Qureshi, et al., 2025). This means that the composition of the speeches marks the possibility of employing its lines to encourage and inspire the creation of critical thinking skills translated into an argumentative model in higher education practices.

## 2.2. Distribution of ACER Elements in engagement with argumentative writing structure

The distribution of the ACER element positions shows that KC is dominant at the beginning, ER in the middle, and DM in the middle to the end of the speech. If this pattern is projected onto the academic essay framework, students' argumentative structures can be systematically constructed. This alignment indicates that the rhetorical design of the speeches implicitly models the logical progression of argumentation from contextual framing to analytic reasoning, and ultimately to prescriptive closure. Such sequencing is essential in academic writing as it provides readers with a clear orientation to the issue, a critical interrogation of the evidence, and a reasoned conclusion (Wang, 2022). The systematic placement of these elements also suggests that effective argumentation depends not only on what is said but also when it is said within the structure of discourse, as suggested by (González et al., 2021). In learning practice, Maru et al. (2023) claimed that this insight allows instructors to guide students in mapping their essays according to stages of critical thinking, thereby reducing common difficulties, such as premature conclusions or unsupported claims. Moreover, it illustrates that higher-order thinking is not random but carefully staged within the rhetorical architecture of a text. By internalizing this sequence, students can learn to reproduce argumentative writing that is logically coherent and rhetorically persuasive.

**Table 4. Distribution of ACER Elements in Argumentative Essay Structure**

Section of the Speech (President)	Dominant ACER Element	Functions in a Speech	Structural Implications for Student Essays
Beginning	Knowledge Construction	Establishing the problem framework, identity, vision	Opening paragraph: definition of the issue, background, initial thesis
Mid	Evaluating Reasoning	Analysis of facts, logic, contrastive elements,	Middle paragraph: data processing, evidence-based arguments
Mid-Late	Decision Making	Policy decisions, recommendations, calls to action	Closing paragraph: conclusion, recommendation, final claim

From Table 4, it can be seen that at the beginning of the speech, which corresponds to the opening paragraph of an essay, the president opens with sentences that build foundational knowledge. For

example, “Indonesia is our shared great house” (2019, L19). Such sentences can serve as models for opening paragraphs explaining the framework of the issue or establishing key definitions. Next, the middle of the speech, which is comparable to the body paragraphs of an essay, is filled with logical evaluations. For instance, “The global economic crisis is also the worst in history” (2020, L27) or “There’s only one requirement, it must be downstreamed and industrialized” (2022, L58). This structure can be applied to the body paragraphs of essays, which are expected to show the ability to process data, make comparisons, or emphasize cause-and-effect. Finally, the end of the speech, serving as the concluding paragraph of the essay, contains decisions: “There is no other way but to leave behind the old ways” (2019, L32), or “The government will continue the Free Nutritious Meals program” (2024, L70). In essence, the closing section typically contains the final claim or recommendation to conclude their argument (Latifi et al., 2021). Hence, the distribution of KC–ER–DM in speech can be transformed into a three-stage argumentative essay framework that is easy to teach and practice. At this point, teachers are facilitated to obtain the basis and example to engage students in critical thinking frames, and for students, they are assisted in gaining a model to begin and explore their ideas and analysis for writing purposes.

### 2.3. Lexical Markers as Writing Heuristics

The analysis also identifies distinctive lexical markers for each element. These words can serve as quick heuristics for students to mark the functions of their paragraphs (Crossley & McNamara, 2009). The repeated use of terms such as *adalah, menghadapi, peluang* for Knowledge Construction (KC); *namun, krisis, syaratnya* for Evaluating Reasoning (ER); and *harus, akan, melanjutkan, mewajibkan* for Decision Making (DM) demonstrates a patterned rhetorical strategy in Jokowi’s speeches. These lexical items act as linguistic signals that orient the reader or listener to the type of reasoning deployed, thereby reinforcing argument structural clarity (Sutrisno et al., 2024). In a pedagogical context, introducing students to these markers provides them with a tangible tool to differentiate between establishing a context, engaging in logical evaluation, and arriving at a decision or recommendation. Moreover, this approach highlights that effective argumentative writing does not rely solely on abstract reasoning, but also on concrete linguistic cues that guide the reader through stages of thought (Yang, 2022). By internalizing these markers, students can develop greater control over paragraph functions, avoid structural ambiguity, and enhance the rhetorical coherence of their essays. Thus, lexical markers serve a dual role as analytical indicators for discourse analysis and practical heuristics for scaffolding student writing in higher education.

**Table 5. Lexical Markers and Writing Implications**

Element	Core Marker	Functions in Speeches	Implication for Students’ Writing
Knowledge Construction	is, facing, opportunities, capable	Establishing the identity or context of the problem	Used in the opening sentence to define the issue or framework of the essay
Evaluating Reasoning	however, the crisis forces the conditions	Considering the factual, contrastive, and cause-and-effect conditions	Used to begin the middle of an argument, presenting evidence and reasons

Decision Making	must, will, continue, require	Stating a decision or recommendation	Used in concluding sentences, to emphasize the solution or final claim
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The above table indicates that the presence of these markers shows that presidential speech has explicit grammar of critical thinking. These words function as indicators of cognitive roles: some build knowledge (is), some evaluate it (however), and others make decisions (must). This list of markers can be used to signal the phases of both critical thinking and argumentative models in writing at higher education levels. Despite its contextual and likely flexible implementation in the classroom, learning practice may be formulated in the following stages when writing the opening sentence: Teachers can ask students to start with a structure containing is or facing. When moving to body paragraphs, students are directed to use words such as, however, or the requirement. In conclusion, the students were asked to use must or will. In this way, they learn to construct essays that have substance and a clear argumentative structure that meets the standards of higher education.

