



P-ISSN 2355-2794  
E-ISSN 2461-0275

## Building Knowledge about Language for Teaching IELTS Writing Tasks: A Genre-based Approach

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### Abstract

*As a widely used English proficiency test that includes a writing test component, IELTS raises pedagogical challenges that require high-stake literacy skills to meet the demands of the assessment criteria. Many studies on various teaching strategies for writing tasks in IELTS preparation courses have been conducted. However, more information about explicit instructions is needed to help test-taker candidates respond to the IELTS writing tasks effectively. This paper reports on a small-scale pilot project implementing a new generation of genre pedagogy, the Reading to Learn (R2L), for teaching IELTS writing to 14 government-sponsored student candidates at a public university language center in Indonesia. The project aimed first to identify the linguistic demands of IELTS writing, particularly Task 2. The identification of linguistic patterns was then used to design and implement the intervention. Second, it mapped the participants' writing skills before and after the intervention. The data were drawn from IELTS teaching materials and the participants' writing tasks before and after the intervention. Based on the genre analysis, the IELTS Writing Task 2 requires the test takers to respond to the tasks by taking one side or*

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**Citation in APA style:** Damayanti, I. L., Hamied, F. A., Kartika-Ningsih, H., & Dharma, N. S. (2023). Building knowledge about language for teaching IELTS writing tasks: A genre-based approach. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 10(2), 756-776.

Received July 17, 2022; Revised December 10, 2022; Accepted April 26, 2023; Published Online May 31, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v10i2.26957>

*discussing two sides. Making such linguistic demands explicit to the participants in the writing class helped them respond to the tasks more successfully. As a result of their involvement in the intervention, the participants, including those with low English proficiency, demonstrated their ability to write more coherent texts. This study offered a genre-based teaching model for preparing EFL students intending to take English writing tests.*

**Keywords:** Argumentative texts, genre pedagogy, IELTS writing test, Reading to Learn (R2L) pedagogy.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Enrolling in academic institutions in English-speaking countries requires international student candidates worldwide to provide a valid English language proficiency certificate. International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is an example of an English language proficiency test that measures the English proficiency of non-native English speakers who want to study or work in a country where English is used as a language of communication (“*What is IELTS?*”, n.d.). It includes assessing four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Of the four skills tested, writing is considered one of the most challenging skills to master by candidates from contexts where English is a foreign language (EFL). Studies conducted nearly two decades ago show that generating and presenting ideas were considered to stifle the writing process (Richards & Renandya, 2002), which made conveying messages in a way that made sense to readers more difficult (Murray & Moore, 2006). In more recent studies, challenges encountered by EFL student candidates remain the same. Ideas presented in the candidates’ texts are often unclear as the texts lack coherence and cohesion with several lexicogrammatical errors (Al-Jaro et al., 2016; Ariyanti & Fitriana, 2017).

In Indonesia, student candidates were reported to demonstrate poor performance, particularly in the IELTS Writing section, with an average score of 5.57, the lowest among the skills tested (“*What is IELTS?*”, n.d.). A similar trend is also observed in *Balai Bahasa*, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (hereafter UPI Language Centre), which has offered the IELTS preparatory program since 2013 and has regularly conducted surveys as part of the program evaluation. A consistent survey finding indicates that the participants needed help to develop skills in responding to IELTS writing tasks. Their low writing scores might be attributed to their little awareness of the IELTS Writing Task 2 genre and their limited ability to read critically, leading to difficulties in generating ideas in writing.

Awareness of genre and its underlying language features can be developed through explicit teaching. Roseshine (1987, as cited in Archer & Hughes, 2011, p. 1) described explicit instruction as “a systematic method of teaching with an emphasis on proceeding in small steps, checking for understanding, and achieving active and successful participation by all students”. This approach suggests that students will benefit from a clear, systemic scaffold that is delivered by selecting and sequencing contents before dividing them into units corresponding to students’ abilities (Archer & Hughes, 2011). In our research, essays in IELTS Writing Task 2 were taught

explicitly, using a genre-based pedagogy referred to as Reading to Learn (R2L) pedagogy. This pedagogy informs students what social purposes of the essays they must achieve and what stages of the essays they should construct to make the essays coherent. The nature of explicit teaching incorporating step-by-step demonstration of a skill, guided practice, and regular feedback provision (Archer & Hughes, 2011) is considered suitable for our short-term IELTS training programs because of this straightforwardness.

Previous studies have established that explicit teaching positively impacts students' learning outcomes. Bychkovska (2021) reported an increased use of register-appropriate noun phrases in undergraduate students' essays after explicit instruction on noun phrase modification. Another study also identified a similar achievement (Akkoç et al., 2018), in which the participants were reported to score higher after being explicitly taught how to use formulaic language in their argumentative writing. These two investigations align with the current study in terms of noun phrases and formulaic language, which are paramount to enriching students' lexical range in high-stake English tests such as IELTS. However, few studies have investigated explicit text-based teaching in IELTS preparation courses. Therefore, this paper proposes the R2L as the explicit instruction in IELTS Writing preparation courses.

