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"WE ARGUE FOR NEW KNOWLEDGE": ARGUMENT STYLES IN RESEARCH ARTICLE DISCUSSIONS OF SCOPUS-INDEXED ELT JOURNALS

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Abstract
Numerous studies over the past decade examined rhetorical structure and linguistic features of research articles (RAs); however, the investigation of writers' arguments in research article discussions (RADs) in reputable international journals in specific disciplines remains scarce. This present study aims to investigate argument styles (AS) and the linguistic clues that characterise the arguments in RADs of English Language Teaching (ELT) Scopus-indexed journals. 115 RADs were collected purposively from twelve ELT journals and analysed using the adapted framework of Arsyad et al. (2020). The results revealed that new knowledge claims in RADs were constructed with strong and complete arguments, where interpreting the findings (AS-1) was obligatory, while contrasting the findings with previous research (AS-6) was optional. Other argument styles, such as elaborating (AS-2), illustrating (AS-3), stating the reasons for the findings (AS-4), comparing with previous studies (AS-5), and stating the contribution of the findings (AS-7) were very commonly used by the writers. Furthermore, each argument was characterised by distinct linguistic realisations that demonstrated the writers' expertise in academic writing. These findings contribute to the academic writing instruction in the English for Academic context in that novice writers can emulate the writing style of the RAD in reputable international ELT journals.

Keywords: argument style, discussion section, ELT Scopus-indexed journals, linguistic realisation, new knowledge claims

Introduction
A growing body of literature has recently focused on research articles as a central genre of academic writing (Holmberg & Vainio, 2018), together with the recognition of reputable journals as the main platform for disseminating scientific knowledge (Kankam et al., 2024). The development of academic writing studies is closely linked to the role of Swales (1990), who proposed the communicative moves framework as an important basis for analysing the rhetorical structure of RAs. Complementing this perspective, Halliday (1994) emphasises the choice of lexico-grammatical features to construct academic arguments, while Hyland (2005)

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highlights the metadiscourse marker model as a resource for building interaction between writers and readers. These views suggest that analysis of RAs must address both rhetorical organization and linguistic features to construct persuasive and credible academic discourse.

Discussion section, as a central part of a research article, is often regarded as a core section where writers present new knowledge claims (Dobakhti, 2016). In this section, writers are expected to interpret their findings, relate them to previous studies/literature, and highlight their scientific contributions in the fields (Basturkmen, 2012). They are also encouraged to acknowledge the study's limitations and recommendations (Al-Shujairi, 2021). These expectations indicate that RADs should be carefully structured and supported with appropriate linguistic realizations to fulfil their communicative purposes.

However, current studies report that writers, especially novice writers, often face challenges in constructing RADs effectively (see Amnuai, 2025; Thanajirawat & Chuea-Nongthon, 2022; Wardhana & Hindarto, 2022). These challenges highlight the need for a deeper understanding of rhetorical strategies closely tied to disciplinary contexts. To date, most research has focused on analysing rhetorical moves in RADs across disciplines, for example, Medical Studies (Ash'ari et al., 2023), Economic and Business (Thanajirawat & Chuea-Nongthon, 2022), Applied Linguistics, History, Dentistry, Medicine, Law, Accounting (Al-Shujairi, 2021). However, these studies mostly describe the rhetorical moves employed by writers rather than how they use different arguments to develop, support, and position their research findings within those moves. In other words, these studies seem to have limited insights into argument strategies through which writers interpret and explain the findings, engage with previous studies, and establish the contribution of the findings to the field.

Furthermore, previous scholars have conducted studies on arguments in RADs from various perspectives. Arsyad et al. (2020) and Arsyad et al. (2021) examined the argument styles writers used to support and justify their findings in Applied Linguistics and Linguistics RAs published in national and international journals. These studies revealed some argument styles, such as interpreting findings, explaining/elaborating findings, stating possible causes of findings, illustrating findings, and relating findings to relevant previous research. Arsyad et al. (2021) also concerned with argumentation strategies and linguistic realisations. Although these studies have established a foundation for understanding argument styles in RADs, less attention has been paid to how writers compare and contrast separately to credit their findings and specifically to highlight the contribution of the findings as part of constructing new knowledge claims (Basturkmen, 2012; Moyetta, 2016).

Moreover, current studies have extended argumentation studies in RADs viewed from different perspectives. Arizavi et al. (2023) investigated argumentation patterns and lexico-grammatical realisations in English for Specific Purposes articles from a diachronic perspective, whereas Arizavi et al. (2025) examined argument schemes and soundness and strength arguments. Warsidi and Maniam (2024) focused on academic conflicts in RADs written by Indonesian and Malaysian writers in language education by investigating proposing claims, inconsistency indicators, opposing claims, and conflict resolutions. Meanwhile, Walková and Bradford (2022) propose an argument construction model, revealing

different variations of argument construction across disciplines. These studies show that academic argumentation can be examined as patterns of reasoning, relationships among claims, rhetorical conflict, and disciplinary models of argument construction. However, these perspectives do not seem to fully explain how recurring argument styles function as rhetorical resources through which writers construct, negotiate, and legitimise new knowledge claims in RADs of Scopus-indexed ELT journals.