#### 2.4. Integration with the Toulmin Model

Further analysis of the speeches brought forward another significant finding: the ACER structure in speeches directly corresponds to Toulmin’s elements, namely Claim, Grounds, and Warrant (Sastrawati et al., 2021). This correspondence reveals that presidential speeches are structurally in line with one of the most widely recognized models of argumentation. Knowledge Construction (KC) frequently operates as the Claim or as part of the Grounds, since it introduces the thesis of speech and often embeds factual information that sustains it. Evaluating Reasoning (ER) typically fulfills the role of the warrant, bridging the gap between the data and the claim by providing logical connections, conditional statements, or evaluative judgments. Decision Making (DM), in turn, serves as the claim in action, supported either by explicit grounds or by implicit warrants that justify the decision as being reasonable and necessary. This structural alignment emphasizes the educational value of speech as authentic models of argument construction, offering students real-world illustrations of how claims must be substantiated and connected to evidence through reasoning. Furthermore, the integration of ACER and Toulmin provides a powerful dual framework for teaching critical writing, allowing students to see both the cognitive stages of argument (KC–ER–DM) and structural components (claim–grounds–warrant) working in tandem. As such, these speeches exemplify how they can be translated into effective academic writing practice, demonstrating that critical thinking skills, when systematically analyzed, share their foundation with scholarly modes of reasoning.

**Table 6. ACER and Toulmin Equivalents**

ACER Element	Toulmin Model	Example of a Speech Line
Knowledge Construction	Claim & Grounds/Data	“Indonesia is our shared great home” (2019, L19); “A total of 215 countries are facing the pandemic” (2020, L25)
Evaluating Reasoning	Warrant	“The only requirement is, it must be
Decision Making	Claim (action) & implicit Warrant	“The government will continue the Free Nutritious Meal program” (2024, L70); “The government requires mining companies” (2023, L135)

These equivalents show that presidential speech follows the structure of academic arguments. Claims appear as major visions or national identities (KC), which are represented by economic

figures or social conditions, whereas warrants appear as explicit or implicit logic (ER). The DM presents action claims that close the chain of arguments. As Sastrawati et al. (2021) mentioned, in writing classes, students can be trained to map each essay paragraph to the Toulmin model. This marks the connection between Toulmin’s theory and speech, as well as critical thinking skills. They share and display correspondence in their use of the text of speech. Further, such an alignment portrays the potential of generating text of speeches in the writing class to suggest that students practice both critical thinking and develop structural and analytical models of argumentation.

In brief, these findings have several direct implications for argumentative writing instruction, namely, a Natural Essay Outline that guides the understanding that speech can be taught as outline models: KC at the start, ER in the middle, and DM at the end. Students learn that argumentative structure is not by chance, but rather follows a consistent rhetorical design (Murtadho, 2021). There are also marker heuristics in the form of marker words, such as, however, must, which can be used as writing prompts. In this sense, teachers can create a list of “must-have” words for each essay section so that students can learn to construct sentences according to the paragraph function.

In short, it can be formulated that speeches have a consistent KC–ER–DM flow, align with the academic essay framework, are rich in lexical markers usable as writing heuristics, and naturally correspond to the Toulmin model, thereby facilitating and mirroring the transfer from text theory to writing practice, and deal with current issues, projecting students’ essays more relevant to their academic needs, or even to real life issues. Thus, presidential speech can be conceptualized. and functions as authentic pedagogical models for training college students’ critical thinking and argumentative writing skills.

### 3. A critical thinking model in speech texts for argumentative writing practice

#### 3.1. The Relationship between ACER and Toulmin in Speeches

The previous findings show that ACER elements consistently align with the Toulmin structure. This convergence suggests that the cognitive stages of critical thinking (knowledge construction, evaluating reasoning, and decision-making) are not isolated phenomena, but are systematically embedded within a recognized argumentative framework. In practice, Knowledge Construction (KC) corresponds to Toulmin’s claim and often overlaps with Grounds, since the president’s speeches introduce both a thesis and the factual context that sustains it. Evaluating Reasoning (ER) serves as a warrant that connects data to claims through logical conditions, contrasts, or evaluative judgments. Decision-making (DM) functions as an actionable claim, often supported by either explicit or implicit warrants that render the decision rational and persuasive. This constant mapping indicates that the rhetorical and structural logic of the speeches can be conceptualized and translated into a learning model in which students not only identify critical thinking stages, but also visualize their placement within Toulmin’s schema. Moreover, it demonstrates that high-level political rhetoric and academic argumentation share structural foundations, making speeches powerful resources for cultivating argumentative literacy (Murtadho, 2021; Maru et al., 2023). By adopting this integrated framework, teachers can guide students to construct essays that are both cognitively rigorous and rhetorically effective.

