



## Scaffold the Writing of Argumentative Texts to Undergraduate Students through Genre-based Pedagogy

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### APA Citation:

Samad, I.A., Fitriani, S.S., Yusuf, Y.Q., & Ys, S.B. (2024). Scaffold the writing of argumentative texts to undergraduate students through genre-based pedagogy. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 17(2), 196-222.

Received  
21/06/2023

Received in  
revised form  
03/03/2024

Accepted  
01/04/2024

### ABSTRACT

English is a demanding language for EFL students especially ones without access to additional support like tutorials, extra classes, and opportunities to use English in their daily lives. Scaffolding the writing process for students and making automatic use of genre knowledge would help them improve their English writing performance. Little is known about how genre knowledge with scaffolding instruction can help undergraduate students write an argumentative text in English that is composed of complex stages and sub-stages, for them to write a good thesis. This study aims to explore if the use of scaffolded genre-based pedagogy applied in a writing process can improve the argumentative writing skills of undergraduate

	<p>students. This study employs two-cycle action research involving 25 students enrolling in Argumentative Writing subject at the university. An observation form and documentation are used as the research instruments. Data from the observation and documentation were analyzed qualitatively. The results of the analysis have indicated that scaffolding students to write argumentative texts based on the genre of the text has assisted them in developing their writing skills.</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> argumentative text, genre-based pedagogy, scaffolding instruction, undergraduate students</p>
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## Introduction

Learning English as a foreign language in non-English-speaking countries has become increasingly important for people to engage with the global community (Abbas et al., 2021). However, English is a challenging language for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students (Abrar et al., 2018), especially those without access to additional support such as tutorials, extra classes, and opportunities to use English in their daily lives. Countries like Thailand, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, and Indonesia have conducted extensive research to help their citizens develop English skills. Writing is a crucial skill for EFL students to master. EFL students are expected to be proficient in writing different genres of academic English texts, especially those that were used at the university level (Römhild et al., 2011), to be part of the international community. Learning to write academic English texts is essential for the future academic success of EFL students who aim to advance to higher levels of education (Poedjiastutie & Oliver, 2017). Academic writing differs from everyday writing in terms of linguistic, cognitive, and socio-cultural/psychological dimensions (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2010). Moreover, the written genres they must produce are often unlike other genres, especially in English. Explanations, expositions, historical recounts, complex narratives, and argumentations, for example, present particular challenges for many students.

Scaffolding the writing process for EFL students and making automatic use of genre knowledge would improve their writing performance. In a classroom context, scaffolding involves teachers creating a supportive environment to make learning easier and more successful for learners (Pawan, 2008). Genre knowledge can help students become familiar with the structure of key text types in academic discourse, enabling them to develop productive drafts more effectively. Improved writing skills in English may lead to increased motivation in writing. Research suggests that enhancing students'

motivation to develop literacy skills can result in better grades (e.g., Schaffner et al., 2013). Equipping EFL students with an understanding of the texts they are asked to write can lead to a more enthusiastic approach to writing in English with enthusiasm.

Studies related to the implementation of genre knowledge for teaching literacy in EFL classrooms have been long initiated by scholars. To date, studies in this field are becoming more and more focused on different participants' backgrounds and contexts, different types of texts, different goals, etc. There are studies spotlighting genre-based pedagogy in teaching how to write a report text (e.g. Flowerdew, 2000), a recount text (e.g. Luu, 2011), a thesis (e.g. Wang, 2017), an analytical essay (e.g. Worden, 2018), a descriptive text (e.g. Haerazi & Irawan, 2019), an argumentative text (e.g. Albana et al., 2020) and various types of text (e.g. Kindenberg, 2021). Introducing genre knowledge to writing different types of texts is very important to scaffold students in developing paragraphs (McGrath et al., 2019). Therefore, further studies are needed to provide more insights to teachers and students, especially regarding academic texts that are rarely addressed in the literature. Little is known, for example, how genre-based pedagogy with scaffolding instruction can help EFL undergraduate students write argumentative text that is composed of complex stages and sub-stages, which is important for writing a good thesis. Argumentative writing skills are important for undergraduate students to properly build their argument in a thesis. Therefore, our study aimed to address this gap by focusing on the writing of argumentative texts to help undergraduate students develop appropriate and effective arguments in their undergraduate thesis. Accordingly, our study sought to answer this question: Could scaffolded genre-based pedagogy be applied in a writing process to improve the argumentative writing skills of undergraduate students?

## Literature Review

### A Genre-based Pedagogy

In the EFL context, two major approaches to genre need to be considered: English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). From an ESP point of view, the genre is defined as a group of communicative events (Paltridge, 2014). Within this perspective, “genre is a text, either spoken or written, that serves a particular purpose in a society and is composed of a series of segments, called moves” (Ellis et al., 1998, p.147). This study, however, takes the perspective of SFL, an Australian approach to genre theory (Coe & Freedman, 1998).