Furthermore, although previous studies have examined linguistic realisations of argumentations (e.g., Arizavi et al., 2025; Arsyad et al., 2021), and syntactic complexity to signal writers' arguments (see Casal et al., 2021; Ziaeian & Golparvar, 2022), the relationship between specific linguistic resources and particular argument styles remains insufficiently specific. These include lexico-grammatical and metadiscourse resources. These linguistic realisations are important, as they function as rhetorical signals, which writers use to make their argumentative positions visible and interpretable for readers. Previous research (Esfandiari & Ahmadi, 2024; Parkinson, 2011; Samanhudi, 2020) demonstrated that writers used various grammatical and interactional features to convince readers of new claims, and they differ across disciplinary and journal accreditation status contexts. Thus, these studies remain unclear about how particular linguistic resources are realised in different argument styles and support writers in constructing and highlighting new knowledge claims in Scopus-indexed ELT journals.

Considering the gaps, this present study aims to investigate argument styles and their linguistic realisations in RADs of ELT Scopus-indexed journals. The findings are expected to enrich ELT writers', particularly novice and aspiring writers', understanding of rhetorical practices of academic discourse and to inform the teaching of academic writing for novice writers and non-native English speakers (Flowerdew, 2021). To address the problems of the study, this study seeks to answer the following research questions.

1. How do argument styles work together to construct, negotiate, and legitimise new knowledge claims in RADs?
2. What linguistic realisation signals each argument style in RADs of ELT Scopus-indexed journals?

Literature review

Argument styles in research article discussions

Arguments in RAs play a crucial role in establishing and disseminating knowledge and presenting scholarly evidence to support or challenge a claim or position (Yasuda, 2023). In RADs, writers are required to provide arguments explaining how they rhetorically convince readers and the discourse community at large of their new knowledge claims after presenting research results or findings. These arguments serve as writers' comments on the findings, which are presented in four possible ways: interpreting the results, comparing or contrasting the results with literature, and accounting for the results (Liu & Buckingham, 2018). Arsyad et al. (2020) conceptualised these argumentative responses to research findings as argument styles. They divided them into five styles: Style 1 (interpreting the research findings), Style 2 (explaining or elaborating findings), Style 3 (stating the

possible cause/s), Style 4 (illustrating or exemplifying findings), and Style 5 (relating the research findings to those of previous studies).

Subsequent research has extended a perspective on how writers argue the credibility and significance of the findings. For example, Deng et al. (2024) identified promotional strategies to support and highlight the research's contribution in offering new insights. These strategies include stating consistency with previous research, stating inconsistency, and explaining the inconsistency (reasons to upgrade the credibility of the results). These strategies suggest that relating findings to previous studies needs to be broken into two arguments: comparing and contrasting with previous studies, due to different rhetorical functions. Furthermore, Chien and Li (2022) and Basturkmen (2012) argue that writers are expected to articulate the added value of their research findings explicitly. This aims to state that the findings contribute to knowledge in the field in terms of theory, practice, or methodology.

In conclusion, argument strategies demonstrate that argumentation in RADs is not limited to interpreting or explaining findings, but also involves positioning the contribution of findings to existing knowledge. These perspectives imply that argument styles represent functional rhetorical resources through which writers construct, negotiate, and legitimise new knowledge claims. These are realised by interpreting findings, explaining their possible meanings or causes, illustrating them with specific evidence, relating findings to previous studies (comparing/contrasting), and highlighting the contribution of the study.

Linguistic realisation of argument styles

Rhetorical functions (moves) in academic texts are accomplished through genre-specific linguistics (Zuo & Mahfoodh, 2026). The existence of linguistic resources in research article part-genres such as Discussions has shed light on how writers textually realise disciplinary knowledge construction at a micro level (Hao et al., 2026). In this study, linguistic realisations of argument styles are conceptualised as the linguistic resources through which rhetorical arguments are textually constructed and signalled. These resources are examined from two complementary perspectives: lexico-grammatical resources, informed by Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 1985) and metadiscourse resources, drawing from Hyland's (2005) metadiscourse framework. From the SFL perspective, Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) argue that language is viewed as a meaning-making resource in which meanings are realised through linguistic choices. The metadiscourse perspective, in turn, explains how writers organise propositions and signal their stance and engagement with readers in academic discourse.

Lexico-grammatical resources refer to lexical and grammatical choices through which writers construct meaning and rhetorical relationships in academic discourse. Concerning argument styles, Arsyad et al. (2020) identified inferential expressions realised through reporting or interpretative verbs, such as *this suggests that*, *the findings indicate that*, and *these results imply that,* to interpret research findings. Other studies coded knowledge-extension expressions, such as *this study contributes*, *extends previous knowledge*, to position the contribution of research findings (Liu & Buckingham, 2018; Wallwork, 2022; Wang & Deng, 2023). In addition, lexical resources (e.g., *contribution, implication, contribute*) can