**Table 7. Relationship between ACER Elements and Toulmin in Speeches**

ACER Element	Toulmin Model	Main Indicator Words	Example of a Speech Line	Context
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Knowledge Construction	Claim & Grounds/Data	adalah	“Indonesia is our shared great home” (2019, L19); “215 countries are facing the pandemic” (2020, L25)	Claim of national identity, global pandemic data
Evaluating Reasoning	Warrant	namun	"The one condition is that it must be	Logical relationship: Natural resources → downstream processing → added value
Decision Making	Claim (action) & implicit Warrant	harus	“The government will continue the Free Nutritious Meals program” (2024, L70); “The government requires mining companies” (2023, L135)	Political decisions and policy instructions

The table above illustrates that the KC serves a dual function: as a claim of vision or thesis and as grounds as initial data or facts as indicated by lines, “Indonesia is our shared great home” is not just a normative claim but also has a historical-political basis, as Indonesia consists of diverse ethnicities and cultures. Next, Evaluating Reasoning (ER) plays a key role as a Warrant, the connecting logic. Sentences such as “The one requirement is that it must be downstreamed( 2022, L58) serve as warrants linking abundant natural resources (grounds) with the claim of people’s welfare (claim). Ultimately, the DM (Decision Making) delivers both an action claim and an implicit warrant. Statements like “The government will continue the FNM program” (2024, L70) are action claims but underpin an implicit warrant: since this program helps reduce stunting, it is logical to continue it. This relationship demonstrates that speech texts naturally contain critical thinking patterns that can be taught using an argumentative model.

### 3.2. The AT-Model Design (ACER–Toulmin) Conceptualization

The analysis of the speeches also reveals that a critical thinking instructional model for argumentative writing classes, hereafter conceptualized and referred to as the AT Model (ACER–Toulmin Model), can be detected. This model integrates the cognitive stages of ACER with Toulmin’s structural elements, thereby providing both process-oriented and form-oriented frameworks for teaching critical thinking in writing. In this design, Knowledge Construction (KC) anchors the opening of the essay as a claim supported by grounds, ensuring that students begin with a clear thesis contextualized by relevant facts. The Evaluating Reasoning (ER) stage corresponds to Warrant, guiding students to articulate logical connections, causal explanations,

and conditional reasoning that substantiate their claims. The decision-making (DM) stage, situated toward the conclusion, translates into a decisive claim in action, framed as a recommendation, solution, or stance that draws strength from the preceding reasoning. The AT-Model is therefore not a theoretical abstraction, but a pedagogically actionable template that mirrors the rhetorical architecture of authentic speech as a text functioning as a basis for learning and practicing models. By applying this model, teachers can scaffold student writing so that each stage of critical thinking is explicitly realized in the text. Furthermore, the AT-Model encourages learners to view argumentation not merely as a product of persuasion, but as a disciplined cycle of reasoning that culminates in justified decisions, as suggested by (Monte-Sano et al., 2014). This dual emphasis on cognition and structure situates the model as a practical innovation for argumentative writing instruction in higher education settings, as shown in the following table

**Table 8. AT-Model Design for Argumentative Writing Classes**

Phase	ACER Element	Toulmin Equivalent	Student Learning Activities	Marker Words
1	Knowledge Construction	Claim & Grounds	Write an opening paragraph with a definition of the issue and initial data	is, facing, opportunities, able
2	Evaluating Reasoning	Warrant	Write the middle paragraph with logical analysis, cause-effect, or contrasting.	however, crisis, the conditions
3	Decision Making	Claim (action) & Implicit warrant	Write a concluding paragraph containing a decision, recommendation, or final claim	must, will, continue, require

Table 8 shows that in the Knowledge Construction phase, students are asked to begin their essays with a claim or definition using stative words *adalah* (is); *merupakan*, (constitutes) or descriptive words *menghadapi*, (facing); *peluang*, (opportunity). In this way, they learn to construct a clear initial thesis, similar to political claims in presidential speeches. The Evaluating Reasoning phase requires middle paragraphs to use logical or contrasting words *namun*, (however); *syaratnya*, the (requirement/condition) ; *krisis*, (crisis). The goal was for students to practice weighing data, presenting evidence, and connecting cause and effect. Through this, they learn the function of typically implicit warrants. Finally, the decision-making phase consists of a closing paragraph that serves as the action claim: decision or recommendation. Modal words such as *harus* (must), *akan* (will), *mewajibkan* (require) are used so that students get used to articulating clear solutions or actions. With these three phases, the AT-Model unifies the cognitive dimension of ACER and the logical structure of Toulmin into the flow of argumentative essay writing.