Given the challenges encountered by the participants of the IELTS preparatory program at UPI Language Center and the importance of explicit teaching, pedagogical intervention strategies are needed to remedy the low reading and writing skills of IELTS test candidates. Against this backdrop, a teaching and learning program incorporating explicit teaching and reading alongside writing, namely the Reading to Learn (R2L) methodology (Rose & Martin, 2012), was selected for implementation in the 2020 IELTS Writing Preparation Program. In particular, the study is framed within the following research questions:

- What kinds of text types and relevant linguistic features characterize IELTS Writing Task 2?
- What linguistic features indicate the development of students' IELTS Writing Task 2?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews studies reporting on efforts in helping test-taker candidates develop a control of writing skills. The goals are to meet the IELTS Academic Module demands, comprising two tasks. IELTS Writing Task 1 requires test takers to describe or explain data, and IELTS Writing Task 2 instructs them to write essays "in response to the point of view, argument or problem" ("What is IELTS?", n.d.). This study focuses on IELTS Writing Task 2, which refers to Rose's (2019) text-in-context model and its relevant teaching and learning cycle, the Reading to Learn Pedagogy (Rose & Martin, 2012).

### 2.1 IELTS Writing Tasks

Several studies have been done to improve students' IELTS Writing outcomes by implementing various teaching strategies. A study by Pratiwi et al. (2016) investigated the use of mind-mapping strategies in improving Indonesian senior high

school students' IELTS Writing scores. The participants reported that the mind-mapping strategy helped them write better. A similar result was also found in a study conducted in Thailand by [Sanonguthai \(2011\)](#), who combined the process of debating and writing IELTS argumentative essays. The participants, consisting of 20 senior high school students, claimed that the brainstorming process in debating and rewriting sentences in writing expanded their knowledge of a topic and reduced grammatical errors. [Abe \(2008\)](#) investigated the use of model texts incorporated into a 'think-aloud' approach. The study indicated that while some advanced participants benefited from the model texts as the feedback tool, some others, particularly the intermediate ones, struggled to identify grammatical structures that might support their writing improvement.

In recent years, more studies have employed metacognition strategies such as think-aloud and a process-based approach as their IELTS Writing instruction. [Firoozjahantigh et al. \(2021\)](#) found that the combination of the process-based approach and explicit teaching of hedging and booster contributed to the higher IELTS Writing score of Iranian learners. Similarly, a study by [Nourazar et al. \(2022\)](#) reported the students' improved IELTS writing performance in an English language school in Iran. In their study, metacognitive strategies using the 'think-aloud' approach were modeled explicitly to help the students' thinking processes when writing. In this research, the students were guided on how to question themselves about their writing. While these studies have focused on the metacognitive processes in writing, less attention has been paid to teaching language features that constitute IELTS Writing essays.

To help students produce texts successfully to achieve their social purposes requires them to be aware of the linguistic resources they must provide in writing (Halliday, 1990, as cited in [Derewianka & Jones, 2016, p. 5](#)). In IELTS Writing, the ability to identify and produce essays aligned with the intended social purposes is assessed under 'Task Achievement' as whether test takers have written a corresponding genre to the question. Unfortunately, as indicated in the previous paragraphs, most studies focus on strategies for enriching ideas. Meanwhile, IELTS Writing can be an opportunity to introduce students how to unpack texts and identify the linguistic features constituting the texts.

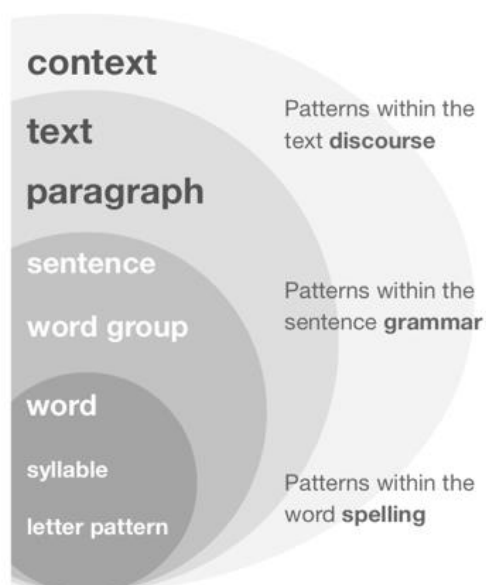
In response to the identified gap, we attempted to design an explicit instruction to help EFL test-taker candidates raise their awareness of linguistic features relevant to IELTS Writing Task 2. In the EFL context, students can benefit from explicit teaching because it capitalizes on "procedural facilitation" that activates "cognitive apprenticeship" in a controlled learning environment ([Tsiriotakis et al., 2017, p. 5](#)). In the present study, the controlled learning environment refers to the genre-based Reading to Learn Pedagogy, which is explained further in the following section.

## **2.2 Text-in-Context Model: Genre-Based Materials and Instructions**

Genre-based approach, or the Sydney School genre pedagogy, has gained significant application worldwide ([Brisk, 2015; Ramírez et al., 2021](#)), including Indonesia, known as GBA ([Kartika-Ningsih, 2019](#)). The genre-based approach has developed several models of teaching procedures, including Reading to Learn (R2L), as the latest generation of genre pedagogy. R2L, similar to genre pedagogy, was developed from the text-in-context model based on the functional language theory, which establishes in the teaching and learning process that the text is always within its

social context (Rose & Martin, 2012). Understanding the text as a two-layered model has underpinned the design of a text-based teaching model, also known as a genre pedagogy. This model emphasizes that a text is a unit of meaning designed to achieve specific social purposes (de Silva Joyce & Feez, 2016; Derewianka & Jones, 2012) and cannot be separated from its social context. As a text-oriented teaching methodology, the basic tenet of this pedagogy is twofold, i.e., knowledge genres and curriculum genres.