Macken-Horarik (2002) defines genre as text types with sequenced stages that include social location, purpose, and schematic structure, such as narrative, recount, explanation, and procedure. Moreover, Johns (2002, p.3) stated that “Genre has become a term that refers to complex oral or written responses by speakers or writers to the demands of a social context”. Derewianka (2003) described genre as a staged process, and Martin (2009) defines genre as staged, goal-oriented social processes in which language plays a role in the configuration of meaning. Genre is defined as staged because it takes several stages to achieve its goal. It is goal-oriented because it is necessary to reach something which is set as its goal. It is social because it needs to be recognized by community members (Martin & Rose, 2012) to achieve communicative goals through a means of communication, whether it is spoken or written. The genre approach is usually used to teach writing (Firkins et al., 2007) and reading, because reading and writing are interrelated. The focus of teaching genre to students in writing is on the patterns of stages and clause grammar (Christie, 2013). The exploration of genre knowledge including knowledge about the genre structure of the text and the language features (Rose & Martin, 2012) in writing an academic text enables students to write purposefully and coherently different kinds of texts that are useful for their educational background and social needs.

### **Argumentative Text**

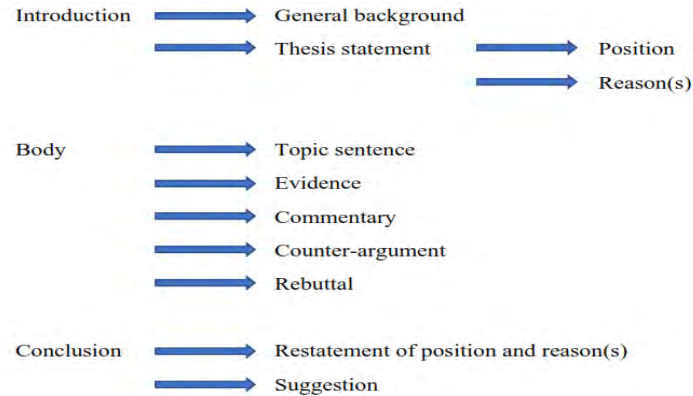
Argumentative text is a genre that aims to persuade readers to adopt the author's position on a debatable topic. Unlike persuasive text, argumentative text also provides a counterargument. This means that in addition to providing evidence and reasons for the author's position, the text must also address opposing viewpoints. Therefore, the process of writing an argumentative text is more challenging than writing a persuasive text.

According to Schmeer (2014), the development of an argumentative text involves three main stages: introduction, body, and conclusion. Each stage includes specific sub-stages. In the introduction paragraph, these sub-stages are the general background and the thesis statement. The thesis statement, should clearly state the author's position on the topic and provide reason(s) for their position. The body paragraph is the most challenging part of an argumentative text, as it requires the author to address five sub-stages: topic sentence, evidence, commentary, counterargument, and rebuttal. This involves providing evidence for the author's position and addressing opposing viewpoints. The conclusion paragraph consists of two sub-stages: a restatement of the author's position and reasons and providing a suggestion. Due to the complexity of the stages and sub-stages involved in writing an argumentative text, students can benefit from scaffolded instruction using

genre-based pedagogy to write the text well. Figure 1 concludes the structure of argumentative texts as suggested by Schneer (2014).

## Figure 1

*The Generic Structure of An Argumentative Text (Based on Schneer, 2014)*



## The Connections of Scaffolding Instruction, Genre-based Pedagogy, and Writing Skills

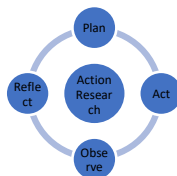
In the context of language and literacy development, there is an interconnection between scaffolding instruction, genre-based pedagogy, and writing skills. This connection is important to foster effective writing abilities. Introduced by Vygotsky (1978), scaffolding provides support to learners to engage with the tasks. In the writing context, scaffolding aims to guide students to become independent in the writing process (Wood et al., 1976). Meanwhile, genre-based pedagogy emphasizes the teaching of writing by exploring different types of genres, recognizing that each genre has its purpose, structure, and features (Martin & Rose, 2007). This approach helps students understand how to effectively structure and convey ideas effectively. By integrating genre-based pedagogy, students are provided with a framework to scaffold their writing tasks. Scaffolding can be tailored to support students in mastering the conventions and expectations associated with different genres, as it includes explicit instruction to enhance students' writing skills. Scaffolding and genre-based pedagogy jointly contribute to developing effective writing skills. Thus, scaffolding instruction, genre-based pedagogy, and writing skills are connected in the educational landscape.

## Research Methodology

This study employs action research to implement genre-based pedagogy in the classroom to teach undergraduate students how to write an argumentative text based on its stages and sub-stages. Action research is characterized by introducing an intervention, trying it, and then reflecting on it to change and improve classroom academic performance (Cohen et al., 2000), as well as for problem-solving (Stringer, 2004). Because this research aims to change the writing classroom activities to improve students' academic writing performance and ease their writing problems, action research is an appropriate methodology for investigating the impact of the intervention. Cohen et al. (2000) outline four steps of each cycle, which they refer to as an action research model. These steps are plan, act, observe, and reflect. Our research project implemented the steps in the action research cycle by Cohen et al. (2000) discussed above. Two cycles of action research were conducted in the intervention class. The assumption is that within two cycles of action research, students had sufficient opportunities to practice writing argumentative texts. It is also expected that their writing skill could be improved within these two cycles. The steps of each cycle of the action research are presented in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**

*The Action Research Cycle*



**(Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000)**

The planning step involves creating a teaching/intervention design for teaching activities that include genre-specific pedagogy, as opposed to regular writing activities in typical classrooms. In the action step, we act as both instructors and researchers, so the action and the observation steps of each cycle are done simultaneously. During this step, students produced argumentative texts. The reflection step involved a review of the intervention design, including the writing activities concerning students' writing improvement. This step was also done as a preparation for the second cycle of the intervention classes. This study expected that the action research cycle

would stop after the second cycle if the students indicated better performance in writing argumentative texts.