Thus, it can be summarized that this model has several important implications for the teaching of argumentative writing. Guided Essay Structure: Students are no longer confused about how to begin, develop, and conclude their essays. They can follow a proven speech pattern: KC–ER–DM. Use of Marker Words as an Evaluation Rubric: Teachers can evaluate essays by checking if the introductory paragraph contains KC words (“is”), if the body paragraph uses ER words (“however”), and if the closing paragraph uses DM words (“must,” “will”). Strengthening Argumentation through Toulmin: By linking ACER with Toulmin, students learn that each claim must have data (grounds) and logical reasons (warrants). This enhances the quality of the academic argumentation. Contextualization with Current Issues: As presidential speeches address real issues

(pandemic, natural resources, demographic bonus, and state budget), students learn not only to write but also to think critically about national issues. Application in Authentic Assessment: The AT Model can be used to design argumentative essay assessment rubrics in class. This rubric assesses whether students are able to (a) construct a clear KC, (b) present evidence-based ER, and (c) formulate a convincing DM. In other words, this study found that presidential speeches contain a critical thinking pattern (KC–ER–DM) and reflect the Toulmin structure (Claim–Grounds–Warrant). From this pattern, the AT-Model (ACER–Toulmin Model) emerges, consisting of three writing phases: opening with the KC, middle with the ER, and closing with the DM. This model can be taught using marker words as heuristics, modeled on Toulmin’s argument structure, and evaluated with a rubric based on critical elements.

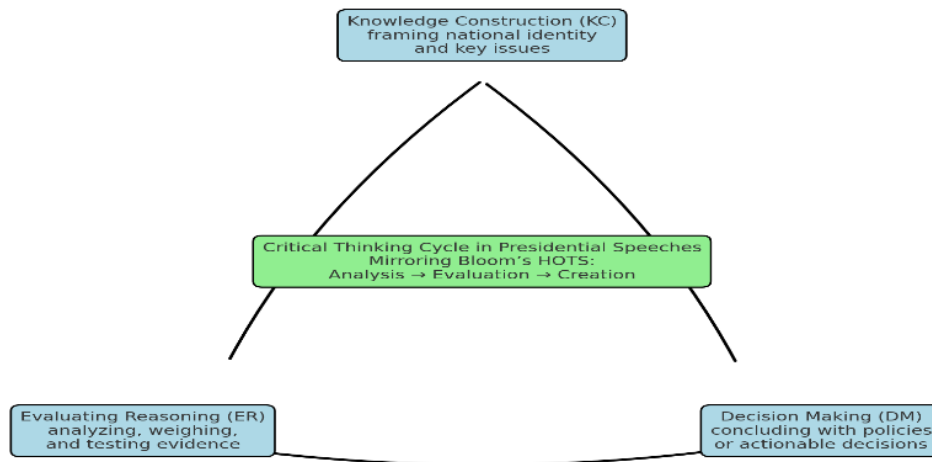
#### **4. Discussion**

The president’s speech is a rhetorical text that reflects the cycle of critical thinking, demonstrating higher-order thinking skills, and their relevance to argumentative writing structures in higher education. As a political text, it operates beyond the immediate function of persuasion by embodying the systematic sequence of constructing knowledge, evaluating reasoning, and arriving at decisions. This rhetorical sequencing mirrors the architecture of academic argumentation, within which an issue must first be framed, subjected to logical and evidentiary analysis, and finally resolved through reasoned conclusions. Situating presidential speeches within this framework makes it clear that such texts offer authentic exemplars of how higher-order cognitive processes are embedded in public communication. Irianti et al. (2024) argued that the presence of critical thinking elements in carefully staged positions across speech demonstrates that the crafting of rhetoric is not arbitrary but instead reflects a deliberate pedagogical logic that parallels academic writing conventions. Moreover, this synthesis defines the pedagogical potential of these speeches to serve as models for teaching argumentative writing, as they embody the principles that students are expected to master in higher education.

##### **4.1. The President’s Speech as a Rhetorical Text Reflecting the Critical Thinking Cycle**

President Joko Widodo’s state addresses from 2019 to 2024 are not merely ceremonial political documents, but rhetorical texts that embody a recurring cycle of critical thinking. Across the six speeches, a triadic structure consistently appears: Knowledge Construction (KC), Evaluating Reasoning (ER), and Decision Making (DM). This cycle mirrors the stages of Bloom’s higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) such as analysis, evaluation, and creation, and reveals that presidential rhetoric can be interpreted not only as persuasion but also as a model of advanced cognition. In this sense, speech functions as dual texts: persuasive communications in the political sphere and cognitive exemplars for academic learning, particularly in argumentative writing supported by ( Maru et al., 2023). They appear as cyclic structures in the following diagram.

### Critical Thinking Cycle in Presidential Speeches



Knowledge Construction is typically situated at the beginning of speeches, where the president defines contexts or frames national identity. For example, “*Indonesia adalah rumah besar kita bersama*” (2019, L19) and “*Sebanyak 215 negara menghadapi masa sulit*” (2020, L25) exemplify Bloom’s analytic stage, which involves classification, definition, and contextualization. The mid-sections shift toward Evaluating Reasoning, where evidence is interrogated through causal and conditional logic, as in “*Krisis perekonomian dunia terparah dalam sejarah*” (2020, L27) or “*Syaratnya satu, harus dihilirkan*” (2022, L58). These illustrate Bloom’s evaluative stage in which competing ideas are assessed and justified. The final phase, Decision Making, is consistently positioned toward the conclusion, where policy decisions are articulated. “*Tidak ada jalan lain selain meninggalkan cara-cara lama*” (2019, L32) or “*Pemerintah akan melanjutkan program Makan Bergizi Gratis*” (2024, L70). These decisions embody Bloom’s taxonomy’s creative stage by generating actionable solutions.

