# Stylistic Devices and Meaning Construction in Academic Writing

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## 1. Abstract

This study aims to investigate the role of stylistic devices in shaping meanings within academic discourse. It seeks to understand how these devices project writers' stances toward their content and affect reader interpretation. Grounded in a theoretical framework that examines the interplay between a writer's stance, reader interpretation, and intertextual influences, the research analyzes the use of various linguistic devices. It systematically reviews existing studies that focus on stance-markers concerning lexical and syntactic choices, aiming to provide a comprehensive comparison of stylistic devices across academic texts. The findings indicate that while prior research has explored individual categories of stance-markers, including modality and hedging, there remains a gap in comparative analyses of stylistic choices. The study highlights how stylistic devices intertwine with lexical and syntactic elements to create nuanced messages that engage readers. This discussion explores the implications of these findings for academic writing. By illustrating the significance of stylistic devices in conveying attitude and meaning, it argues for a more integrated approach to studying these elements. The research reveals that understanding the combined effects of different stylistic devices is essential for uncovering the complexities of writer-reader interactions in academic contexts. In conclusion, the study emphasizes the necessity of addressing the limitations in current literature regarding stylistic device analyses. Future research should aim to broaden the scope by evaluating the effects of various stylistic choices holistically, thereby enhancing our comprehension of their critical role in academic discourse.

Keywords: Stylistic, Meaning, Construction, lexical, syntactic

**الادوات الاسلوبية و بناء المعنى في الكتابة الاكاديمية**

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تدريسي في كلية الامام الكاظم (ع) ذي قار

**المستخلص**

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى بحث دور الأدوات الاسلوبية في تشكيل المعاني ضمن الخطاب الأكاديمي. وتسعى إلى فهم كيفية انعكاس هذه الادوات على مواقف الكُتّاب تجاه محتواهم وتأثيرها على تفسير القارئ. وانطلاقاً من إطار نظري يدرس التفاعل بين موقف الكاتب وتفسير القارئ والتأثيرات النصية المتبادلة، يحلل البحث استخدام مختلف الأساليب اللغوية. كما يستعرض بشكل منهجي الدراسات السابقة التي تركز على مؤشرات الموقف المتعلقة بالاختيارات المعجمية والنحوية، بهدف تقديم مقارنة شاملة للأدوات الاسلوبية في النصوص

الأكاديمية. وتشير النتائج إلى أنه على الرغم من أن الأبحاث السابقة قد استكشفت فئات فردية من مؤشرات الموقف، بما في ذلك الأسلوب والتحوط، إلا أنه لا تزال هناك فجوة في التحليلات المقارنة للاختيارات البلاغية. وتُبرز الدراسة كيف تتداخل الأدوات الاسلوبية مع العناصر المعجمية والنحوية لخلق رسائل دقيقة تجذب القراء. ويناقش هذا البحث آثار هذه النتائج على الكتابة الأكاديمية. ومن خلال توضيح أهمية الأدوات الاسلوبية في نقل الموقف والمعنى، يدعو البحث إلى اتباع نهج أكثر تكاملاً لدراسة هذه العناصر. يكشف البحث أن فهم التأثيرات المُجتمعة لمختلف الأدوات الاسلوبية أمرٌ أساسيٌ لكشف تعقيدات التفاعل بين الكاتب والقارئ في السياقات الأكاديمية. وختامًا، تُؤكّد الدراسة على ضرورة معالجة أوجه القصور في الدراسات الحالية المُتعلّقة بتحليل الأدوات الاسلوبية. ينبغي أن تهدف الأبحاث المستقبلية إلى توسيع نطاق البحث من خلال تقييم تأثيرات الخيارات الاسلوبية المختلفة بشكلٍ شامل، ما يُعزّز فهمنا لدورها المحوري في الخطاب الأكاديمي.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** بلاغية، معنى، بناء، معجمية، نحوية