## **Research Participants**

The research participants for this study are undergraduate students enrolled in the English Education Department (EED) under the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Universitas Syiah Kuala (USK). The EED offers a subject called Argumentative Writing, which was taken by 125 students. This number is divided into 5 classrooms (Classroom 1 until Classroom 5). One classroom was randomly selected from the five for the intervention. To select the classroom, each classroom number was written on a piece of paper, the papers were rolled, and one was randomly selected. The randomly selected class was chosen as the participants of the intervention. In this case, Classroom 3 with a total of 25 students was selected.

## **Data Collection Techniques and Research Instruments**

The research utilized observation and documentation as data collection techniques. The observation form and documentation served as the research instruments. The observation form was used to observe the action in both cycles where the researchers used genre-based pedagogy to scaffold the participants to write argumentative texts (See Table 1 for the observation forms). Some members of the research team provided treatment to the students while others observed the classroom as non-participant observers. The items observed in the classroom include the teaching of the purpose, text structures, and language features of an argumentative text which are part of genre-based pedagogy. The observers filled in the observation form while observing the classroom. Meanwhile, the documentation that was collected in the classroom is the students' writing worksheets. In the treatment, we provided a table of guidelines to scaffold students in developing their argumentative paragraphs. We also provided 4 meetings for the intervention of each cycle. Each meeting lasted for 100 minutes. During each intervention meeting, the students were asked to write the text stage by stage based on the table of guidelines. After each cycle, each student produced one complete argumentative text which was used for the analysis.

**Table 1***The observation forms*

Items for observation		Meeting # Cycle # (Tick the column)	Remarks (Write Notes)
Introducing the purpose			
Teaching the structure	Introduction paragraph (General background & thesis statement)		
	Body paragraph (Topic sentence, evidence, commentary, counterargument, & rebuttal)		
	Concluding paragraph (Restatement of position and reason & suggestion)		
Teaching the language features			
Scaffolding the writing process (Help students organize the writings based on the text structure)			

**Data Analysis**

The data from the observation and documentation were analyzed separately. The data from the observation were analyzed following the steps of qualitative data analysis suggested by Miles et al. (2018); these are data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. For the data reduction step, we selected relevant details in the observation forms to examine the teaching process. These details were then displayed in a table to determine if all the important teaching steps listed in the observation forms were included in the treatment. In the conclusion step, the data were analyzed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching process. Meanwhile, the argumentative writings produced by the participants were qualitatively analyzed by examining text structure, including stages and sub-stages the students have written as presented in Table 2. The framework for the analysis is based on the structure of the argumentative text presented previously in Figure 1 of this manuscript as suggested by Schneer (2014). As explained previously, an argumentative text has three stages; introduction, body, and conclusion. In each stage, there are sub-stages, for example, the introduction stage includes general background and thesis statement sub-stages. The body and concluding paragraphs also have sub-stages. The qualitative analysis of



the students’ writings did not **require statistical measurement. Instead, we** checked if or not the students included all the stages and sub-stages needed to develop an argumentative text, and whether the content of each stage and sub-stages was correctly written. Each of the sub-stages is marked “√” if it is written correctly, marked “I” if it is written incompletely, and marked “×” if it is not written in the text.

**Table 2**

*The analytical table to analyze students’ worksheets*

Student’s Name & Cycle #	Text Structure	Mark	Notes
..... (Cycle .....)	Introduction paragraph (General background & thesis statement)		
	Body paragraph (Topic sentence, evidence, commentary, counterargument, & rebuttal)		
	Concluding paragraph (Restatement of position and reason & suggestion)		

## Results and Discussion

### Results

This 2-cycle action research aimed at improving the students’ skills in writing argumentative texts through scaffolded genre-based pedagogy. Based on the analysis of the students’ writings, we could see their writing performance in both cycles as concluded in Table 3 below.

**Table 3**

*Students’ argumentative writing performance*

Students’ names (Pseudonyms)	Cycle 1									Cycle 2								
	Introduction			Body			Conclusion			Introduction			Body			Conclusion		
Aisa	√	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Silmi	√	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	I	√
Faris	√	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Dalay	√	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	√	√	√	×	×	√	√	√	×
Islami	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Alifa	√	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Ahmad	√	I	I	I	I	×	×	I	I	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Hada	√	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Dina	√	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Hery	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Akbar	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Rasya	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Rahma	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Fitri	√	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Adinda	√	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Fajar	√	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	I	√
Raihan	√	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Dana	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Billa	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Nadia	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Amira	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Dewi	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Thaya	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Isma	√	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	×
Mawar	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

The above table shows the students' argumentative writing performance in both cycles. In the first cycle, 12 students were able to correctly write argumentative texts based on the stages and sub-stages, while 13 students were not able to do so. In the second cycle, it is evident that the majority of students were able to write argumentative texts correctly and completely based on the text structure. The detailed explanation and examples of students' argumentative writings are presented in the following sub-headings.

### ***The Students' Argumentative Writing Performance in Cycle 1***

To scaffold the students to write argumentative texts in the first cycle, we created a table of guidelines to direct the students in the writing process, rooted in the theoretical principle of genre which is staged- (Derewianka, 2003) and goal-oriented (Martin, 2009). The guideline consists of the stages and sub-stages, which are sequentially written in different rows of the table. We also provide empty rows to the right of the stages and sub-stages for the

students to write sentences for the argumentative text. The guideline to write the text is presented in Figure 3.