The integration of Bloom’s taxonomy reinforces the broader pedagogical potential of presidential speech. Previous studies affirm the value of Bloom’s framework in education: Furst (1981) emphasizes its comprehensiveness in structuring learning goals, and Granello (2000, 2001) demonstrates its utility in enhancing cognitive complexity and graduate-level writing by moving learners from comprehension toward evaluation and synthesis. Such findings support the claim that Bloom’s taxonomy is effective in mapping higher-order thinking and, by extension, in analyzing rhetorical discourse that embodies these processes. Other studies have also reinforced the significance of Bloom’s taxonomy in advancing higher-order thinking skills across educational contexts. Romadhon (2024) highlighted the revised taxonomy as a valuable tool for aligning instructional objectives with assessment practices, ensuring that learners progressively move from basic knowledge acquisition to critical evaluation and creative production. Similarly, Soe (2024) underscores its applicability in 21st-century learning environments, noting that taxonomy provides educators with a practical guide for fostering analytical and reflective abilities in students. In the field of EFL, Roell (2019) demonstrated how Bloom’s hierarchical framework supports the

development of language learning tasks that go beyond rote memorization, encouraging students to apply, analyze, and synthesize knowledge in meaningful communicative contexts.

Simultaneously, critical scholarship has highlighted Bloom's limitations. Gierl (1997) found that students' cognitive processes in mathematics assessments did not always align with Bloom's intended categories, raising concerns about their reliability in capturing authentic thought. More recently, Gonsalves (2024) argued that AI-assisted learning environments present cognitive demands that exceed Bloom's hierarchical structure. These contrasting perspectives highlight the need for caution: while Bloom's taxonomy is useful in identifying the cognitive sophistication of speeches, it may not fully account for the nuances of real-world or technologically mediated reasoning.

Several studies have continued to support Bloom's taxonomy as a reliable framework for guiding instructional design and evaluating learning outcomes. For instance, Montello et al. (2025) extended the taxonomy's applicability by integrating knowledge dimensions with cognitive processes, thereby offering a more nuanced model for contemporary pedagogy. Rothe and Snyder (2024) likewise emphasized its enduring relevance in fostering critical thinking, particularly in environments where structured scaffolding is essential for learners' progression. In EFL contexts, Chavda et al. (2024) demonstrated that taxonomy can be effectively adapted to language learning tasks, enabling educators to develop activities that systematically move students from comprehension to synthesis.

Conversely, other studies underscore the limitations of Bloom's taxonomy in addressing the complexity of modern learning. Jaakkola (2020) acknowledges the challenges in categorizing cognitive processes, noting overlaps that blur the hierarchical distinctions Bloom proposed. Lubbe and Mentz (2021) critique its linear structure, arguing that learning is often recursive and dynamic rather than strictly sequential. In digital learning contexts, Doronina et al. (2024) pointed out that Bloom's categories fail to fully capture skills such as digital creativity, collaboration, and information literacy, which are central to 21st-century competencies. Similarly, Özkan and Aşık's (2023) insights on AI-driven environments reinforce the concern that Bloom's taxonomy may be too rigid to account for the fluid, multimodal reasoning processes learners engage in today.

Thus, this study seems to confirm the extension of Bloom's taxonomy into the realm of political rhetoric, which constitutes something new in learning practice, particularly for integrating critical thinking and argumentative writing models. By demonstrating how KC-ER-DM aligns with analysis, evaluation, and creation, Jokowi's speeches illustrate a cycle of critical thinking in practice. This interdisciplinary synthesis bridges rhetoric and pedagogy, and the positioning state addresses both persuasive performance and instructional models. For higher education, the implication is clear: presidential speeches can serve as authentic texts for teaching argumentative writing, illustrating how ideas are framed, analyzed, and resolved through decisions and practicing their critical thinking. In this way, political discourse contributes to the cultivation of critical literacy and higher-order thinking in academic contexts, showing that the boundary between public communication and education is more porous than is traditionally assumed.

#### **4.2. The Critical Thinking Cycle from the Perspectives of ACER and Toulmin**

The analytical reflection on the combined lenses of the ACER framework and Toulmin's model of argumentation implies that President Widodo's speeches consistently enact a complete cycle of critical thinking, thereby positioning political rhetoric as both persuasive and pedagogically instructive. The speeches begin with Knowledge Construction, typically through the articulation of national identity or the framing of pressing issues, as in "*Indonesia is our shared*

*great home*” (2019, L19). In Toulmin’s terms, this phase corresponds to the articulation of claims and their supporting grounds, where the president introduces a thesis embedded within a contextual and factual foundation.

The middle sections of the speeches highlight Evaluating Reasoning, in which data and conditions are processed into logical judgments. Statements such as “*The global economic crisis is also at its worst*” (2020, L27) and “*There’s only one requirement, downstreaming is a must*” (2022, L58) exemplify the function of the Warrant, serving as the logical bridge that links evidence to the claim. This phase represents the evaluative dimension of critical thinking, where information is interrogated rather than merely reported, thus reflecting higher-order reasoning that is central to both ACER and Toulmin’s frameworks.