Knowledge genres are related to identifying key genres or text types used as materials for the teaching goal. These genres focus on “patterns of written discourse in which the knowledge and evaluations unfold through a text” (Rose, 2019, pp. 239-240). A text is realized across several language strata (spelling, grammar, and discourse), and its character is controlled by the context (the social purpose, the particular audience, the modalities, and the particular institution of the text) (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** The Text-in-Context Model (Rose, 2019, p. 37).

Different text types, or genres, in the subject areas of schooling, have been mapped according to their central purposes. Several key genres in school have been identified for teaching and learning purposes, i.e., stories, factual texts, and arguments (Rose, 2019). In arguments, for example, exposition and discussion are distinguished by the presence of sides. The former only presents one point of view, whereas the latter offers two points of view. The purpose of this genre is to “persuade people to act” or to believe “a particular point of view” (exposition) and to “discuss two or more sides of an issue” (discussion) (Derewianka & Jones, 2016, p. 235). Central to a genre are the stages or parts of the texts that unfold to achieve the social purposes of the genre (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Genre for persuading (Derewianka & Jones, 2016, pp. 236-238).

Genre	Social Purposes	Stages
Hortatory Exposition	“To persuade people to act in a particular way”	Statement of position Arguments Reiteration of appeal
Analytical Exposition	“To persuade people to a particular point of view”	Statement of position Arguments Reiteration of appeal
Discussion	“To discuss two or more sides of an issue”	Issue Position A Position B Recommendation

In the case of the IELTS writing tasks, the topic and language demands, which are rather implicit, can be identified through the selected high-score texts. It is thus essential to identify the key genres constituting the high scores through the text-in-context model. Therefore, test-taker candidates need to grasp the structure that encodes this genre so that their writing achieves its intended purposes. One way to support the candidates’ learning is through a genre-based teaching-learning cycle, explained in the subsequent section.

### 2.3 Genre-based Reading to Learn (R2L) Pedagogy

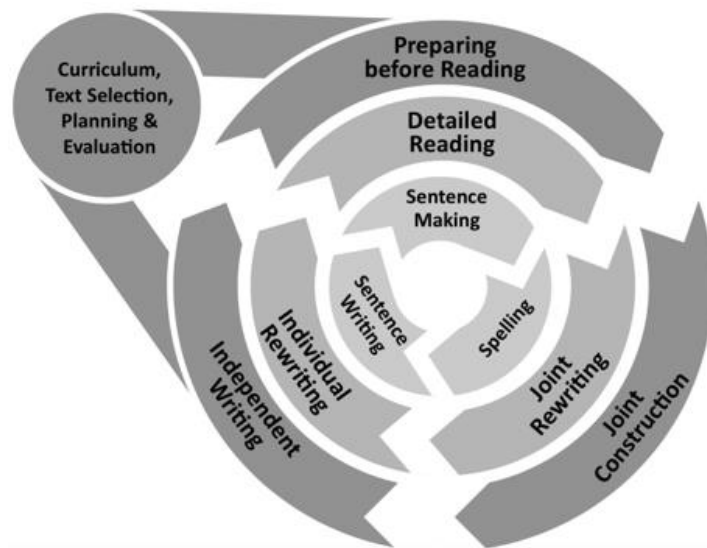
Through teaching and learning practices of the identified genres, teachers can help students read and write appropriately based on the linguistic demand of the genres (Rothery & Macken, 1991). Drawing on the work of Halliday (1993) and Painter (1991), genre pedagogy places importance on “guidance through interaction in the context of shared experience” (Rose & Martin, 2012, pp. 61-62). This principle is translated into different teaching procedures involving stages and activities in each stage.

Various teaching procedures have been developed, such as the teaching/learning cycle for genre writing (Callaghan & Rothery, 1988; Rothery, 1994) and the Reading to Learn (R2L) program as the latest generation (Rose & Martin, 2012). The R2L teaching and learning activities are organized through three-level intensive strategies, tackling the genre and field, the discourse, the grammar, and graphology (Rose & Martin, 2012). The first level, Preparing for Reading, includes building a field for accessing a text and overviewing the steps in which the field unfolds through the genre. The second level, Detailed Reading, focuses on language patterns within and between sentences that help students use the schematic structure and lexicogrammatical features in their writings. The third level includes Sentence Making, Spelling, and Sentence Writing—providing the foundation skills for reading with comprehension and writing fluently.

The intensive strategies offered in R2L have been found effective in pedagogic practices in Australia and increasingly in other countries (Acevedo, 2010; Damayanti, 2017; Kartika-Ningsih, 2019; Ramos, 2015; Shum et al., 2018). Acevedo (2010) and Shum et al. (2018), investigating the impact of R2L pedagogy on students’ literacy skills, reported significant improvements in their participant students’ construction of the schematic structure and the appropriate linguistic repertoire to the target genre. In the USA, Ramos (2015) particularly accentuates the virtues of the Detailed Reading stage because explicit instruction in examining linguistic resources employed in a

model text supported her adolescent learners to produce more authoritative academic writing.

While the studies above underscored the promising outcomes of R2L pedagogy for improving academic literacy, few studies have examined the use of R2L in writing test preparation programs such as for IELTS Writing tasks. In addition, [Moore and Morton \(2005\)](#) propose a separate preparation program due to the differences in terms of ‘genre, information source, rhetorical function and object of inquiry’ (p. 47). Hence, the current study reported in this paper was designed to understand the potential of R2L pedagogy in supporting the development of IELTS test candidates’ writing achievement.