explicitly lexicalise the contribution and consequences of research findings. For example, Ziaeian and Golparvar (2022) reported the frequent use of nominal phrases to build argumentative chains in Discussions for legitimising and advancing disciplinary knowledge. Comparative and contrastive lexical expressions, such as *consistent with*, *in line with, agree with, differ from, and contrary to*, can also be used to relate the research findings to previous studies (Zuo and Mahfoodh (2026). Hyland's (2005) metadiscourse model complements the lexico-grammatical perspective, which is divided into interactive markers (transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidential, and code glosses), and interactional markers (e.g., hedges, boosters, attitude markers, engagement markers, and self-mentions). Previous studies demonstrated that modal and epistemic elements (e.g., can, might, may possible) function as hedging resources to elaborate findings (e.g., such as *this can be explained by*, *one possible explanation is*) to elaborate findings, and for causal arguments (*this may be due to)* (Arsyad et al., 2021; Hilmi et al., 2021). Other studies have also identified code glosses, realised through exemplification expressions (e.g., *for example*, *for instance*), and transition markers, such as *similarly, likewise*, and *however*, which help signal relating findings with previous research (Zuo & Mahfoodh, 2026).

Overall, these theoretical perspectives and empirical studies suggest that argument styles in RADs are realised through the combination of lexical, grammatical, and discourse resources. These resources are not necessarily used uniformly across argument styles, but they may be associated with particular rhetorical functions. Moreover, their use may change over time in response to developments in academic discourse and disciplinary practices. For example, Wu and Pan (2023) found that grammatical stance devices in medical articles changed across the period 1970-2020, reflecting changes in disciplinary and pedagogical practice. Therefore, examining the linguistic realisations to support the arguments for new knowledge constructions in the Discussions of Scopus-indexed journals is crucial to help ELT writers when preparing manuscripts and to inform pedagogical implications in academic writing instruction.

Method

Design

This genre study employed a mixed-methods approach to investigate argument styles and their linguistic realisations in RADs. Genre analysis was considered appropriate as it enables systematic investigations of rhetorical practices and linguistic features within a specific disciplinary context (Swales, 1990). The quantitative component was used to identify the frequency and distribution of argument styles across the corpus. This provides an overview of the occurrence and relative prominence of argument styles. The qualitative component was then used to investigate how the identified argument styles were linguistically realised by writers to construct arguments. Thus, the integration of quantitative and qualitative analysis provided a comprehensive account of both the distributional patterns and contextual linguistic realisations of argument styles in RADs of Scopus-indexed ELT journals (Biber, 1993; Hyland & Guinda, 2012).

Corpus of the study

This study examined a corpus of RADs drawn from twelve peer-reviewed ELT Scopus-indexed journals in Quartile 1 using a purposive sampling technique. The consideration of the selection of journals and article criteria follows Nwogu (1997): 1) representativeness, 2) reputation, and 3) online accessibility. Representativeness refers to the inclusion of ELT journals and articles published in the latest issue (2024, when the study was conducted), ensuring that the data capture the current developments in article writing within the field (Arsyad et al., 2021). Reputation refers to the esteem in which readers hold a peer-reviewed journal and can also be reflected in its ranking in the SCImago Journal and Country Rank (SJR) database. The online availability means the selected journals are available for online access through the journals' official websites. Thus, the table below describes the corpus of the study.

Table 1. The corpus of the study

No	Journals and Code	SJR	Publishers and Country	No. Articles	Selected Articles	Word Count Average
1	TESOL Quarterly (TQ)	1.86	Wiley-Blackwell, USA	50	15	1.444
2	ELT Journal (RELC)	1.3	Oxford University Press, UK	36	9	639
3	RELC Journal	2.48	SAGE Publications, UK	36	10	908
4	TESL-EJ (T-EJ)	0.42	TESL-EJ Publications, USA	25	7	1.385
5	Teaching English with Technology (TEwT)	0.56	University of Nicosia, Cyprus	12	10	862
6	English Teaching: Practice and Critique (ET)	0.56	Emerald Group Publishing Ltd, UK	21	6	1.034
7	English in Education (EE)	0.37	Taylor and Francis Ltd, UK	21	5	659
8	English Teaching and Learning (ETL)	0.56	National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan	19	10	1.193
9	International Journal of English Language and	0.22	Asian Economic and Social Society, USA	39	10	830

No	Journals and Code	SJR	Publishers and Country	No. Articles	Selected Articles	Word Count Average
	Literature Studies (IJELLS)					
10	TESOL Journal (TJ)	0.91	John Wiley and Sons Inc., USA	37	10	1.155
11	International Journal of TESOL Studies (IJTS)	0.18	International TESOL Union Co., Ltd., UK	32	10	885
12	System (Sys)	2.21	Elsevier Ltd., UK	150	13	1.098
Total				452	115	12.141
Word Count Average in Total						1.012

Table 1 shows that 115 RADs were selected from 452 articles published in the twelve selected journals. The selected Discussion sections were selected using a purposive sampling procedure with two considerations. First, the articles had to contain a separate Discussion section. Articles in which the Discussion was combined with the Results (i.e., "Results and Discussion") or with the Conclusion (i.e., "Discussion and Conclusions") were excluded. Second, the article had to focus on a topic within English Language Teaching. Accordingly, the number of selected RADs varied across journals because purposive sampling was based on the inclusion criteria rather than a predetermined equal quota. These considerations caused a different number of selected articles in each journal. These criteria met the inclusion requirements, were included in the final corpus of analysis, and exceeded the minimum corpus study requirement: 30 texts (Biber et al., 1998).