Finally, the speeches culminate in decision-making, where evaluative reasoning is translated into prescriptive action. For example, the declaration “*The government will continue the Free Nutritious Meals program*” (2024, L70) embodies a decisive Action Claim, supported implicitly by the preceding data and warrants that render the decision rational and justified. This closing stage illustrates the synthesis of argumentation: the context is established, evidence is weighed, and conclusions are drawn in the form of actionable policies.

Taken together, the analysis reveals how presidential speeches embody the full cycle of critical thinking, while simultaneously aligning with Toulmin’s structural logic. This integration highlights their value as authentic exemplars for teaching argumentative writing, offering students a concrete model of how reasoning moves systematically from claims and grounds through warrants to defensible conclusions.

The synthesis of the ACER and Toulmin frameworks in analyzing President Joko Widodo’s speeches also constructs how political discourse can be reframed as a model of critical thinking rather than being reduced to mere information dissemination. By drawing on Knowledge Construction, Evaluating Reasoning, and Decision Making (ACER) on Claim, Grounds, and Warrant (Toulmin), the speeches demonstrate that argumentation theory and discourse analysis together reveal the cognitive processes embedded in political communication. This integration shows that rhetorical texts, often considered persuasive or ceremonial, can function pedagogically by illustrating the full cycle of critical thinking in practice.

Scholarly evidence has supported this claim. For instance, Sengul (2019) demonstrated how critical discourse analysis (CDA) provides tools for uncovering deeper meanings and intent in political communication. This confirms the analytical value of combining discourse frameworks with structured models such as ACER–Toulmin to interpret speech as a complex enactment of reasoning. Similarly, Giri and Paily (2020) provided evidence that Toulmin’s Argument Pattern (TAP) enhances critical thinking in educational contexts by training students in structured argumentation. This finding parallels the function of presidential speech, which presents arguments in ways that implicitly model reasoning and evaluation. Žagar (2010) further supports this perspective by showing how incorporating topoi into CDA enriches the analytical depth of political texts, aligning directly with Toulmin’s focus on warrants and reinforcing how political discourse can scaffold evaluative reasoning for learners.

Further evidence comes from studies that integrate Toulmin’s model with broader discourse and analytical perspectives. Alameda (2023) and Amaliah (2024) show that TAP fosters dialogic argumentation in classrooms, enabling students not only to construct claims and warrants, but also to critically engage with counterarguments, thereby deepening evaluative reasoning.

Similarly, Budiana (2023) demonstrated that structured argumentation frameworks grounded in Toulmin's principles significantly enhance learners' critical reflection and collaborative reasoning in digital learning environments. In the field of political communication and education, Dharmawan et al. (2023) and Indarti (2025) illustrate how practical reasoning within the CDA can be systematically mapped through Toulmin's schema, underscoring the model's capacity to reveal normative underpinnings of persuasive discourse.

The connection between argumentation theory and political discourse is also advanced by Fairclough and Fairclough (2011) noted in (Bahtilla & Xu, 2021), who highlight the centrality of practical reasoning in political argumentation, particularly in contexts where normative judgments and policy decisions must be justified. Their approach underscores the value of integrating the CDA with Toulmin's model to examine how arguments lead to collective decisions. Likewise, Fairclough explicitly applies argumentation theory within policy discourse, further noted in Dwikoranto (2022), demonstrating that political communication cannot be understood fully without attending to its structured argumentative logic. Collectively, these studies reinforce the claim that the ACER–Toulmin integration is well grounded in both discourse analysis and argumentation scholarship and that it has practical utility for revealing how speeches embody critical reasoning.

At the same time, contrasting studies highlight the limitations of this approach. Kuhn (2016), for instance, emphasized broader thematic and descriptive approaches in discourse studies without employing the structured rigor of Toulmin or ACER. While valuable in capturing contextual nuances, such approaches risk overlooking the normative and logical structures persuasive political texts. Similarly, Mullet (2018) critiques discourse analysis for often neglecting normative evaluation, resulting in accounts that describe rhetorical performance, but fail to engage critically with its reasoning. These perspectives highlight the variability in frameworks used to study discourse and caution against overreliance on a single model.

Within this reflective view, this inquiry comes up with a newly defined synthesis explicitly integrating ACER and Toulmin to interpret presidential speeches as exemplars of the critical thinking process. By emphasizing argument construction, evaluation, and decision making, the analysis demonstrates how political texts embody higher-order reasoning in ways that can be practiced for learning purposes. Unlike prior research, which treats political discourse primarily as an object of critique, description, and persuasion, this approach positions it as a cognitive and educational resource. In doing so, this study advances an interdisciplinary model that bridges rhetoric and pedagogy, demonstrating that political communication texts can serve as a practical method for cultivating critical thinking skills in higher education. Such a synthesis enriches rhetorical understanding while simultaneously providing innovative pathways for teaching argumentative writing through authentic real-world discourse.