**Figure 3**

*The Table of Guidelines for Cycle 1*

Stages	Sub-stages		Sentences
Introduction	General background		
	Thesis statement	Position	
		Reason(s)	
Body*	Topic sentence		
	Evidence		
	Commentary		
	Counter argument		
	Rebuttal		
Conclusion	Restatement of position and reason(s)		
	Suggestion		

Based on Schneer (2014)

\* The number of body paragraph depends on the number of reason students write in the thesis statement. Each body paragraph argues one reason only.

In the writing process, students write their texts in the guidelines table. As can be seen previously in Table 3 (the students' writing performance), in cycle 1, some students were able to write the text correctly while others struggled to complete the text according to the stages and sub-stages of the text. To discuss the students' argumentative writings in Cycle 1, we chose two argumentative writings as examples.

**Figure 4***The Argumentative Text Written by Alifa in Cycle 1*

Stages	Sub-stages	Sentences
Introduction	General background	Homework is important for every student in order to train and develop insight into each subject given by the teacher. With homework, teachers can also find out the ability of each student to the learning that has been taught so far.
	Thesis statement	However, many arguments about how burdensome homework is for students; and more homework must be removed. This is due to one of the reasons there is a time limit that determines when working on and collecting assignments. Homework cannot be completely eliminated but can be overcome by means of a limit on each homework given by the lecturer to students, and also that students do not feel burdened in doing the homework.
	Position Reason(s)	
Body**	Topic sentence	Homework is common among school students, both elementary and high school.
	Evidence	Quoting from Cooper (2001, p. 3), homework is a task given by the teacher which is intended to be done outside school hours, and homework is also said to be a learning strategy caused by more factors that influence the learning process.
	Commentary	Especially now when the corona pandemic in Indonesia changed all activities at school into an online system.
	Counter argument	This has an impact on students who will not get an accurate explanation because it is online classes. And not a few teachers give homework with the intention that students can also study at home and not only play after online classes.
	Rebuttal	However, most students and parents complained about the homework given. Starting from the discussion given is not understood by students or also a subject that is different from the current era of their parents.
Conclusion	Restatement of position and reason(s)	In conclusion, presenting homework from the teacher to students is not wrong. However, the presence in the number of gifts is also the main reason that needs to be emphasized.
	Suggestion	Giving a slightly long time limit can help students more easily string words from each thought into the results of the homework they do. Also, presenting homework in various forms such as making videos or making handwork with fun things can also make students feel less burdened in doing the homework. As students, the limitation in giving homework makes students not too stressed thinking about the amount of homework that is available.

Based on Figure 4, Alifa has written the text in complete stages and sub-stages as guided by the table of guidelines. In the introduction stage, she wrote some sentences for the general background and thesis statement sub-stages. She wrote two sentences about homework as the general information and then started writing the thesis statement. As we can see in the table, the thesis statement is composed of four sentences, which she had to do in one sentence only. From the sentences also, we understood that she had a “pro” position on the topic where she wrote “...many arguments about how burdensome homework is for students....”, and had a reason for the position appearing in this sentence “...there is time limit...”. However, the thesis statement is not written in one clear sentence where she needs to include both the position and reason for the topic. We concluded that she had difficulty in composing a thesis statement as one of the sub-stages of the introduction stage. Moving to the body paragraph, she wrote neutral information about homework which reads “Homework is common among school students...” as the topic sentence. Whereas in this sentence, she had to restate the reason for being “pro” to the topic. Meanwhile, the evidence that she wrote in the next sentence does not relate to the position, reason, and topic sentence. The

other sub-stages of the body paragraph, which are the commentary, counterargument, and rebuttal are not related to position, reason, and the topic sentence. The body paragraph written by Alifa went wrong. The introduction and body paragraph stages are not aligned, and this has led to a wrong conclusion as can be seen in the table. From the analysis, we found that Alifa was confused in understanding the sub-stages and had difficulties providing information for each sub-stage of the text. Now we see the analysis of the second text.

**Figure 5**

*The Argumentative Text Written by Adinda in Cycle 1*

Stages	Sub-stages	Sentences
Introduction	General background	Homework is one thing that cannot be separated from students. Have you ever seen a student cry because he was overwhelmed with homework? Yes, a lot of homework may be stressful and frustrating for students. Homework is the leading source of frustration and stress for children, according to a survey done by the Better Sleep Council. The quantity of homework assigned by the teacher takes a lot of students' time so that students' time to develop their talents is reduced.
	Thesis statement	I want to argue that homework is a remnant of an outdated system that is no longer useful for learning or assessing student progress.
	Reason(s)	
Body*	Topic sentence	The amount of homework provided by teachers can cause students to become depressed or stressed.
	Evidence	According to Stanford researcher Denise Pope, children who have too much homework experience negative impacts such as increased stress, health issues, and a loss of balance.
	Commentary	What happens if children who still need to learn become stressed? They will experience a heavy burden when studying, leading to a dislike of learning and a feeling that learning is trouble.
	Counter argument	On the other hand, there is an opinion that says providing children with a quiet space to study might help them feel less stressed when doing homework.
	Rebuttal	However, this technique is ineffective. Even if their study area is quiet, they will still feel stressed due to a large amount of homework that is difficult to complete. If students do not finish the homework on time, they will get stressed and depressed.
Conclusion	Restatement of position and reason(s)	In conclusion, having less or no homework for students is a good idea since homework causes students stress, and without homework, students have more time to grow their talents.
	Suggestion	Alternatively, homework is substituted with something that might help students develop their talents while also reducing stress. Without needing to assign homework, teachers may change the learning approach so that learning becomes effective and fun. When students have free time, they can accomplish a multitude of activities, like personal benefits for students.