Analytical framework

The argument style framework was adapted from Arsyad et al. (2020), which developed three argument functions proposed by Liu and Buckingham (2018) (e.g., interpreting the results, comparing or contrasting the results with the literature, and accounting for the results) into five argument styles for analysing RADs. Arsyad et al.'s framework focused on argumentation for constructing new knowledge claims in RADs in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics. The framework provides a useful analytical basis for examining how writers construct arguments from research findings. To the best of our knowledge, it has not previously been applied to English-medium RAs in reputable international ELT journals. However, this present study focused specifically on the construction of new knowledge claims in Discussions of English-medium RAs published in reputable international ELT journals. This focus required a contextual extension of the framework because, in addition to interpreting and accounting for findings and relating them to previous research, writers may explicitly articulate what their findings contribute to existing knowledge. Accordingly, we added "highlighting contributions (claiming

knowledge)" as a sixth style. This argument aligns with Chien and Li (2022) and Basturkmen (2012), who argue that the Discussion is a space for writers to construct new knowledge claims, convince the academic community of the credibility of the findings, and provide scientific contributions to the field. Thus, the addition of this style allows the framework to capture the articulation of the contribution or new knowledge emerging from the findings.

Two experts in genre analysis and academic writing then reviewed the adapted framework, which consisted of six argument styles. They evaluated the clarity, relevance, coding guidelines, examples, and suitability in the context of the study. The validation gained 96.64% (very valid). Additionally, they recommended separating the style of relating findings to previous studies into comparing and contrasting with that of previous studies, as these styles have different rhetorical functions and argumentative purposes. The style of comparing to that of previous studies functions to establish convergence with existing knowledge, so it would support and strengthen new knowledge claims, while contrasting to that of previous studies highlights divergence from previous knowledge, creating space for new, extended, or alternative claims (Deng et al., 2024). Based on the experts' validation and recommendation, the final framework comprised seven argument styles, as presented in Table 2. The seven argument styles are conceptualised as complementary rhetorical resources for constructing, negotiating, and legitimising new knowledge claims, with knowledge claiming representing the most explicit realisation of such claims.

Table 2. Modified argument style framework

No	Argument Styles and Code	Description
1	AS-1: Interpreting the Findings	Explaining the meaning of the findings based on the research questions.
2	AS-2: Explaining/Elaborating Findings	Providing further explanation or detail about the results beyond their surface meaning.
3	AS-3: Stating Possible Causes	Offering reasons or explanations for why the findings occurred as they did.
4	AS-4: Illustrating Findings	Providing illustrations or concrete examples to explain findings.
5	AS-5: Comparing to that of previous studies	Connecting current findings to those of prior research to show alignment
6	AS-6: Contrasting to that of previous studies	Connecting current findings to those of prior research to show contrast
7	AS-7: Highlighting Contributions (Claiming Knowledge)	Explicitly stating the contribution of the study to knowledge, theory, practice, or methodology.

Table 2 illustrates that this analytical framework was employed as the primary coding scheme for argument style analysis. This framework also specified the linguistic realisations associated with each argument style, drawing on the lexico-grammatical and metadiscourse resources explained in the literature. These linguistic realisations served as coding indicators for identifying how each AS was linguistically realised in Discussions.

Data analysis techniques

The data were analysed using the genre-based discourse or communicative purpose analysis (CPA) method, following Dudley-Evans (1994), which focused on the communicative purpose and discourse clues to identify the argument styles and linguistic clues in the discussions. The steps of the CPA method included: First, researchers read the entire articles to understand the research activities presented in the RAs, starting from the titles to the conclusion sections. Second, the researchers read the RADs to capture the argument styles and their linguistic realisation. Third, the possible argument styles and linguistic realisation were coded and put in the coding scheme table. Fourth, the frequency and percentage of the data were calculated.

Importantly, the percentage was calculated based on the 115 RADs in the corpus, with each research article counted once for determining the distribution of an argument style, regardless of how many times that style occurred within a single Discussion section. Finally, the argument styles were categorised according to their degree of conventionality, following Kanoksilapatham (2005): obligatory when an argument style occurred in 100% of the 115 RAs, conventional when it occurred in 60-99% of the RAs, and optional when it occurred in fewer than 60% of the RAs. This classification is the analytical basis for distinguishing argument styles into obligatory, conventional, and optional categories.

Validity and reliability measurement

This study involved an independent co-rater to ensure the validity of the analysis and to avoid subjective judgment during the coding process (Biber et al., 1998). The co-rater randomly analysed 20% of the corpus samples (23 RADs). Then, the results of inter-rater analysis were counted using the Cohen Kappa statistic to assess the reliability of the analysis. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Inter-rater reliability of argument style

Measure	Result
Number of samples	23
Argument style categories	7
Total coding decisions	161
Agreements	158 (98.14%)
Disagreements	3 (1.86%)
Cohen's Kappa (κ)	0.978
Interpretation	Excellent Agreement

As shown in Table 3, there were 161 coding decisions. The two raters reached 158 agreements and 3 disagreements. The Cohen's Kappa analysis was 0.978. It indicates excellent inter-rater agreement (Brown, 1996).