#### **4.3. Relevance to Argumentative Writing Structure**

The cycle of critical thinking identified in President Widodo's speeches parallels with striking precision the canonical structure of argumentative essays in higher education, thereby reinforcing their pedagogical value as authentic models of academic reasoning. The Introduction corresponds to the stage of Knowledge Construction, where issues are defined and articulated. In much the same way that the president begins his speeches with claims of identity or problem frameworks, such as framing Indonesia as a unified national entity or situating the nation within global crises, the introductory section of an essay establishes context and sets forth a guiding argument.

The Body of the essay aligns with Evaluating Reasoning, where claims are interrogated through evidence, logical connections, and comparative analysis. Just as Jokowi's speeches present economic data, highlight global crises, or stipulate the necessary conditions for reform, academic essays employ analytic strategies cause-and-effect reasoning, contrastive logic, or evaluative commentary—to substantiate claims with depth and coherence. This stage embodies the evaluative dimension of critical thinking in which assertions are justified and tested rather than merely asserted.

Finally, the Conclusion parallels the decision-making stage, where arguments are synthesized into recommendations or prescriptive claims. Much like the president concludes his addresses with definitive policy announcements, the closing section of an essay consolidates reasoning into a final position, demonstrating both logical closure and a forward-looking orientation. This stage reflects the creation dimension of higher-order thinking, in which analysis and evaluation culminate in actionable outcomes.

Analytically, the progression from introduction to body to conclusion reflects not only the rhetorical logic of effective communication, but also the cognitive sequencing of critical thinking. The close alignment between political speeches and essay structures highlights their shared intellectual architecture, suggesting that presidential addresses can serve as accessible and authentic models to scaffold argumentative writing in higher education. Presidential speeches, particularly those delivered in formal state contexts, provide more than political messaging. They also offer structured models of argumentation that can be repurposed for educational use. By analyzing how claims are introduced, data are presented, logic is arranged, and decisions are articulated, educators can employ such texts as authentic frameworks for teaching argumentative essay writing. This approach moves beyond abstract instruction by grounding student learning in real-world examples of argument constructions and rhetorical practices.

Recent studies have continued to underscore the pedagogical significance of integrating structured frameworks and authentic discourse into writing instruction. Budiana (2023) revealed that when students are introduced to disciplinary argumentation models, their ability to construct coherent claims and evidence improves substantially, reinforcing the role of structured frameworks in developing argumentative competence. More recently, Pohan et al. (2025) argued that embedding argumentative epistemologies in classroom practice enhances students' critical reasoning, particularly when authentic texts, such as political speeches, are used as exemplars. Sato (2022) further emphasized that instructional design and teacher scaffolding strongly influence argumentative writing outcomes, suggesting that real-world speech provides models that make logical structures and reasoning processes explicit. Similarly, the collaborative approaches highlighted by Yang (2022) demonstrate that peer interaction and authentic examples encourage students to practice argumentative "moves" and refine their individual writing. In line with this, Zhang and Zhang (2021) affirmed that explicit teaching of argument structures significantly boosts students' ability to generate logically consistent arguments, echoing the benefits of using speeches as instructional texts.

On the other side, few studies caution against over-relying on speech as a pedagogical tool. Wang and Li (2022) showed that second-language learners still face persistent rhetorical and cultural challenges in producing effective arguments, even when exposed to structured models, indicating that supplementary scaffolding is necessary. Likewise, it is acknowledged that applying argumentation frameworks in STEM-related writing tasks often results in transfer difficulties, highlighting that, while presidential speeches exemplify persuasive reasoning, their instructional

applicability may be limited outside the context of traditional humanities. These findings suggest that while speech offers valuable resources for modeling argumentative reasoning, its effectiveness depends on thoughtful adaptation across disciplines and learner needs.

Hence, this study proposes the use of presidential speeches as an instructional framework in terms of their interdisciplinary potential. They bridge rhetoric and learning purposes by offering authentic, structured, and context-rich argumentation models. This method equips students not only with theoretical understanding but also with concrete illustrations of persuasive reasoning in practice; integration enhances both critical thinking and argumentative writing, positioning political discourse as a valuable pedagogical resource in higher education.

#### **4.4. The Speech as a Model of Authentic Learning**

In the field of writing practice, the integration of authentic texts is widely recognized as a crucial strategy for fostering students' engagement and critical literacy (Sutrisno et al., 2024). Authentic texts are valued because they mirror the complexities of real-world communication, thereby bridging the gap between classroom instruction and societal discourse (Maru et al., 2023). President Widodo's speeches meet this pedagogical criterion in several significant ways. First, they are topical, addressing issues of immediate national and global relevance such as the COVID-19 pandemic, demographic bonus, downstreaming of natural resources, and formulation of the state budget (APBN). These themes are not only socially consequential, but also inherently argumentative, providing fertile ground for teaching students how to situate claims within meaningful contexts.

Second, the speeches are rich in structure, consistently exhibiting the KC-ER-DM cycle—knowledge construction, evaluating reasoning, and decision-making reinforced by distinctive lexical markers. This structural clarity ensures that students can identify and internalize the rhetorical progression from framing an issue to weighing evidence and logic to arrive at decisions or recommendations. This cycle directly parallels the architecture of argumentative essays, thereby offering a transferable model for academic writing.