Similar to Alifa, Adinda has also written all the stages and sub-stages of the argumentative text as guided in the table. The general background sub-stage is well-composed within five sentences where she wrote about the general information of homework. Adinda then continued writing the thesis statement by using one sentence only. In the thesis statement, Adinda strongly showed her pro position on the topic. However, she did not mention the reason for her position. Thus, Adinda has missed one part of the thesis statement which is the reason. In the next stage, which is the body paragraph,

Adinda started by writing the topic sentence where she included one reason why homework should be limited, which reads “The amount of homework provided by teachers can cause students to become depressed or stressed”. The words “depressed” and “stressed” show the reason raised by her, but these reasons do not appear in the thesis statement. She then provided evidence and commentary that are related to the stress condition experienced by school students caused by homework. In the conclusion stage, Adinda restates the position and reason for being pro to the topic, which is followed by a suggestion. Based on the analysis of the argumentative text, Adinda had one problem in her writing, which is in the thesis statement where she did not include the reason for her position.

From the results of the analysis of all argumentative texts produced by the students in cycle 1, we identified several writing problems that they encountered. The introduction paragraph of an argumentative text should present the general background of the topic and a thesis statement. In the thesis statement, position and reason(s) should be mentioned. For this first stage of the text, most students can write the general background of the topic very well; nevertheless, most of the thesis statements drafted by the students are constructed in more than one sentence, had no clear position on the topic, and had no reason to the position. Moving to the second stage, which is the body paragraph, the students have also indicated their struggle in writing the five sub-stages: topic sentence, evidence, commentary, counterargument, and rebuttal. Some topic sentences are found to be unrelated to the thesis statement and some contain a reason which is not mentioned previously in the thesis statement; some evidence and commentaries are not related to the topic sentence; and some counterarguments and rebuttals are inappropriate. The errors the students have made in the introduction and body paragraph stages have also led them to an error in the conclusion stage. Reflecting on the findings, we concluded that the students still need scaffolding instruction through genre-based pedagogy in the second cycle of this research to help them increase their skill in writing argumentative texts.

### ***The Students’ Argumentative Writing Performance in Cycle 2***

Due to the difficulties the students faced in the first cycle, we revised the table of guidelines to scaffold students better in the writing process. For second language learners such as those participating in this research, more explanations or descriptions are needed in the table of guidelines to help them understand what to write in each stage and sub-stage of the text. The table has been divided into three parts, corresponding to the three stages of the text, in order to help students focus on each stage individually. The revised table is presented in Figure 6.

**Figure 6***The Revised Table of Guidelines*

Stage	Sub-stages	Sentences
Introduction	General background (Talk about the issue in a general way)	
	Thesis statement: Position, reason(s) (State your position on the issue and state the supporting reason(s)* <b>in one clear sentence</b> )	
Stage	Sub-stages	Sentences
Body**	Topic sentence (Restate the supporting reason <b>in one clear sentence</b> )	
	Evidence (Provide evidence from related sources: articles, news, expert opinions, etc.)	
	Commentary (Explain the evidence and the topic sentence)	
	Counter argument (Mention the other side of the supporting reason)	
	Rebuttal (Refute the counter argument)	
Stage	Sub-stages	Sentences
Conclusion	Restatement of thesis (Readdress position and reason(s))	
	Suggestion (Offer possible solution)	

Based on Schneer (2014)

\* Students may write more than one reason to support the position.

\*\* The number of body paragraph depends on the number of reason students write in the thesis statement. Each body paragraph argues one reason only.

For the above table of guidelines, we have included concise information about each stage and sub-stages to help the students in understanding what to include in each part of the text. We will now provide two examples of the students' writings from the second cycle of the research, both from the same students (Alifa and Adinda), to show the improvement in their writing. This improvement is also evident in the writings of other students. Due to space limitations, we are unable to present all students' writings in this paper.

**Figure 7***The Introduction Paragraph of An Argumentative Text Written by Alifa in Cycle 2*

Stage	Sub-stages	Sentences
Introduction	General background (Talk about the issue in a general way)	Homework is a set of tasks given by the teacher to students to be completed outside the classroom or usually done at home. Homework is given by the teacher to get positive things to students. One of them is to determine whether students learn or not in the classroom. Sometimes, the amount of homework given by the teacher to students can make students, not like it. This can have a negative impact on students.
	Thesis statement: Position, reason(s) (State your position on the issue and state the supporting reason(s)* in one clear sentence)	Therefore, homework should be less because the amount of homework can make students feel burdened, limit students' rest time, and even interfere with student health.

The meaning of homework is written to start the paragraph. It is then followed by other general descriptions of homework in the next sentences. The general background sub-stage is written well by Alifa. The thesis statement then continues the writing, which is written in one sentence containing her pro position on the topic, and three reasons for the position which are “feel burdened”, “limit students’ rest time”, and “interfere with students’ health”. The position and the supporting reasons for the position are written in the thesis statement. The introduction paragraph is written accordingly.