Results and Discussion

Results

Argument styles to construct, negotiate, and legitimise new knowledge claims in research article discussions

This question investigates how argument styles work together to construct, negotiate, and legitimise new knowledge in RADs in ELT Scopus-indexed journals. Table 4 presents the data analysis results.

Table 4. Argument styles in RADs of ELT Scopus-Indexed journals

No	Argument Styles	F (RAs)	% (of 115 RAs)	Category
1	AS-1: Interpreting Findings	115	100.00%	Obligatory
2	AS-2: Explaining/ Elaborating Findings	107	93.04%	Conventional
3	AS-3: Stating Possible Causes	102	88.70%	Conventional
4	AS-4: Illustrating Findings	97	84.35%	Conventional
5	AS-5: Comparing to that of previous studies	108	93.91%	Conventional
6	AS-6: Contrasting to that of previous studies	45	39.13%	Optional
7	AS-7: Highlighting Contributions (Claiming Knowledge)	104	90.43%	Conventional

As shown in Table 1, AS-1 occurred in all 115 RAs (100%), and was therefore categorised as an obligatory Argument style. Five styles, namely AS-2, AS-3, AS-4, AS-5, and AS-7, occurred frequently and were categorised as conventional styles. In contrast, AS-6 occurred in 45 RAs (39.13) and was categorised as an optional style. Then, this study also investigated the distribution of argument styles in each style, as presented in Figure 1.

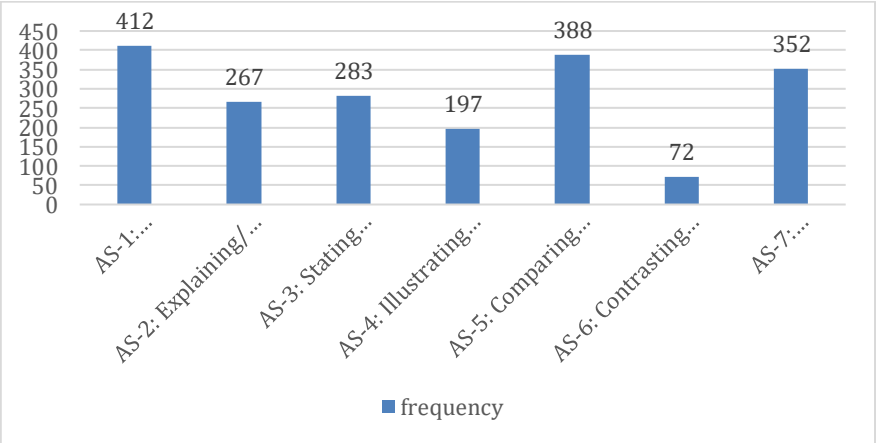


Figure 1. Distribution of argument styles in RADs

As indicated in Figure 1, the most frequent argument styles were AS-1: Interpreting findings (20.90%), AS-5 (19.68%), and AS-7 (17.86%), followed by

AS-3 (14.36%), AS-2 (13.55%), AS-4 (9.99%), and AS-6 (3.65%), which occurred least frequently. AS-1 was identified in all 115 RAs, indicating that this style is a central rhetorical activity in RADs. Through this style, writers move beyond reporting research results by explaining what the findings mean and how they should be understood. The realisation of argument styles in RADs is illustrated in extracts 1 to 3.

Extract 1

> *Our initial statistical analysis shows no significant difference between CMI and EMI classes in the Math learning. …, this result suggests that the foreign language barrier alleged in EMI literature seems to have no negative impact on the students' math learning outcomes*. (AS-1)

AS-1, as presented in Extract 1, is argued after reporting the statistical finding through the expression "*this result suggests that*,". This argument shows how the finding is interpreted to help readers understand the finding's meaning and its significance.

AS-2 occurred in 107 RAs (93.04) and was categorised as a conventional style. This style enables writers to provide additional explanation or detail concerning a previously reported finding. Extract 2 is the example.

Extract 2

> *To elaborate, … ChatGPT demonstrated moderate intra-rater reliability, with ICCs ranging from 58 (language use), 66 (Communicative Quality, Use of Academic Vocabulary and Style…* (AS-2, TEwT 6)

Extract 2 illustrates AS-2 because the writer explicitly uses the marker "*To elaborate*" to elaborate on the findings in the discussion. This argument helps expand the readers' understanding and explanation concerning the reliability of ChatGPT.

AS-3 was found in 102 RAs (88.70%) and was categorised as a conventional style. This style allows writers to state possible explanations for their findings while maintaining an appropriate degree of caution. Extract 3 is an example of this style.

Extract 3

> *Our results demonstrated that vocabulary size may be an important factor to consider … However, within-group correlations revealed a moderate positive and significant correlation between MTLD and summary writing quality for the learners with larger vocabulary size, suggesting that MTLD is a much better predictor of summary writing quality when learners have more words at their disposal. One possible explanation may be that knowing more words enabled learners to choose their words more precisely, leading to a more accurate communication of ideas.* (AS-3, T-EJ 6)

Extract 3 illustrates that writers first report and interpret the findings before arguing a possible explanation for it. The stating possible cause argument is realised

through the expression "*one possible explanation may be that*". This argument provides a plausible explanation for the findings and avoids an overly definite causal claim.