## 2. Introduction

One of the areas that has not been addressed fully is the contribution of the stylistic devices in construction of meaning in scholarly texts. Stylistic devices can be described as a set of lexical, syntactic and rhetorical devices that manipulate the original meaning of words and sentence pattern to enable the authors to convey point of view, emotion, indicate textual relations, achieve cohesion, mark intertextuality or indicate stance. (Alghazo et al., 2021). However, the phenomenon, role, or description of such devices is not clearly defined in academic literature. The proposed research endeavors to examine the impact of stylistic devices in creating meaning of academic writing by answering the following research questions: (1) What are the stylistic devices of scholarly articles written in different fields in various languages? (2) What impacts do these devices have on meaning-construction and meaning-interpretation? The linguistic environment is becoming more characterized by the multidimensional social and economic implications and this pushes scholars to be more competent in their capacity to convey their ideas and discoveries using convincing texts that are sufficient to represent and spread their concepts. As a result, students in the higher learning institutions are under mounting pressure to acquire writing skills that are in tandem with expectations of the international academic circles. The study follows a sound mixed-methodology and pays careful attention to articles published in English and written in high-impact journals that are within the scope of business, biology and linguistics. This extensive work is made complete by involving parallel Spanish-language articles obtained in respectable journals in the same fields of study. There are 16 articles that are chosen carefully with eight in English and eight in Spanish being taken through a stringent qualitative and quantitative analysis. In the process, the different stylistic devices are identified and analyzed systematically and their detailed descriptions are made to clarify their possible impact on meaning

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construction and interpretation in the reasoning, result, and analysis moves that can be observed in the articles. This comprehensive research is a valuable contribution to the theoretical investigations of academic writing by tracing a significant aspect of politically committed academic writing (Purnawan et al.2024). The outcomes imply that the use of stylistic devices is not the same according to a set of disciplinary requirements. This fluidity allows scholars to engage with academic discourse in terms of great freedoms and it gives a possibility of improving scholarly communication and contribute to the general academic discourse in the case of dissimilar fields of study (Aku, 2023).

## 3. Literature Review

The role of stylistic devices in the meaning construction of academic writing remains to be understood incompletely. Although much attention has been paid to the study of corpus that examines the characteristics of academic discourse, very little is known regarding the specific roles of linguistic sources that can be viewed as stylistic in order to create scholarly speech. There is an increasing awareness that such resources possess colossal meaning-making potentials, and not much is known with regard to how they interact with more traditionalized linguistic resources to make meaning. The lack of a single model on how these roles can explain each other has merely served to obscure their importance in the academic discourse. An improved comprehension of how stylistic devices play a role and impact meaning is important in improving the understanding of academic discourse as it is and developing pedagogical options that are in line with the growing need among students to have to compose academic texts (Alghazo et al., 2021).

Stylistic devices are the strategic and selective uses of linguistic resources, which supersedes exploitation of language in a particular genre, a particular mode of communication, or a particular discourse. Discussing these devices, one can single out three fundamental types of them lexical, syntactic and rhetorical. The functions of such resources in the context of academic discourse have become the subject of extensive research, which has allowed identifying and elaborating a number of interpretive frameworks. These frameworks attempt to chart out the complex relation between utilization of different linguistic resources and the meanings which are constructed, communicated, or implied by using the different resources. A particularly powerful paradigm explores the evaluation positions in the choice of particular devices that indicate evaluative positions on various voiced positions and viewpoints. The choice is meaningful because it tends to expose the stances that are evidently taken by these voiced views, which are distinctly different to the real self of the writer or speaker (Kuriata and Kasatkina2022).

The second framework is based on systemic functional linguistics, and which critically examines the manner in which the development of the text and the critical decisions made in various turntables systematically determine the sequential interpretation. This process, in its turn, affects the kind of meaning that eventually results and develops in the text. Lastly, there is a third framework which takes into consideration the complicated concepts of the notion of ostensive and interpretive cues. It draws attention to the many ways how different forms of citation may result in signaling of different forms of inferred knowledge and its sources in different texts. The analysis of such kind gives understanding over the process of sharing the knowledge and the meaning of citation style in perceiving the interaction of thoughts. Furthermore, a lot of attention has been given to the role of cohesive devices and their importance in improving the general wholeness and smoothness of academic texts. These devices assist in connecting the ideas, creating the relationships between the various parts of the text, and adding to the overall readability and persuasiveness of the text, thus making it more informative and engaging to the reader (Mustafayeva2025).