Third, the texts are contextual, resonating with students lived experiences as citizens, who are directly impacted by the issues discussed. This relevance enhances the pedagogical value of speech, as students are more likely to engage critically with content that intersects with their social and political realities. By analyzing and emulating these speeches, students not only practice constructing evidence-based arguments, but also cultivating civic awareness and critical engagement with national discourse.

Such qualities establish presidential speech as authentic pedagogical resources that combine topical urgency, structural richness, and contextual relevance (Maru et al., 2023). Their use in writing instruction demonstrates how political rhetoric can function as both a persuasive performance and cognitive scaffold, equipping students with the skills necessary for evidence-based, logical, and socially engaged argumentative writing. The use of presidential speeches as models for teaching students to write evidence-based, logical, and contextual argumentative essays offers a compelling synthesis that closely aligns with the broader objectives of higher education. These texts, situated at the intersection of rhetoric and public discourse, illustrate how arguments are constructed, supported, and communicated in real-world context. By integrating them into instructional practice, teachers provide students with theoretical knowledge and authentic exemplars of how evidence, logic, and context shape persuasive communication.

In addition, the critical discourse analysis of speech demonstrates how ideological positioning and lexical framing provide students with models for constructing evidence-based

arguments. Similarly, Stofiana et al. (2025) highlighted the role of speaker–audience dynamics and strategic rhetoric in shaping persuasive communication, underscoring their utility as templates for developing coherent argumentative structures. Macagno and Walton’s framework has been revisited in recent studies (Farooqi et al., 2024), showing how emotive appeals and pragmatic reasoning enhance argumentative qualities. More recently, Bahtilla and Xu (2021) extend this line of inquiry by analyzing China–US diplomatic exchanges, revealing how discursive strategies shape international perception, which can inform teaching argumentative writing in globalized contexts. Likewise, Wajdi and Asrumi (2024) emphasized the pragmatic use of metaphor and affective discourse, illustrating how figurative language and emotional resonance can enrich students’ rhetorical repertoire.

Some critical perspectives argued toward the uncritical adoption of political texts in education. For instance, Indarti (2025) documented how populist rhetoric often relies on fear appeals and polarizing discourse, raising concerns about the ethical suitability of such texts for classroom use. Similarly, Bahtilla and Xu (2021) stressed the cultural specificity and contextual embeddedness of political rhetoric, warning that its direct application may risk misalignment with learners’ sociocultural backgrounds. These critiques underscore the importance of employing political speeches as teaching materials selectively and reflectively, ensuring that students learn both the affordances and limitations of political rhetoric as a model for argumentation.

Such insights led to the propositions offered by this study, such as the framing of presidential speeches as authentic and pedagogically valuable resources for developing argumentative writing in higher education. By bridging real-world discourse with instructional theory, this method facilitates critical engagement, enhances students’ capacity for evidence-based reasoning, and fosters transferable skills essential for both academic and civic participation.

In summary, it can be concluded that the president’s speech is rhetorical text that reflects the cycle of critical thinking. This text shows how knowledge is constructed, evidence is weighed, and decisions are made, thus reflecting higher-order thinking skills. The ACER–Toulmin analysis revealed a complete cycle of critical thinking. KC serves as the Claim/Grounds, ER as the Warrant, and DM as the Action Claim. This confirms that the speech contains a comprehensive argumentative structure. Speech can be used as a model for authentic learning in writing instruction. Students can learn to write argumentative essays with a clear structure (introduction–body–conclusion), while simultaneously practicing critical thinking skills relevant to the demands of higher education.

## **Conclusion**

The study analytically achieves its research objectives by illustrating that President Joko Widodo’s six annual state addresses (2019–2024) consistently embody the critical thinking cycle of Knowledge Construction (KC), Evaluating Reasoning (ER), and decision-making (DM). These components are not only evident but are also strategically ordered: KC at the outset, ER in the middle, and DM towards the conclusion, thereby forming a comprehensive argumentative structure analogous to the logic of academic essays. The integration of the ACER framework with Toulmin’s model (Claim–Grounds–Warrant) further substantiates this finding: KC aligns with claim and grounds, ER with warrant, and DM with claim-in-action. By underscoring this structural and cognitive convergence, this study affirms that presidential speech texts can function as authentic pedagogical tools for cultivating critical thinking in argumentative writing. This study introduces an innovative

synthesis by reconceptualizing high-level political rhetoric as a direct instructional model, culminating in the development of the AT Model (ACER–Toulmin). This model not only exemplifies the seamless integration of critical thinking and argumentative writing, but also provides marker-based heuristics that educators can readily adapt to higher education writing courses. Nonetheless, certain limitations persist in this study. The analysis is confined to a single national leader and a fixed six-year corpus, which may limit its generalizability across diverse cultures, genders, and periods. Furthermore, although multiple triangulations have been applied, the interpretation of lexical markers still involves the researcher’s subjectivity. Future studies should expand to other leaders, languages, and rhetorical contexts, and test the AT Model in diverse classrooms and disciplines. Such a broader application would validate and refine this study’s pioneering contributions to critical thinking pedagogy and discourse-based writing instruction.

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