Linguistic realisations of argument styles

This section presents the results regarding the linguistic realisations that characterise each argument style in RADs. Table 5 below presents the data analysis results of distinctive linguistic realisations in RADs of ELT Scopus-indexed journals.

Table 5. Linguistic realisations in argument styles

Argument Styles	Linguistic Realisation Identified	Rhetorical Patterns	Examples
AS-1: Interpreting Findings	**Interpretative clues** (indicate, suggest, highlight, show, confirm, illuminate, interpret, etc.) **Nouns** (finding results, evidence)	Result statement → interpretative clues → meaning/interpretation	The results indicate /imply/illuminate that …; It/this indicates that …; this result suggests that …; this could be interpreted as …,
AS-2: Explaining/ Elaborating Findings	**Elaboration markers** (explained by, possible, explanation, in particular, specifically, indeed, notably, more detail)	Results → elaboration markers → detail theory	In particular, students …, in more detail, it appears …, This further elaborate on …, this can be explained by …
AS-3 Stating Possible Causes	**Modal/hedges** (could, may, might, possible), **Cause markers** (because, contributing, contribution, factor, explanation, influence, cause)	Results → modal/hedge + cause marker → proposed reasons	A possible reason for this is that …, it may be reasoned that …, This is influenced by factors …, One reason for this …, X can cause problems …, this may be due to ..
AS-4: Illustrating Findings	**Exemplification markers** (for example, for instance, illustrated by, to exemplify/ illustrate, another case is .., our data, case)	General claim → exemplification marker → specific case/example	For example, "ch' is pronounced … , In our data, we saw how X , …, another case is …,
AS-5: Comparing to that of previous studies	**Comparison markers** (consistent with, in line, similar to, support, corroborate, align with, agree with, echo	Result → comparison marker → reference to prior study	These findings align with /corroborate with / are in line with / are similar to / agree with …, our result support the findings …
AS-6: Contrasting to	**Contrast markers** (unlike, contrary to, in	Previous studies claim → contrast	Different from previous studies, … ,

Argument Styles	Linguistic Realisation Identified	Rhetorical Patterns	Examples
that of previous studies	contrast to, however, deviate from, different/differ from)	marker → present study finding Results → contrast marker → reference to prior study	These findings contrast to …, Unlike the findings of …, these results differ from …
AS-7: Highlighting Contributions (Claiming Knowledge)	**Contribution markers** (contribute, provide insights, underscore, advances, extend, implication, contribution)	Finding/study →contribution marker → contribution domain (theory, practice, method)	The findings underscore the need for …, A key contribution …, ... *extend current knowledge on*

As shown in Table 5, each argument style is associated with distinctive linguistic resources that help writers accomplish its rhetorical function. The corpus extracts presented in the previous sections provide contextual evidence of how these linguistic realisations operate in RADs. The realisation of linguistic resources in argument styles is illustrated in Extracts 4-6.

Extract 4

> The results also reveal that ... ***This suggests that*** *Chinese English teachers have little interest in and internal drive to do research*. (Syst 2)
>
> *The findings … **illuminate** a dynamic and evolving relationship between traditional teaching practices …* (TeWT 2)

Extract 4 demonstrates the use of interpretative expressions such as *"this suggests that" and "illuminate"* to connect reported findings with their interpretation. These resources enable writers to explain what the findings mean rather than merely report the results.

Extract 5

> ***Moreover,*** *it facilitated interaction with each other and assisted them in revising and submitting essays.* (IJJELS 4)
>
> ***As our results revealed,*** *the use of multimodality and translanguaging, overall, **provided** an environment facilitating meaning-making for learners … (*Syst 3)

Extract 5 illustrates how writers elaborate on findings through transitions such as *moreover*, and expressions such as *As our results revealed*. These resources specify how the reported findings contributed to particular outcomes, such as interaction, essay revision, and meaning-making.

Extract 6

> *This subjectivity **may arise from** the different roles within the association; for example, the President is likely to play diverse roles … of responsibilities …* (EE 4)

> *One **possible explanation for** the lack of change between the second and third reading **is that** the participants reached a threshold …* (TJ 7)

Extract 6 illustrates how writers use hedges and causal expressions to propose possible explanations for their research findings. Expressions such as "possible explanation" and "may arise from" allow writers to account for findings cautiously without presenting causal interpretations as absolute facts.

In conclusion, the results of the analysis show that ELT writers use seven argument styles to comment on the research findings in RADs. All these argument styles are employed strategically to show how knowledge is constructed, negotiated, and legitimised in RADs. Each argument style is also realised through linguistic resources. In other words, arguments in RADs and linguistic realisations work together to achieve the specific rhetorical purposes. This finding highlights the multifaceted nature of argumentation in RADs, where writers draw on different argumentative strategies to develop and strengthen their knowledge claims.