### 3.1. The Principles of Stylistic Devices in Academic Discourse

Stylistic devices are very essential in academic discourse and they are also necessary in effective communication. The lexical, syntactic, and rhetorical tools play an important role in building and expressing the overall meaning and understanding, but the mechanisms by which these tools work and the impacts of the tools on the interpretation processes are not well understood in most scenarios. The three key frames that become apparent to explain the role of these devices in the multifaceted process of meaning-making are stance, appraisal, and intertextuality. Each of the frameworks is divergent in its assumptions made about the nature of scholarly communication with regard to what is the intricate interaction that exists between the authors and the readers in the academic texts. Stance underlines that there is a dynamic type of relation between the text and its interpretation; appraisal, to the contrary demonstrates that the main role on the creation of various stances that can be adopted by the readers belongs to the text. On the other hand intertextuality places a lot of emphasis on the role of previous texts as critical determinants of the meaning-making processes that will be followed later (Yousef and Shahid2025).

These stylistic devices have a profound influence on the meaning behind the academic discourse on the intertextuality and various rhetorical maneuvers. Arguation does not only depend on but also proactively rearrange previous texts to generate new meanings, however, not looking at the source content properly does not necessarily ensure that readers will be able to interpret and grasp them. Such

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rhetorical devices, as effective introductions, smooth transitions, and definite conclusion, contribute greatly to a further development of the overall argument under consideration. Meanwhile, cohesion and coherence are used to create a necessary text-internal relationship that supports the argument. The value of organizing the argumentation through the text that comes before and explaining the main line of the argument clearly is critical in order to successfully make the reader interpret it. This attention is in line with the definition of intertextuality and most significantly supports a significant gap in the current literature concerning the subject. Historically, producers have needed to collaborate with customers to gather feedback regarding the company's services. In the past, manufacturers have had to consult customers to receive feedback about the services of the company (Kuriata and Kasatkina-Kubyshkina, 2022).

## 3.2. Construction and Interpretive Frames of Meaning

Interpretation, a core concept of many artistic disciplines, particularly those within the visual arts has long been recognized as an important concept in the domains of the social sciences and humanities. In such disciplines, interpretation does not just help one to comprehend the practices and activities of other individuals; it takes a central role in the production of knowledge itself. Just like the complex approaches in the way of working in artistic fields, different academic practices have their own distinctive approaches to the interpretation that shapes the way of how texts are put together, the lines that are drawn that clearly define what is part of a piece of writing, the types of stakes that are invoked, and the ways in which individuals may locate themselves within the text. Moreover, these frameworks inform the way an individual may be supposed to approach and read the presented material (Biggs, 2008).

On the contrary, natural sciences hold a different position, according to which the intent of the author is usually interpreted to bear a relative importance to the total meaning-making process. In this traditional paradigm, communication is usually presented as a clear and clearcut issue where the exchange of information prevails over the subjective interpretation and personal understanding. This disruption underscores the many differences in the creation and perception of knowledge in different fields, which is the dominance of context and perspective in interpreting artistic and academic texts (Alghazo et al., 2021).

## 3.3. Rhetorical moves, Coherence and Cohesion

In order to provide cohesion and coherence in academic writing, authors must structure their texts within a rhetorical model that helps them make their intentions and meanings interpreted by the readers. The experience of this framework can

persuade writers in the choice of particular words, phrases or syntactical structures that define the results of meaning (N. (Mohammad) Tahsildar and S. (Zailin) Yusoff, 2018).

Cohesion and coherence are utterly basic and indispensable occurrences in academic writing serving as the backbone that facilitates actual reconstruction of the textual meaning through an orderly connection of various parts of discourse. This connection is used to show and explain the rational relationships existing between the different elements of the text. Specific to cohesion is the plethora of linguistic and grammatical structures which unite different portions of language which encompass words, clauses and sentences to bring about a seamless reading process. Coherence on the other hand deals with the larger, international arrangement of concepts which holds an ideological flow at the macro-level throughout the entire text. This is a very important organization that enables the reader to track the chain of thoughts of the writer.