**Figure 8***The Body Paragraph 1 of An Argumentative Text Written by Alifa in Cycle 2*

Stage	Sub-stages	Sentences
Body 1	Topic sentence (Restate the supporting reason in one clear sentence)	To start with, the amount of homework can make students feel burdened.
	Evidence (Provide evidence from related sources: articles, news, expert opinions, etc.)	A survey was done by Zenius Education in 2012 regarding the perception of Indonesian students toward homework and their habits in completing the homework. The results showed that 48% of the 1340 respondents admitted that homework could be a burden for them.
	Commentary (Explain the evidence and the topic sentence)	This can harm students with the homework they do almost every day. It can complain to students the most, feel chased by the homework, and even worse it can make students depressed and stressed.
	Counter argument (Mention the other side of the supporting reason)	On the other hand, the teacher assumes that the homework they give almost every day has a positive impact which can increase students' learning time at home and train students' sense of responsibility for the homework given to them.
	Rebuttal (Refute the counterargument)	However, it does not completely increase student study time at home and does not always have a positive impact on students. Giving homework every day may cause students to receive pressure and compulsion.



Alifa has written three body paragraphs in her writing to support the three reasons mentioned in the thesis statement. Body paragraph 1 commences with a topic sentence by restating the first reason to support the position. It is then followed by giving evidence. Because the reason is related to the “burden” of doing homework, the evidence given in the paragraph was also connected to that feeling. The commentary sub-stage comes afterward by explaining the evidence and the topic sentence. Alifa used the words “depressed” and “stressed” to strengthen the burden felt by students because of homework. Following the commentary, a counterargument that counters the topic sentence is provided, saying that homework has a positive impact on students’ responsibility. This sentence is then refuted in the rebuttal sub-stage by emphasizing the pressure students have in doing homework. This body paragraph is successfully written by Alifa because she has included one of the reasons mentioned in the thesis statement of the introduction paragraph, the evidence related to the reason, the explanation related to the topic and the evidence, the counterargument countering the reason, and the refutation to the counterargument. All sub-stages of the body paragraph are written well.

## Figure 9

### *The Body Paragraph 2 of An Argumentative Text Written by Alifa in Cycle 2*

Stage	Sub-stages	Sentences
Body 2	Topic sentence (Restate the supporting reason in <b>one clear sentence</b> )	On top of that, the large amount of homework can limit students’ rest time.
	Evidence (Provide evidence from related sources: articles, news, expert opinions, etc.)	According to Robert H. Tai, Associate Professor of Education, University of Virginia, through the conversation “Estimate the evening hours spent by many high school students on homework add about 180 hours during a school year”.
	Commentary (Explain the evidence and the topic sentence)	This shows that homework takes students more time to do and leaves less time to develop students’ interest or increase students’ soft skills, and reduces students’ rest time at home after a tiring day.
	Counter argument (Mention the other side of the supporting reason)	On the other hand, Robert H. thinks it is common for high school students to devote twice as much time, about two hours each day to do their homework, and even some schools need more homework.
	Rebuttal (Refute the counterargument)	However, giving more homework to students, may not necessarily make students understand the lesson. Students spend much time doing homework and struggling to understand what they are assigned.

The second body paragraph argues the second reason for the position of the topic, which is “limit students’ rest time”. The second reason is written clearly in the topic sentence. To strengthen the topic sentence, Alifa continues the paragraph by providing a piece of evidence related to the reason as can be seen in the next sentence. Following the evidence, a commentary sentence

is written to comment on the topic sentence and the evidence. She then continues her writing by presenting a counterargument sentence to counter the second reason for the position. The second paragraph ends with a refutation of the counterargument. Alifa has written body paragraph 2 following the correct sub-stages of an argumentative text. The arguments that she presented in this paragraph are interconnected from the first sentence to the last sentence.

**Figure 10**

*The Body Paragraph 3 of An Argumentative Text Written by Alifa in Cycle 2*

Stage	Sub-stages	Sentences
Body 3	Topic sentence (Restate the supporting reason in <b>one clear sentence</b> )	Last but not least, the amount of homework can harm students' health.
	Evidence (Provide evidence from related sources: articles, news, expert opinions, etc.)	According to a group of Australian researchers, from investigated the relationship between time spent on homework and students' academic performance "As a result, they found that most students who get too much homework will increase health problems due to lack of sleep, stress, less time to play, and so on".
	Commentary (Explain the evidence and the topic sentence)	Worse yet, students who answered that homework can cause stress also have physical symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, lack of sleep, weight loss, and digestive problems. This shows that based on the research and respondents, if the teacher gives a large amount of homework, students can be stressed and it can harm their health.
	Counter argument (Mention the other side of the supporting reason)	On the other hand, one of the triggers for stress is not always only caused by homework. It can be because each student has a different work resistance and learning style.
	Rebuttal (Refute the counterargument)	However, the amount of homework, will take up more time and can make students have less rest time. Students who have low work endurance will be vulnerable to adverse effects on their health.

The third reason for the position of the topic that she wrote in the topic sentence of the third body paragraph is related to the third reason she has presented in the thesis statement of the introduction paragraph. She continues in the next sentence with the evidence for the reason. The evidence talks about homework and its effect on students' health, which is written to strengthen the topic sentence. Following the evidence, she commented on the topic sentence and the evidence by adding health issues such as weight loss and digestive problems to emphasize the side effects of too much homework given to students. The counterargument coming in the next sentence is trying to counter the health issue by saying that students have work resistance that hinders them from doing homework given by teachers. This counterargument is then refuted by her by saying that more homework does not give students enough time to rest. The analysis of the third body paragraph written by Alifa has indicated that all sub-stages are composed connectively to each other.