**Figure 2.** The Reading to Learn cycle ([Rose & Martin, 2012, p. 121](#)).

### 3. METHODS

#### 3.1 Research Design

This qualitative study employed a case study design ([Yin, 2018](#)) that focused on a pilot project to explore the potential application and innovation of R2L methodology in a relatively new teaching context. This study was a ‘proof of concept’ ([Vaish & Subhan, 2015](#)) in that, instead of observing the results of the study through the measurement of pre- and post-intervention results, it examines the efficacy of applying R2L in teaching IELTS writing for EFL learners. The exploration of how the R2L method worked in this program is twofold. First, potential texts to be used in designing the teaching/learning activities were sought and developed. Secondly, the student’s pieces of writing were compared to the expected model answer to identify the development of students’ writing after the program.

The study was conducted in three phases: (1) genre analysis, (2) teacher training and implementation of R2L pedagogy, and (3) evaluation of the participants’ writing texts. Phase 1 was done by identifying a number of the corpus of high-score IELTS writing Task samples. The results were used as a model text for phase 2.

Phase 2 involved a sequence of teacher training which was conducted twice within a two-week interval for all teachers at UPI Language Center, followed by R2L implementation by one of the authors who acted as the teacher. The classroom implementation, lasting for 300 minutes, selected R2L strategies: Preparation for Reading, Detailed Reading, Joint Construction, and Independent Construction. In Preparation for Reading, the teacher used the model text and discussed the nature of the text with the students by identifying the social purposes and the main topic of the texts. In Detailed Reading, the teacher read each sentence and explained the focus of the sentence. She also asked the students to find phrases or nouns in the text. In Joint-Construction, the teacher prepared the class to do note-making by having one student act as a reciter and another as a scribe. The students took turns doing the roles and rewriting all of the ‘nouns’ identified and discussed in the earlier stage. It was followed by the teacher and students jointly paraphrasing the identified wordings. Finally, in Independent-Construction, all students took an in-class IELTS practice test, focusing on Writing Task 2. In phase 3, students’ texts in pre and post-tests were analyzed to provide comparative results, particularly on linguistic development.

### **3.2 Participants**

Participants of the study were 14 LPDP (Indonesian Endowment Fund for Education) scholarship holders from different provinces in Indonesia who applied for Master’s and Doctoral degrees overseas. As a part of their scholarship scheme, the 20-35 years old participants enrolled in the IELTS Preparation course at UPI Language Centre. The participants of this study were selected based on their writing scores, which ranged from 5 to 5.5 when they took the IELTS prediction test as an entry test before enrolling in the course. The consent forms were obtained from all participants before the commencement of the program.

### **3.3 Instrument**

The study used two prompt questions of typical IELTS Writing Task 2 adapted from the past IELTS tests for the participants to respond. The pre-task question was given at the beginning and the post-task at the end of the program:

- *Pre-task question*  
“People’s lives are becoming increasingly stressful nowadays, and there are many reasons behind this. Many people relate this to technological advancement while others say that high living costs and competitions are the main reasons for this stressful life we have. In your opinion, what are the reasons behind this? What can be done to solve this problem?”
- *Post-task question*  
“Some people say that artists such as painters, writers and musicians affect our life more than scientists. To what extent do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer and include relevant examples from your experience”.

### **3.4 Data Collection and Analysis**

There are two main data sets used in this study. The first data set was collected from essays in the Official Cambridge Guide to IELTS for Academic and General



Training (Cullen et al., 2014). The sample answers which are given high scores were examined to gain insights related to the linguistic features. In addition, the teacher and the students used the book at the time of the study.

The second data set was collected from the participants' essays before and after the intervention. The essays collected from both data sets were analyzed using Martin and Rose's (2008) genre analysis, unpacking the stages and phases of the texts as well as other linguistic features and their relationships with the test questions. First, the essays were annotated based on stages and phases corresponding to the genres indicated by the prompt questions. See Appendix A for the analysis of the sample answers and Appendices B, C, D, and E for the students' pre-and post-tests. While the research team analyzed the sample answers, the two external raters initially assessed students' essays to determine high- and low-scoring texts. Then, the essays produced by two students representing each group were selected for more detailed analysis. The teacher and other researchers in the study examined the linguistic features indicating the development of students' writing.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Key Genres and Linguistic Features of IELTS Writing Task 2

Identifying genres and linguistic features in IELTS Writing Task 2 is crucial. Yet, as a relatively new area of application, studies on genres in IELTS writing tasks, particularly focusing on the model answers rather than the students' writing, are scarce. In the R2L program, selecting and analyzing texts is the first step in developing a curriculum genre. The rule of thumb is threefold – subject matter, appropriate genre, and a high-stake reading text beyond the students' independent reading level (Rose, 2019). The principles are critical since the selected texts are later used for designing the lesson plan and the teaching and learning activities.

The sample answers in this study were from the Official Cambridge Guide to IELTS for Academic and General Training (Cullen et al., 2014). Eight sample questions and answers were analyzed using systemic functional linguistic genre theory (Martin & Rose, 2008). The results indicate two main genres of the argumentative genre family, i.e., discussion and hortatory exposition (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Argumentative genre in IELTS writing.