Discussion

Argument styles to construct, negotiate, and legitimise new knowledge claims in research article discussions

Argument styles are how writers justify their findings in RADs. The findings reveal that AS-1 appears as an obligatory style, while AS-2, AS-3, AS-4, AS-5, and AS-7 emerge as conventional styles. These findings indicate how these styles significantly demonstrate the rhetorical work of RADs. They function not merely to restate results but to justify the study's claims, position them within prior scholarship, and articulate their contribution to the field (Moyetta, 2016). The findings of obligatory and conventional styles corroborate the previous studies (e.g., Arsyad et al., 2021; Basturkmen, 2012; Ulya, 2022), who also found that Indonesian writers in local, national, and international journals in language education almost always used these styles (AS-2, AS-3, AS-4, AS-5).

However, unlike the findings of Arsyad et al. (2020), writers in language studies position AS-1 as a conventional category. This difference appears possible because of differences in knowledge of academic writing. Yue (2024) state that experienced writers are generally more capable of article writing, so they might be familiar with this style and the entire structure of the academic genre. Also, this is possibly because each discipline has different characteristics in constructing arguments (Swales, 2004); for example, discussion writing in reputable international ELT journals, being pedagogical, tends to foreground interpretation of results/findings as central to establishing pedagogical implications. Meanwhile, research in broader language studies published in local journals may rely more on theoretical discussions, so that they seem not to prioritise this style as obligatory (Arsyad et al., 2021).

Additionally, the findings show that AS-6 occurs far less frequently, which is categorised as an optional style. This finding indicates that writers in ELT journals tend to emphasise alignment rather than opposition in positing their research findings. This tendency should, however, be interpreted cautiously because the corpus comprises 12 journals and may also reflect disciplinary norms, differences in writers' academic backgrounds and scholarly cultures. The relatively limited use of contrastive argument may be related to the characteristics of ELT studies, which often emphasise the consistency of pedagogical and linguistic theories to prove their effectiveness in language teaching and learning practices (Alsowat, 2020). For example, Noor et al. (2025) found that the trends and innovations of studies in language education employed by writers include task-based learning, collaborative learning, explicit strategy instruction, technology integration, and blended/hybrid learning. Another possible explanation is that contrasting previous findings requires sufficiently strong empirical evidence to substantiate claims that genuinely challenge existing knowledge (Wang & Deng, 2023). These possible contributing factors may interact in shaping writers' preferences for alignment over opposition. Thus, this style is used only to a limited extent and is thus considered an optional style; nevertheless, its presence significantly contributes to the discussion section writing by providing and negotiating differences with prior research.

Nevertheless, AS-6 is academically important and the most expected finding for new studies because it demonstrates novelty, fosters scholarly debate, tests the boundaries of theories, and enhances the credibility of the writer's argument. Tikhonova et al. (2025) have confirmed this view that writers in the education discipline commonly compare or contrast their findings in the realms of methodology, scope, and focus of the study in their RADs. According to them, this strategy is employed to show the novelty and scientific contributions of the study. Similarly, studies of Indonesian ELT researchers have shown that the novelty and scientific contribution are constructed by positioning findings in relation to previous studies, such as comparing and contrasting to that of previous studies, but they did not explicitly explain the scientific contribution (Arsyad et al., 2020; Arsyad et al., 2021; Arsyad et al., 2021).

The less frequent AS-6 in RADs aligns with previous research, which revealed that Indonesian writers rarely state inconsistent findings to previous studies, as observed in Indonesian language education journals, such as Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics, Studies in English Language and Education, and Indonesian Journal of Language Education (Warsidi & Maniam, 2024). Similarly, Hardiah et al. (2026), who examined Discussion sections in eight internationally reputable journals ranging from Q1 to Q4, found that writers almost always presented the move – referring to previous studies in all articles across the journals. However, this move category did not distinguish between comparing and contrasting, making this present study more specific in showing that contrastive argumentation occurs less frequently than other ways of relating findings to previous research. In contrast, Ming and Wenbin (2024) reported that quantitative research articles in Applied Linguistics negotiated academic disagreement more frequently through detailed explanations and supportive evidence than qualitative research articles. These patterns suggest that the preference for comparing or contrasting findings with those of previous studies may reflect rhetorical practices

associated with ELT and broader Applied Linguistics contexts, as well as differences in research methods.

Linguistic realisations of argument styles

The results show that writers employed a wide and varied range of linguistic realisations (lexico-grammatical and discourse markers) in making their arguments. This implies that they have academic writing competence in expressing diverse linguistic resources to capture each argument (Beck & Stolterman, 2016). The use of linguistic realisation shows that the writers not only present research data but also try to explain and elaborate on these findings using various rhetorical strategies. In particular, interpreting findings was characterised through interpretative verbs such as *illuminate, highlight, suggest*; comparing findings through expressions such as *corroborate, support, and consistent with*; and contrasting findings through forms such as *inconsistent*, *echo with,* and *differ from*; and highlighting contribution (claiming knowledge) through contribution-oriented expressions such as *contributes, extends previous knowledge, provide insights,* as well as noun such as *implication* and *contribution*. These resources enable writers to make the rhetorical relationship between their findings and previous knowledge more explicit and to position their claims within the disciplinary discourse. However, these patterns are quite different from previous studies, which identified writers employing common lexico-grammatical features in Indonesian journals on Applied Linguistics and Language Education: comparing findings through expressions such as *align with, in line with*; illustrating findings with markers such as*, as shown in*; interpreting findings through interpretative verbs such as *show, indicates* (Arsyad et al., 2020; Arsyad, Nur, et al., 2021; Deng et al., 2024). These linguistic resources may help make arguments more interpretive, persuasive, and argumentative (Hyland, 2005). These would strengthen the position of new knowledge claims in RADs.