**Figure 11***The Concluding Paragraph of An Argumentative Text Written by Alifa in Cycle 2*

Stage	Sub-stages	Sentences
Conclusion	Restatement of thesis (Readdress position and reason(s))	To sum up, a large amount of homework given by the teacher can make students feel pressured, limit students' rest time, and endanger students' health, which can affect students' mental conditions and harm their learning.
	Suggestion (Offer possible solution)	It would be better if the teacher did not burden students too much with homework that could make students feel surfeited and bored. The teacher could replace the homework with other activities that students like and also related to students' talents and interests.

The first sentence in the last stage of the argumentative text written by Alifa restated the position and the supporting reasons for the position in one sentence. The suggestion then came in the last sentence saying that teachers can replace the homework with other activities related to students' talents and interests. The composition and the content of this paragraph are already appropriate, to sum up the argumentative text. After the whole analysis of Alifa's argumentative essay, we concluded that she has improved her writing in terms of organization where she can write the text based on the correct structure. In addition, the information presented in all stages and sub-stages is interconnected. Now we see the argumentative writing written by Adinda in cycle 2.

**Figure 12***The Introduction Paragraph of An Argumentative Text Written by Adinda in Cycle 2*

Stage	Sub-stages	Sentences
Introduction	General background (Talk about the issue in a general way)	Ever be a student? Everyone that ever sits in the class while facing the whiteboard must be thinking once or more in a lifetime about why after all the tasks and study in the class the teacher also gives us homework to finish besides the school time. In case of that, sometimes homework could be burdensome for the student because some of times teacher would give them more than one homework without knowing that his/her student actually already gets dozens of homework from other classes.
	Thesis statement: Position, reason(s) (State your position on the issue and state the supporting reason(s)* <b>in one clear sentence</b> )	Homework must be restricted to one class meeting; it makes students feel burdened and less active in the class.

Adinda has provided general information about homework in the first paragraph, followed by a thesis statement. The thesis statement is written in one sentence, which is correct according to the theory of writing this text. In

the thesis statement, she included her contra position on the topic, where she wrote “homework must be restricted...”. Also in the same sentence, she added two reasons why she is against the topic by writing two phrases “feel burdened” and “less active”. The thesis statement sentence is already complete because it has a position and supporting reasons.

### Figure 13

#### *The Body Paragraph 1 of An Argumentative Text Written by Adinda in Cycle 2*

Stage	Sub-stages	Sentences
Body 1	Topic sentence (Restate the supporting reason in one clear sentence)	The amount of homework that was given to the student is making them burdened.
	Evidence (Provide evidence from related sources: articles, news, expert opinions, etc.)	National Education Association and the National Parent Teacher Association recommend that student spend their time on homework 10 minutes per grade level per night, but a study by The American Journal of Family Therapy said that students are spending much more than that.
	Commentary (Explain the evidence and the topic sentence)	10 minutes does not seem that hard but can you imagine how the sixth grade recommended spending like one hour per night to make the homework but they actually need more time to finish their homework than the actual time, it would be better if school started to have a serious discussion and limiting their teacher in giving a homework per meeting.
	Counter argument (Mention the other side of the supporting reason)	However, research by the City University of New York said that "students who engage in self-regulatory processes while completing homework".
	Rebuttal (Refute the counterargument)	The idea of self-regulatory is great, but as we know homework is not the only way to get it, and something that exaggerates is never good.

The topic sentence of body paragraph 1 restates the first reason mentioned previously in the thesis statement. This is followed in the next sentence with the evidence that proves the reason. The commentary sub-stage is coming next to explain and strengthen the reason and evidence. This is then countered in the counterargument sentence claiming that students engage in a self-regulatory process while they complete homework, which is afterward refuted in the rebuttal sentence. The contents of all sub-stages in body paragraph 1 are related to each other.

**Figure 14***The Body Paragraph 2 of An Argumentative Text Written by Adinda in Cycle 2*

Stage	Sub-stages	Sentences
Body 2	Topic sentence (Restate the supporting reason in <b>one clear sentence</b> )	Homework is also affected students' activeness in the classroom.
	Evidence (Provide evidence from related sources: articles, news, expert opinions, etc.)	As we know the national education target is not just a great score but to develop skill, character, and also knowledge (UU no.20 of 2003 article 1 paragraph 2), it all would be assessed by the teacher from each meeting in the class.
	Commentary (Explain the evidence and the topic sentence)	Imagine if a six-grade student has seven subjects in a week and all of that meeting would give them one homework, it indirectly would make them think that homework is a must to get the score and what happens in the class is not that important to them.
	Counter argument (Mention the other side of the supporting reason)	On the other hand, a study said that homework could train students to work independently, train their time management, prioritize and take responsibility for the educational process.
	Rebuttal (Refute the counterargument)	But, if all of their eagerness to learn is already used to make the homework every night, they truly think to rest a little bit in the class, while actually, the teacher needs their activeness to discuss the material together so that the teacher could directly assess the three things from the national education target.