Prompt Question	Potential genre (staging) answer	Informal description
dis/agreement: to what extent do you agree or disagree	discussion: two-sided [Issue ^ Sides ^ Resolution]	more than one sides or views considered
truth and measurement: how true...; ...what measure...	hortatory exposition: one-sided [Appeal^Arguments ^Reinforcement]	one side or view including suggested actions or recommendations

Both discussion and exposition genres argue or discuss different sides, but the former involves two sides, and the latter states the position, favoring one side of the argument (Rose & Martin, 2012). Discussion genres, which dominate the sample answers in those two positions responding to the prompt question, are given higher

scores than a single point of view. The function of the discussion genre, as mentioned above, is to discuss two or more points of view (Martin & Rose, 2008). It presents a range of perspectives on an issue before making a judgment or recommendation. This genre type consists of three stages, Issue ^ Sides ^ Resolution, organizing the global structure of discussion texts.

Within each stage, phases organize how the global structure unfolds. The Issue stage presents the statement about what the debate is about. Phases in Issue include a general statement and a preview of the sides. Sides are the polarized arguments consisting of Side 1 and Side 2 phases, each presenting the opposite of the previous position. Phases in the body of Sides include different sides that can be labeled Side 1, Side 2, and so on. Each paragraph of each side includes a topic and elaboration. Elaborations may include evidence, examples, and reasons. The Resolution provides the position that the author agrees with, which is typically located in the final paragraph. The concluding phase includes reviewing the sides, summarizing the evidence, and concluding statements.

In IELTS testing, the Issue stage is the statement that needs to respond to the question. The task of the test taker is to recall knowledge of the topic and language of the question, providing a general statement about the Issue and previewing the sides. The Sides stage should then discuss the two opposing views according to the situation, including evidence and elaboration. At the end of the writing, the Resolution stage follows to outline how the writer resolves the Issue.

In one sample question, the topic concerns the use of tax imposed to mitigate health issues caused by fast food, and sides or positions are indicated in the following questions.

(1) Sample question:

In some countries an increasing number of people are suffering from health problems as a result of eating too much fast food. It is therefore necessary for governments to impose a higher tax on this kind of food. To what extent do you agree or disagree with these views?

The sample answer, displayed in Appendix A, organizes the answer conforming to a discussion genre that includes Issue ^ Side 1 ^ Side 2 ^ Resolution. While the text is presented verbatim, the bold and underlined parts are added for analysis.

In the Issue stage, the test taker responds to the question above by writing “The growth of the fast-food industry...” to set out an issue statement, followed by providing examples of health problems “Diabetes, high cholesterol...” in the following sentence. At the end of the paragraph, a preview of the sides is presented in a question of whether a higher tax would improve the situation.

Critical attention should be paid to the strategy used by this test taker. Paraphrasing the question is key in the issue statement phase because repetition of wordings or even direct quotations from the question often results in a low score. The model answer displays the skill of sentence reformulation, often with the use of dense information in the form of nominalization to serve as the issue statement.

In the body of the essay, two sides of the argument are presented in two different paragraphs (Side 1 ^ Side 2), and each side is indicated by marked Theme to begin the paragraph. In Side 1, the topic deals with an economic point, followed by evidence “In countries such as the USA...”, elaboration “It could be argued...”, and point “The tax could help...”. In Side 2, the topic opposes Side 1 by countering with a socioeconomic point of view “However... consider which socioeconomic group”. In terms of phases,

this particular essay unfolds a pattern of evidence ^ elaboration: “Statistics indicate...”, “One possible reason...”, “Research suggests...”, “For them, fast food...”. The final paragraph is signaled with the use of marked Theme in the conclusion, indicating Resolution stage. It resolves the Issue by opposing the tax, stating that a higher tax does not seem to be the answer.

Some sample answers indicate that the hortatory exposition genre is used to respond to the task questions (which unfortunately cannot be presented here due to space constraints). Hortatory exposition is to argue a particular action that should be taken, and the stages are Appeal ^ Arguments ^ Reinforcement of appeal (Humphrey et al., 2012). The question required for this genre writing often implies considerations on dis/advantages or measurement.

The two genres found in the data, however, should be considered early findings and thus suggestive rather than prescriptive. More sample answers collected may provide better information and map the key genres which receive high scores. Nevertheless, the finding is still critical, particularly to compare with the current writing level of the students.

## 4.2 The Students’ Writing Development

This section discusses linguistic features indicating the students’ writing development of Student 1 (S1) from a high-attaining group and Student 2 (S2) from a low-attaining group. Both students are referred to as females. Their responses were documented verbatim and presented in tables (Appendix B, C, D and E) that include annotation for the genre analysis. The following compares the students’ essays before and after the implementation of R2L pedagogy.

### 4.2.1 Case of Student 1 (S1)

In S1’s pre-task essay, although it is seemingly easy to differentiate which paragraph discusses the factors leading to stress and the solutions, her text is poorly organized. In Paragraph 2, S1 did not elaborate on the idea of high-living costs. As indicated in the question, she should have analyzed why ‘technological advancement’, ‘high-living costs’, and ‘competition’ are cited as contributors to a stressful life. The solution she offered ‘having regular holiday and grateful feeling’ in the third paragraph did not correspond to the previous Issue ‘sense of competition’, because there were no phrases or words that explained how having a regular holiday and grateful feeling could eliminate a sense of competition as the source of stressful life. In conclusion, she restated the idea that she brought in the previous supporting paragraphs; however, the sentences used similar word choices and lacked variations in paraphrasing.

Another issue identified in her writing was unclear pronoun references. For example, the use of the pronoun ‘they’ in the paragraph did not clearly state which party she was referring to (as can be seen in Clause 5). Then, in ‘those two problems’ (Clause 8), no clear transition indicated which one was the first and second problem. In Clause 9, S1 did not clearly refer to which ‘unpleasant condition’ she was referring to. The unclear pronoun references in her text could hinder the understanding of the idea as it was difficult to follow the progression of her text. In general, S1 managed to write her text in line with the discussion genre, but some lexicogrammar errors were identified. For instance, the presence of parallelism issues (e.g., competitions and

overworking [sic], feeling of pressure and unsatisfied life [sic]), and word usage errors (e.g., being stress [sic], live a life[sic], and measurable [sic]) were frequently found throughout the passage.