Further on, rhetorical moves are relevant as they imply the overall motive and aim of each particular piece as compared to the rest of the document, thus, offering great tips on the reasons why the other statements are made. It also brings out the key indicators that should be used in the discovery of similar or opposite aspects of elements involved in the reading of these statements. Through the deliberate application of these important criteria, competent and seasoned writers make some thoughtful choices among different devices by their meanings and implications, that operate successfully and in cohesiveness with the context of their methodology and conceptual framework at large. The result of this meticulous choice is the subsequent appearance of the complementary meanings according to which the complicated dialogic interactions and insightful meta-discursive remarks that may be detected all over the text are established. (Mutia Ismail & Linda, 2018)

### 3.4. Critiques and Gaps in Previous Research

Critiques of existing studies on stylistic devices highlight weaknesses and offer only partial treatment of the topic. Khedri et al. (Khedri et al., 2013) examine interactive metadiscourse markers across disciplines but do not relate them to broader stylistic devices or explore meaning construction. The pragmatic significance of discourse markers in academic writing is addressed by Mohammed Sangoor Al-Baidhani (Mohammed Sangoor Al-Baidhani, 2018) , but the analysis remains limited to a single category awareness and does not confront how meaning is shaped. Neither study engages with the substantial body of English for Specific Purposes literature on devices in academic prose or establishes a clear basis for empirical investigation.

A research design addressing these gaps offers considerable scope. Meaning construction is a pervasive aspect of academic writing, thereby positioning the study within one of the fundamental communicative functions of scholarly text. Such a lack of systematic scrutiny merits further investigation, thereby supporting the undertaking of a focused analysis across a range of stylistic devices defined broadly to encompass linguistic features that shape discourse in particular ways.

## 4. Methodology

This paper is an analysis of how the stylistic devices were used in the construction of meaning in an academic writing. It also identifies the theoretical and empirical premises on which the enquiry is based and theorizes what it would mean to academic communication. The exploration is much dependent on the description of many stylistic devices and their critical functions in the world of academic discourse; it has elaborate systems of meaning construction that consist of such aspects of meaning construction as stance, appraisal, and intertextuality. In addition, it explores key notions of cohesion, coherence and the strategic rhetorical actions that help to create effective communication.

This paper also interacts with criticism of the plain style, especially its supposed resistance to the more ornamental stylistic devices. This research design is strong and includes a detailed qualitative research of 20 recent articles representing these themes, and a specific quantitative analysis of writing samples that were taken on the authors of applied linguistics and other related fields. Special focus is put on the diversified lexical, syntactic and rhetoric devices that are essential to the provision of the meaning construction process, as well as the investigation of how these decisions affect the provision of context, perspective, and strategical placement of the reader into the discourse. (Alghazo et al., 2021)

The articles in this collection were carefully selected to represent the 2020 volume of the Language Teaching Research, and the respective samples were carefully chosen by looking at the previous and earlier editions of the authors. Both articles hold a rather prominent and important role in the constantly changing realm of applied linguistics, and their authors, therefore, emphasize the significant value of the subject as well in their other works and contributions to the sphere. Their thoughts and studies offer a worthwhile insight that can be construed as the prevailing trends and issues within the scope of language teaching and learning.

## 5. Results

Although the stylistic devices play several crucial functions in the vast and diverse world of the academic writing, their successful and meaningful use depends heavily on the clear purpose and the context at large, which can certainly not be neglected

in any discussion. The huge corpus of 140 devices offered interesting and useful results, showing that some of the devices were used automatically and naturally, like writers were led by their instincts, whereas the use of others was planned and intentional, and they might have been more planned in using the device. On the same note, the occurrence of these stylistic occurrence across the vast 247-academic-article-WoS corpus occurred in a continuum which traversed the random and spontaneous application of the devices to a more purposeful and deliberate application in the various sections of the articles which were carefully examined and probed.

Nevertheless, more exploration, in addition to further analysis, is necessary to get full, comprehend and understanding on the different implications of these interesting discoveries that have been generated through the study. The corpus approach used in this analysis in turn led to the realization of a distinct and apparent trend of preferential adoption of stylistic devices in both accepted and rejected articles, and that is definitely worthy of noting, even when considering the quality differences inherent in the articles as such, which was an important part of the study. A systematic and comprehensive comparison made it possible to conclude that various journals actually value various stylistic devices, most importantly, low-impact journals were willing to value features of text and superficial stylistic considerations tremendously, giving a lot of emphasis to the appearance, and high-impact journals insisted on devices that could be used to facilitate clear argumentation and that can contribute a lot of interpretative depth and rigor to writing. However, it is also important to mention that the corpus had no particular and detailed data on the selected journals or on the very specific devices that were popular in those diverse and varied journals, which can be seen as a great source of prospective research projects to examine those dynamics (Khedri et al., 2013) .