The variety of the choice of linguistic resources to express each argument in RADs of ELT in Scopus-indexed journals corroborates previous research findings in international Linguistics and Applied Linguistics journals (Arizavi et al., 2023; Samanhudi, 2020; Esfandiari and Ahmadi (2024). It indicates that academic writing practice for reputable international journals encourages writers to utilise various and appropriate linguistic realisations as rhetorical resources in building an argument (Hernandez & Genuino, 2022). Those variations may appear because writers are familiar with the linguistic conventions of research articles in reputable international journals. This supports a genre awareness theory which emphasises that writers should understand the types and the characteristics of genres to help them in the composing process, achieve the communicative purpose of a genre, and influence the targeted readers (Hyland, 2005; Jarunthawatchai et al., 2025). Therefore, these findings emphasise the importance of mapping the diversity of linguistic realisations in RADs of ELT journals and genre awareness training that focuses on rhetorical variation.

The findings have pedagogical contributions, as stated by influential genre scholars (Bhatia, 2025; Flowerdew & Wan, 2010; Swales, 1990), that extend beyond providing rhetorical models for novice writers and emerging writers to imitate. The identified arguments and linguistic realisations can be used for teaching academic argumentation and enhance students' genre awareness of a specific discipline in academic writing instruction. Instructors can use these

findings to help students recognise the rhetorical purposes of different argument styles and understand how these purposes are realised linguistically in authentic RADs. Such instruction may facilitate students' ability to use appropriate rhetorical choices when constructing, qualifying, comparing, contrasting, and positioning their own knowledge claims. Thus, the findings offer pedagogical resources for developing students' awareness of how rhetorical and linguistic choices function in academic argumentation.

Moreover, instructors may use the findings of this study to enrich article writing materials in higher education. The identified patterns can inform the development of corpus-informed materials (Farr, 2026) that expose students to authentic rhetorical and linguistic resources in RADs (Phoocharoensil, 2021). They may also incorporate a genre-based approach to teaching article writing, as advocated by Hyland (2003). For example, students analyse the argument styles and their linguistic realisations in target journals. The results of the analysis are then discussed collaboratively with peers and instructors. The possible identified rhetorical patterns are used as a basis for writing RADs. These processes may facilitate genre-based academic writing instruction for novice writers or aspiring writers to prepare research articles for Scopus-indexed journals in the field of English language teaching.

Conclusion

This study has investigated how argument styles and their linguistic realisations are constructed in the RADs of Scopus-indexed ELT journals. The findings show that RADs are consistently constructed through argument styles to construct, negotiate, and legitimise new knowledge claims. The argument styles are reflected in the combination of obligatory (e.g., AS-1), conventional (e.g., AS-2, AS-3, AS-4, and AS-4, and AS-7), and optional (e.g., AS-6) argument styles. Each of these argument styles is also realised through specific linguistic resources, which enhance persuasiveness and epistemic authority of the texts. These linguistic resources include: 1) interpretative clues (e.g., indicate, suggest), 2) elaboration markers (e.g., more detail, explained by), 3) cause markers (e.g., because, factor, reasons) and hedges (e.g., could, might, possible), 4) exemplification markers (e.g., for example, for instance, illustrated by), 5) comparison markers (e.g., consistent with, in line, align with), 6) contrastive markers (e.g., contrary to, differ from), and 7) contribution markers (e.g., contribution, extend, insights). These distinctive linguistic resources are used to present and interpret findings, negotiate the strength of knowledge claims, establish relationships with previous studies, and articulate the contributions of the findings. Thus, the construction of new knowledge claims in RADs involves the interactions between argument styles and their linguistic realisations.

These findings of this study provide a positive contribution not only theoretically to enrich the study of academic genres and argumentative style theory in scientific discourse, but also practically for novice writers and non-native English speakers. They can understand and apply the argumentative patterns and linguistic realisations used by professional writers when preparing their manuscripts for their target journals. These approaches would be able to convince and meet the expectations of the journal editors and international readers. Besides, the results of this study could be utilised by instructors as a potential foundation for developing

a genre-based academic writing model for article writing for publication based on genre at the postgraduate level in higher education. Thus, the study could add not only theoretical knowledge but also offer pedagogical benefits for academic writing practice.

Despite this study having valuable findings and implications, some limitations should be acknowledged to guide future research. First, the analysis was delimited to argument styles and their linguistic realisations in constructing new knowledge claims in the RADs. While this focus provided depth and specificity, further research could integrate other rhetorical features such as stance markers, interactive and interactional metadiscourse, or cross-linguistic comparisons to offer a broader perspective. Second, the study was limited to 115 RADs published in twelve ELT Scopus-indexed journals. Although this sample size is sufficient for identifying salient patterns and research design, future studies could benefit from expanding the dataset across wider ranges of disciplines, journal tiers, or multilingual contexts to generate more generalizable findings and deeper insights into how argument styles are constructed in scholarly discourse

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