After receiving Reading to Learn instruction, S1 used some strategies to develop the topic and connected the idea of her essay as her attempt to maintain coherence and cohesion. First, she used the repetition of topical vocabulary (e.g., arts, public figures in art, society's role model, and the lifestyle of writers or musicians) to sustain the idea and remind the readers about the topic. Second, more variations of transition words and the emergence of new phrases were noticeable in S1's post-task essay (e.g., 'It is not bizarre [sic] phenomenon that' – Clause 5; 'Due to its transparency' [sic] – Clause 6; and 'Take Justin Bieber as an [sic] salient example' – Clause 7). It is also noticeable that S1 distinguished her two explanations which derived from one main idea that she expressed earlier in her introductory paragraph 'I entirely affirm that such arts profession can give more impacts to society based on several justifications as will be discussed'. This pattern aligns with the purpose of a discussion text to provide "two or more perspectives, usually coming down in favor of one side based on the weight of evidence" (Derewianka & Jones, 2016, p. 236).

Progress also can be identified from her better use of pronoun references. In the second paragraph, pronoun references to public figures in arts (Clause 4) were written in phrases such as 'society's role models', 'their lives', and 'writers or musicians'. A clearer reference can also be observed when she provided an example ('Take Justin Bieber as a salient example', and pronouns like 'this popular pop singer', 'his fans', and 'him' were used. In paragraph 3, consistent with this pattern, she used 'they' and 'singers and actors' to refer to many people and singers mentioned in the previous sentences. To sum up, in this essay, she successfully provided a richer variation in topic-related words and transition words.

#### *4.2.2 Case of Student 2 (S2)*

Based on the analysis of the pre-task essay, S2 seemingly struggled to elaborate on her points. This can be observed from the lack of topical words related to 'technology' and 'living costs' that she claimed as the main factors of stressful life in paragraph 2, Side 1. In other words, S2 did not focus on one main idea in one paragraph. Further, she did not explain how those two ideas lead to a stressful life. S2 used 'internet-based technology', which is considered too specific, given that she did not mention any technology in the previous paragraph. In paragraph 3, Side 2, even though S2 offers solutions (Clause 12), they do not address the aforementioned problems of 'technology, social media likes' (Clause 5) and 'high living cost' (Clause 8).

After receiving the R2L lessons, S2 showed significant progress in organizing her ideas. A clear focus was evident in two supporting paragraphs. In paragraph 2, even though S2 put her main idea in the last sentence of the paragraph, she focused on explaining why the influence of arts is only exclusive to those who have a sense of arts (Clauses 3, 9). In the next paragraph, S2 explained why scientists contribute more to people's life (Clause 10). Her explanation in this paragraph was supported by the topical vocabulary that relates to scientists, such as 'do research', 'invent', 'the invention', and 'change and influence'. Restatement of the argument/topic is also evident in the last part of the paragraph, which strengthens her explanation (Clause

14). Better use of pronoun references was also apparent in her essay (e.g., ‘Basically an artist will wholeheartedly dedicate his or her creation to represent the emotion which major of its lovers’ - Clause 4 and ‘When people enjoy the art products such as music, poetry, and novel, they can sink in the beautiful words writers put on’ - Clause 5).

## 5. DISCUSSION

The findings of the study demonstrate that the development of students’ writing can be supported by R2L pedagogy. In this study, the implementation of R2L teaching and learning activities was informed by the genre analysis of the model answers that show exposition and discussion as text types, characterizing IELTS Writing Task 2. While both genres argue or discuss different sides (Rose & Martin, 2012), discussion texts presenting two positions dominate the sample answers and are given higher scores than texts favoring a single point of view. As such, students who participated in the study were guided to state a position and present a range of perspectives on an issue before making a judgment or recommendation.

Based on the analyses of sample texts representing high and low-attaining groups of students, the 5-hour training based on R2L pedagogy has indicated promising results. Sample texts obtained from high-attaining and low-attaining students show progress in coherence in terms of better use of topical vocabulary corresponding to topic sentences, better use of pronoun reference, and one main idea focusing on one paragraph. This marks significant progress because the participants could achieve coherence by constructing a solid theme (main point) and rheme (reminder of that main point) relationship that enables the reader to understand the text better (Derewianka & Jones, 2016).

In IELTS Writing Task 2, coherence and cohesion are cited to be the skill that is more challenging to evaluate (Canagarajah, 2002). Through the R2L intervention, students can receive explicit instructions on how grammar and vocabulary link together within a sentence or a text to make meaning. Indeed, IELTS Writing Public Band Descriptor (“IELTS scoring in detail”, n.d.) cites the organization of ideas, the use of cohesive devices, and the presence of a central topic in each paragraph as the qualities sought in high-achieving IELTS test takers. The progress made by students from this R2L intervention reflects these desired qualities. Thus, progressing in coherence and cohesion can help boost candidates’ IELTS Writing Task 2 scores.