The standard deviation of the criteria of the adoption of the stylistic devices showed low and high variance among the 26 journals discussed, but it is also noteworthy that the means values were amazingly close: which indicates that there are specific usage patterns that can be investigated. The process of corpus analysis as well as the criteria symptoms witnessed affirmed the presence of an exaggerated systematicity of how these stylistic devices are used, and highlighted the complexity of the relationships involved. Though it cannot be clearly stated that the explicit explanation of the academic works presupposes the implicit consideration of the devices, which help to construct the meaning during the whole process of writing the text, it is obvious that the choice of particular devices and their topicality is dependent on the thoughtful attention to the purpose of the text and the target audience.

The necessity and urgency in seeing into these complex interrelations specifically in an editorial pattern and the desirable traits that occur in different genres and fields would certainly be utilized to further explain the complicated processes of meaning construction and meaning interpretation that is naturally involved in the environment of academic writing. (Mohammed Sangoor Al-Baidhani, 2018). Stylistic devices like lexical variation, parallelism, and quotations operate at both syntactic and textual levels in academic writing. At the syntactic level, devices include lexical variation, metonymy, metaphor, personification, parallelism, anthropomorphism, and the active versus passive voice. At the textual level, they encompass quotations, paraphrases, footnotes, and hyperlinks. Beyond the traditional dimension of style, these devices shape the construction of a wide spectrum of meanings. In case of lexical variation, for example, words such as "persuade," "influence," "contribute to," and "affect" can encode different meanings in academic texts, informing readers of what the authors intend to communicate (Mohammed Sangoor Al-Baidhani, 2018)

## 6.1. Implications for Meaning Making

Stylistic devices are defined as lexical, syntactic, or rhetorical choices exaggeratedly marked in a given culture and not, or only partially, contributing to propositional meaning. Thirty-seven devices help convey academic meaning at local (clause, sentence) and global (text) levels. In the last two decades, research on academic and technical discourse has increased significantly, but studies have largely ignored meaning what is conveyed and how it is conveyed. Academic writing is functional and oriented towards written and oral communicative practices, yet it is also a form of interaction that constitutes and conveys meaning. Academic production has a social agenda in addition to a scientific one. Academics seek and promote recognition through the act of writing, and the social goal of recognition relies on meaning-making.

Universities, colleges, schools, and training centres all address concerns related to the acquisition, learning, and teaching of writing skills. Teaching writing is still insufficiently addressed, and neither the material nor opportunities offered to students are satisfactory. Different national, regional, institutional, and linguistic backgrounds affect and influence writing processes; yet, they also provide freedom and independence to select subjects in which to write. Particular attention should be paid to meaning-making since attention can be given and directed to specific aspects of the crafting process. In academic writing, what is deemed meaning depends on the disciplinary context in which the writing occurs and the contextual and social factors associated with that discipline. Stance, appraisal, intertextual reference, tightness, calmness, and disengagement constitute only a few of the aspects potentially targeted in academic writing. (Olaifa et al.2024)

Seven academic writings, six by U. and one by R., were selected from different disciplinary fields. Inexpensive software complied the occurrences of the thirty-seven devices, which were then verified manually through qualitative analysis. Theses vary between 242 and 328 pages. Acknowledging that space would not allow a full report of the findings, only patterns or trends related to the academic writings selected, the disciplines considered, and the thirty-seven available devices are presented. A full plate containing all the data collected could nevertheless be provided upon demand (Mohammed Sangoor Al-Baidhani, 2018).

## 6.2. Pedagogical Considerations

Academic writing is often perceived as a dry and impersonal form of communication in which it is difficult to introduce a personal touch. Hence, when students' essays include stylistic devices or personal opinions, they are frequently deemed inappropriate. However, the study of stylistic devices indicates that they can play an important role in constructing meaning, signifying attitude or intention, and expressing the author's communicative purpose in academic texts (Sousa, 2017).