The second body paragraph is composed to argue the second supporting reason which is about students' activeness in the classroom. This information can be seen in the topic sentence. The evidence for the reason is addressed in the next sentence by quoting one of the Indonesian rules on education which says the need for students to develop skill, character, and knowledge. Here she is trying to argue that focusing on the development of skill, character, and knowledge is more important than doing a lot of homework. The commentary sentence following the evidence emphasizes the reason and evidence. The paragraph continues with a counterargument sentence that opposes the reason by stating some benefits of school homework. This is then refuted in the rebuttal sentence asserting that the time the students spent doing homework has hindered them from being active in the classroom to develop important skills.

**Figure 15***The Concluding Paragraph of An Argumentative Text Written by Adinda in Cycle 2*

Stage	Sub-stages	Sentences
Conclusion	Restatement of thesis (Readdress position and reason(s))	Homework is actually the only reason why students burn out and give up on being involved with the class activity.
	Suggestion (Offer possible solution)	In order of that, the teacher could still give them homework in order to train their knowledge and thinking skills, but by the rule of still checking their schedule, the time that is needed to finish the assignment, or just give them an objective type of homework with a multiple-choice, true-false question and other, that doesn't spend a lot of their free time for finishing the assignment.

The concluding paragraph restates the position and supporting reasons mentioned previously in the thesis statement of the introduction paragraph. This paragraph ends by suggesting possible solutions to minimize students' load on school homework. The results of the analysis have shown Adinda's improvement in writing an argumentative text, particularly in terms of organization where she can write the text based on the structure of the text, and in terms of interconnected content where she competently connects the arguments from the first stage to the last one.

## **Discussion**

In general, we concluded a possible tentative starting point of the students' problems in composing a good argumentative text by making an overall comparison of the students' writing samples. They struggle with text organization, expressing ideas, and maintaining a coherent flow of the story. Poor writing satisfaction in students is a common experience that is mainly caused by poor English language proficiency (Sarwat et al., 2021), poor teaching instruction, lack of inventive ideas, (Bulqiyah et al., 2021), background knowledge (Altikriti, 2022), and understanding of the text generic structure (Hawari et al., 2022). All of the above reasons are quite understandable from the students' point of view given English is not their native language. First, they have to be familiar with the language system and their understanding of what good writing is. It is a skill that needs time, knowledge, and motivation to polish. Second, their writing efficiency is also influenced by external and superficial factors that go beyond composing text on paper. In this case, a good and coherent writing puts the students' knowledge to the test. To produce a cohesive argumentative text, students are expected to know and understand the topic they are trying to tell. Additionally, they need a strong narrative to lure the audience into their argument. One way of doing it is by knowing the exact generic structure and organization of the text. Another problem the students are frequently finding themselves trapped with.

Therefore, in this study, we tried to formulate a teaching technique that answers the students' need for improvement by enhancing their writing skills. The initial plan was to scaffold the students' writing process with genre-based pedagogy focusing on the structure of the argumentative text which consists of stages and sub-stages, and to provide a writing table guideline. However, we found that the students were too overwhelmed by the structure of the argumentative text. The plethora of procedures and organization of a text spark difficulty in students' writing proficiency (Teng, 2019). The reason might rely on the fact that the development and construction of a text structure confused them and limited their way of thought thus making it hard

for them to express it. Subsequently, they have difficulty providing information to support their statement and constructing a strong argument in their writings.

However, genre-based pedagogy addressed these problems by providing flexibility through the intervention. After a revision to the table guideline that conforms to the students' needs by providing brief information about each stage and sub-stages, we found that genre-based pedagogy was effective in scaffolding the writing process and improving their writing. This approach has a significant effect on enhancing students' writing skills (Chen, 2021; Ganapathy, 2022). It reacts positively to the students' linguistics skills and helps them compose a more systematic and structural text and use the 'correct' language in their writing.

By comparison, the students are more confident to put their writing skills in the second cycle, proven by how well they put together their compositions, both linguistically and structurally. Gill and Janjua (2020) explain that the scaffolding process through genre-based pedagogy enables students to produce more coherent writing with good organization of text structure. The reason might be relevant to the fact that scaffolding allows students to learn independently by observing themselves and learning from it (Pawan, 2008). In our case, we assign them to the same instructional lesson in the second cycle with a little adjustment that meets their needs. The result shows that the students' reflection on their ability and review of their skills correlated with their improvement. In a way, model review develops a sense of familiarity and awareness of the sequence of stages (Ho, 2009).

Additionally, the intervention also plays a crucial role in the complexity of genre-based approaches to improve writing skills. Kuzmenkova and Erykina (2022) explain that this approach allows discussion and focus on a learner-centered approach. The benefit of this approach pertains to the improvement of text organization as well as helping students develop their style of learning. This explanation mirrored Alifa and Adinda's improvement in their writing skill. After that, their compositions have improved significantly. They can write based on the correct structure of the text organization stage by stage and present interconnected content and ideas orderly.

## Conclusion

The implementation of genre-based pedagogy with scaffolding instruction assists EFL undergraduate students in improving their writing skills, particularly in writing an argumentative text, as indicated by the results of this study. This achievement is a good start for them to later write effective arguments in their undergraduate thesis. Throughout the writing process, it is

essential to evaluate the instruction to ensure its suitability for guiding students through the required stages. Teachers may need to make adjustments to the instruction to better support students in the writing process. Once the instruction is well-suited, students can write effectively and become independent writers, which is the goal of scaffolding instruction. Our qualitative study has examined the improvement of undergraduate students' argumentative writing skills by analyzing their writing process and the texts they produced. Future researchers are suggested to also explore students' perspectives regarding their experience in the writing process using scaffolding genre-based pedagogy.

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