The students’ writing progress was also noticeable in the use of topical vocabulary. According to Rose and Martin (2012), the more frequent use of topical vocabulary is a significant achievement because topical vocabulary is essential for achieving purposes and building text relevance (field building). It can determine if the candidates have provided a relevant essay to the task. This is because these register-appropriate words could serve as cohesive ties in order to accentuate the thematic development of the text (Kuo, 1995). Then, clear pronoun referencing observed in the participants’ post-tests also indicates their improved performance in maintaining the theme (the topic), and they also focused only on one main idea in their paragraph, preventing them from providing unnecessary details in their essays. In other words, this progress might translate into the participants’ improved understanding of how they

should develop and communicate their ideas using topical vocabulary after participating in the R2L program.

The result of the present study resonates with that of Akkoç et al. (2018), who emphasize the impact of teaching transition words explicitly on the performance of university students majoring in English language teaching at one private university in Turkey. The participants reportedly improved the quality of their argumentative essays, resulting in higher scores at the end of their program. This achievement is likely attributed to students' rising awareness of formulaic language due to explicit teaching, without which it could have been "ignored or forgotten in time with fewer gains" (Akkoç et al., 2018, p. 365). A study by Bychkovska (2021) also shows similar findings in which university students managed to use register-appropriate noun phrases after receiving explicit instructions. These studies support our findings regarding the improvement in coherence that primarily draws on better vocabulary use.

The current study also suggests that since the progress in developing coherence was identified in both high-attaining and low-attaining students, R2L can be used to introduce textual functions in teaching writing, especially for university students. University assignments often require students to produce long and complex texts; hence intervention to support students in constructing coherent texts is necessary. This conclusion aligns with the mode continuum of how language develops throughout human development (Derewianka, 2003, as cited in Derewianka & Jones, 2016). According to this summary of the mode continuum, language development starts with "spontaneous, exploratory, free-flowing" oral production to gradual production of "longer multimodal texts that are denser, more compact, [and] more tightly organized" (p. 47). Hence, scaffolding for assisting this transition from oral to written language can be carried out through explicit instruction on how language can shape texts and achieve the intended purposes (textual function). In other words, this study proved this notion as explicit instruction on linguistics resources contributed to the development of coherence in the students' text.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

This study addressed two research questions, investigating how students' writing Task 2 can be supported by implementing R2L pedagogy. In designing the R2L teaching and learning activities, the study first identified key text types characterizing IELTS Writing Task 2. The identified text types include discussion and hortatory exposition. As a result of their participation in R2L lessons exploring both genres, the participant students in both high and low-attaining groups appeared to have better control in using more cohesive devices, nuanced topical words, transition, modality, and points of rebuttals, which are significant for writing argumentative texts.

Nevertheless, grammatical issues, such as uncommon word combinations and errors in subject-verb agreement, were still found in the written texts. This result may be explained by the fact that the training was conducted only briefly, focusing more on how to respond to the IELTS writing questions. Future training will benefit from vocabulary and grammar enrichment activities.

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## APPENDIX A

### A sample answer of discussion genre.

Par.	Sample Answer	Stages	Phases
1	The growth of the fast-food industry has, without doubt, impacted on the eating habits and the health of many societies around the world. Diabetes, high cholesterol, heart and respiratory problems are all on the rise due to fatty and sugar-rich food. However, the question is whether higher tax would improve this situation or not.	Issue	Issue  statement  issue
2	<u>From an economic point</u> , higher tax might seem sensible. In countries such as the USA, Australia and Britain, the healthcare system spends a large part of its budget on people with diet-related health problems. It could be argued that these people have caused their own illnesses because of their choice of food. In this case, why should they expect the state to pay for their treatments? The tax could help fund the healthcare system.	Side 1	Topic  Evidence  Elaboration  point
3	<u>However</u> , we also need to consider which socio-economic group consumer fast food as the main part of their diet. Statistics indicate that lower income groups eat more of this food than wealthier people. One possible reason for this is that fast food is far cheaper than fresh produce. This is because many governments offer large budget subsidies to farmers who provide products for fast food industry, such as corn, wheat and beef. Fruit and vegetables, on the other hand, are not subsidized. Research suggests that many families simply cannot afford to buy healthy food or pay higher taxes on fast food. For them, fast food is not a choice but a necessity.	Side 2	Topic  Evidence  Elaboration  Evidence  Elaboration
4	<u>In conclusion</u> , imposing a higher tax on fast food does not seem to be the answer. If the government chose to do this, it would only lead to greater poverty and families facing further hardship.	Resolution	Resolve

## APPENDIX B

### Analysis of Student 1: Pre-task essay

Par.	Sample answer	Stages	Phases
1	At present, people believe that life is much more stressful compared to the past which seems so comfortable and convenient based on various reasons. However, in my own perspective, competitions and overworking are considered to be the main reasons of this situation. In this essay, I will elaborate more about the aforementioned problems along with the solutions.	Issue	issue  statement
2	First and foremost, rather than the impact of high living cost and high tech in society, sense of competition contributes more to unhappy lives due to high feeling of jealousy. Competition among neighborhood in terms of possession or profession that they have will automatically affect individuals' psychology including feeling of pressure and unsatisfied life. In addition, working more hours also, can be the factor why people nowadays easier to get stress due to the fact that they do not get enough time to rest or holiday. Spending more time at work rather than at home having joyful conversation with family or friends will gradually reduce the happiness of life. If those two problems still occur in people's everyday lives, it will be very measurable since they cannot enjoy their lives.	Side 1	topic  elaboration  point
3	Further, to address this unpleasant condition, having regular holiday and grateful feeling are believed to be the most plausible measures to reduce stress in life. Spending more time with family and friends by going somewhere on vacation may lead to more delightful life since this activity can charge and boost individuals' feeling of happiness. Moreover, individuals also need to be aware more of being grateful for their lives. If people can express more gratitude towards what they have, instead of being stress, they will feel satisfied and relaxed in every situation.	Side 2	topic  elaboration  point
4	All in all, live a life with the purpose of competition and work may put individuals to high pressure lives which are measurable. However, having enough time spent with the loving ones and being more grateful can be the most prominent solutions to shrink those stressful lifestyles.	Resolution	resolve