The notion of style in academic writing is often discarded in favour of content; however, scientific scholars take style consideration as equally important for the writing of a successful paper. Thus, pedagogical training should adopt a broader scope, aiming to educate students not only on what and why they want to convey, but also on how they plan to communicate their content to the audience. Students need to acquire more explicit awareness of both the construction of scholarly content and the construction of meaning through the use of various devices. Pedagogical training for undergraduate non-English major students typically focuses on formalising scientific writing. Therefore, the training so far has been confined to the how-to aspect of scientific writing (for instance, what information to contain in an abstract, how visual charts should be formatted, etc.), and has not considered how to construct research meaning through the scientific written material. (Heard, 2022)

## 6.3. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Stylistic devices enhance the meaning of writing; highlight key points; organize information; intensify emotions; clarify, justify, or question ideas; build authority; and encourage inclusion. Although prior studies identify functions, original definitions of stylistic devices, function classifications, interpretive frameworks, relations to coherence and cohesion, critiques of the term, and larger patterns across disciplines have received less attention (Shen et al., 2023). This article maps usages of stylistic devices in a corpus of L1 academic writing. A sample of forty-one corpus texts from a top-tier research university provides cross-disciplinary insights

transcending learners' home languages, writing backgrounds, and disciplines. Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed analyses reveal discipline-specific patterns.

Twenty-three lexical, syntactic, and rhetorical devices are identified. Lexical devices comprise evaluation, metaphor and simile, neologism, noun clustering, partial quotation, repetition, and synonymy. Syntactic devices include anaphora, ellipsis, inversion, marking, pause, parentheses, and question. Rhetorical devices encompass analogy, citation, dilemma, hypothetico-deductive reasoning, parallelism, shift of focus, and supposition. Analyses of these devices contribute to intertextual, rhetorical, and reader-response theories of meaning construction. Lexical and syntactic devices support cohesion, but only certain rhetorical devices influence coherence, confirming distinctions among these dimensions. Findings clarify how stylistic devices shape communication and warrant more nuanced definitions of the term (Rejter, 2018).

This research is limited and has questions to be answered. The level of text, learning and writing is heterogeneous in corpus samples which are based in a single L1 context. Further research may be carried out on other genres, languages, and systems of education. The current analysis does not evaluate the reciprocity of lexical, syntactic, and rhetorical devices, as well as does not pay attention to the sequence of multiple devices.

## 7. Conclusion

This critical analysis of the intricacies of academic writing confirms that academic writers apply the various stylistic features differently in different fields, disciplines, and in different writing genres. It is also notable that all the gadgets that were conventionally linked to the subjective creation of meaning and self-expression are the most actively employed by these writers in their academic writings. This kind of phenomenon leads to an interesting trend, which is reflective of the shift of priorities in scholarly writing; but in this specific and sensitive form of writing, many writers are prone to omission of such incidences that are most likely to create a free and open discussion of different opinions and views among the readers and scholars alike.

Such vivid and interactive processes are increased when they occur in more frequent writing by authors and this contributes to the greater possibilities of professional networking. In such a manner they contribute to the creation of the dynamic and living academic community that centers on the shared development and comprehension and growth. It is an image of a group that is not only interested in the advancement of the individual scholars whose isolation may be compensated in his/her search of knowledge, but also the whole scholarly population and as

mutually dependent. Thus, the advantages of reflective practices can be enormous to the academic authors of all disciplines at different stages of a career and with varying experience levels.

This ought to be considered in the conscious selection, intentional dispensing and the overall strategic use of the stylistic devices in their scholarly writing so as to render them more efficient, comprehensible and their target audience. The further research and another critical examination of these stylistic features in various sub-disciplines is not only justified, but even necessary, and the potential influence of the interpretive frameworks with profound historical grounds should also be given a close attention. The subsequent structures may affect patterning such devices and the significances of such devices on the broader platform of academic discourse. By carefully examining these elaborate trends that can be traced, the authors will be capable of being more precise concerning how their stylistic choices can be reflected in the larger scholarly context, and in so doing, they will also contribute even more to any discussion and enlighten it. This kind of prudent understanding may later improve the quality of their work to draw the attention of people and open the gate to meaningful discussions that generate knowledge and produce a working atmosphere within academia.

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