## APPENDIX C

## Analysis of Student 1: Post-task essay.

Par.	Sample answer	Stages	Phases
1	In this modern era, people are influenced easily by famous figures around the world in terms of lifestyles and professions. Many individuals admire and choose artists such as writers and musicians as their role models compared to scientists. Personally, I entirely affirm that such arts profession can give more impacts to society based on several justifications as will be discussed.	Thesis	issue  statement
2	In the first place, public figures in arts sector are become society's role models since their lives are opened to public. It is not bizarre phenomenon that the lifestyles of writers or musicians are portrayed perfectly in social media, television or websites starting from the way they dress or achieve their goal. Due to its transparency, the society can easily mimic and imitate the daily life activities as well as the behavior of those famous artists. Take Justin Bieber as a salient example, this popular pop singer who share many activities through social media can affect his fans to buy the same clothes or do the same hobby as him.	Argument	topic  example  elaboration
3	Furthermore, regarding the profession, to be an artist such as writer or singer is much more feasible rather than becoming a scientist. Many people believe that working in art sector have less burden compared to scientist who needs longer time to study and brilliant brain also singers seem to have happy and preferable life as well because they can sing and performed around the world due to the fact that they want less demanding job physically and psychologically. Thus, it is inevitable that the majority of youngsters now are dreaming to become singers or actors in order to have much easier live similar to their role models.	Argument	topic  elaboration  point
4	All in all, live a life with the purpose of competition and work may put individuals to high pressure lives which are measurable. However, having enough time spent with the loving ones and being more grateful can be the most prominent solutions to shrink those stressful lifestyles.	Restatement	point

## APPENDIX D

### Analysis of Student 2: Pre-task.

Par.	Sample answer	Stages	Phases
1	In today's world, live becomes much more competitive, hence people inevitably need to cope and pace with it. Some people argue that, technology is the main cause of this phenomenon while others oppose and claim that living cost contribute more.	Issue	issue statement
2	The invention of internet-based technology has eased people to be connected with people around the world. Social media features, like Facebook, Instagram and twitter, have excessive contribution towards stressful problem. Indirectly, the internet users are involved in unreal competition by competing to gain more likes and comments when they upload photos or update statues. For an instance, people will unconsciously compare likes they receive with other account users connected to them, and they will feel inferior if they get less. Hence, this condition leads the to suffer from stressful. Additionally, the high living cost experienced by people todays stems from indirect competition which occurs on their life-cycle. They face wobbly to fulfill the basic needs sin they cannot cut their coat according to their clothe. People normally draw other attention by wearing branded stuffs, for an example, while they are cannot afford it financially. Therefore, being stressful becomes an impair impact inevitably.	Side 1	topic elaboration point
3	To release societies from the impair phenomenon, they must be grateful and respectful for they have achieve and possess. This attitude helps avoid them to be irritated for what someone else reach. For instance, Baduy tribe, one of Indonesian tribes, can live peacefully inasmuch as they never compare themselves to others and respect to everything they have. As a result, they tend to help each other and put their togetherness at first. Thus, people can live peacefully when they avoid the unbeneficial competition with both real and virtual friends, and appreciate for life they have now.	Side 2	topic elaboration point
4	In conclusion, I, personally, reckon that both living cost and high-tech invention have impaired impact on people's live, especially contributed to stressfulness. Hence, I opine that being grateful for this life is the best way to secure people from this problem.	Resolution	Resolve

**APPENDIX E****Analysis of student 2: Post-task.**

<b>Par.</b>	<b>Sample answer</b>	<b>Stages</b>	<b>Phases</b>
1	Compared to scientists, artists such as writers, musicians and painters contribute and influence people's live more. I obviously stand against this statement since scientists, through their discovery and invention, brings direct impact on people's life.	Thesis	issue  statement
2	The creatures of artists can directly touch people's personal feeling. Basically, an artist will wholeheartedly dedicate his or her creation to represent the emotion which major pf its lovers. When people enjoy the art products such as music, poetry, and novel, they can sink in the beautiful words writers put on. For an example, Kahlil Gibran poetry, by reading this poetry, all broken-hearted people can feel it deeply and prison them in the jar called love. Indirectly this condition influences the way of the people sees the future, in which by taking the story personally, they unconsciously imagine themselves as the figure of that arts product. Sadly, it cannot affect those who have a little sense of arts. Artists, thus are unable to influence society as a whole.	Argument	topic elaboration  example
3	In contrast, scientists always do research to discover and invent a bunch of cutting-edge technology which can case people's life. For an example, the invention of handphone having brought significant changes on communication pattern of people. If in the past, people who are living far away from their family needed to wait for uncountable months to communicate with their colleagues only. since letter was the only one communication medium, now the existence of this communication tool allows them to run long distance communication everywhere and every time, and even better they can do video call and see other's face. Scientists have change and influence people life directly and even more their invention have been a part of people's daily life.	Argument	topic  elaboration  example  point
4	All in all, I do convince that scientists have more influence towards people live than artists.	Restatement	point