Mapping Student Errors in IELTS Writing: An Analysis of Performance Gaps Across the Four Assessment Criteria

Nazlah Syahaf Nasution[1], Barli Kifli[2], Sisila Fitriany Damanik[3], Ariatna[4]

{nazlahsyahaf@unimed.ac.id[1], barlikifli@unimed.ac.id[2], sisiladamanik@unimed.ac.id[3], ariatna@unimed.ac.id[4]}

English and Literature Department, Universitas Negeri Medan, Medan, Indonesia

Abstract. This study investigates the writing performance of 72 undergraduate students from the State University of Medan in the IELTS Writing Task 2. Despite high academic grades in writing courses, many students struggled to meet the criteria for higher IELTS band scores. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the study analyzes students' essays based on the four IELTS Writing band descriptors: Task Response, Coherence and Cohesion, Lexical Resource, and Grammatical Range and Accuracy. The findings reveal common errors such as failure to fully address prompts, poor paragraph organization, limited vocabulary, and frequent grammatical inaccuracies. These issues point to gaps between academic writing skills and the specific demands of the IELTS Writing test. The study highlights the need for targeted interventions in teaching strategies and curriculum design to improve students' performance and readiness for the IELTS test, offering practical recommendations for test preparation.

Keywords: IELTS, error analysis, writing,

1 Introduction

Proficiency in academic writing is a critical skill for university students, particularly those in English and Literature programs, as it directly impacts their academic success and career opportunities. However, achieving proficiency in international standardized tests, such as the IELTS (International English Language Testing System), remains a significant challenge for many students. The IELTS Academic Writing test, in particular, is widely regarded as one of the most challenging components of the exam, requiring candidates to demonstrate not only effective argumentation and critical thinking but also advanced command of English in terms of structure, vocabulary, and grammatical accuracy [1], [2]. Its importance lies in its ability to assess a candidate's readiness for academic and professional environments where high-level English skills are essential

At the State University of Medan, students from the English and Literature Department are trained to develop academic writing skills as part of their curriculum. These students often achieve high grades in their writing courses, typically earning A or B grades, reflecting strong performance in course assignments and examinations. Despite this, many students face challenges in achieving competitive band scores in the IELTS Academic Writing test,

particularly in Writing Task 2. This component assesses essay responses based on four key criteria: Task Response, Coherence and Cohesion, Lexical Resource, and Grammatical Range and Accuracy.

For Indonesian students, achieving high IELTS scores is a gateway to numerous opportunities in higher education, immigration, and professional advancement. Many universities in English-speaking countries, such as Bournemouth University in the UK, require specific IELTS scores for admission. For example, Indonesian students must achieve a minimum score of 5.0 for foundation courses, with higher requirements for undergraduate and graduate programs [3]. Similarly, countries like Australia, Canada, and the UK use IELTS scores as part of their immigration processes. Applicants must meet specific score requirements for various visa categories, demonstrating their ability to communicate effectively in English [4]. Additionally, professional certification bodies, such as the Indonesian Directorate General of Immigration, require IELTS scores for work-related visa applications, with minimum band scores serving as critical benchmarks for eligibility [5].

One of the key reasons for these performance gaps lies in the common errors made by EFL students in essay writing. Studies reveal that students often struggle to interpret essay prompts effectively, leading to incomplete or irrelevant responses. For instance, many students address only one part of a two-part question or fail to develop their arguments fully, resulting in underdeveloped essays [4]. Beyond task comprehension, coherence and cohesion errors are particularly prevalent, with students frequently presenting ideas in a disorganized manner or misusing cohesive devices such as linking words, which disrupt the flow of their writing [6]. Lexical limitations further exacerbate these issues, as students often rely on repetitive vocabulary or misuse advanced words due to direct translation from their native language [7]. Grammatical inaccuracies, including tense inconsistency, subject-verb agreement errors, and sentence fragments, also undermine the clarity and quality of students' essays [8].

Mapping these errors in student writing can provide critical insights into the specific areas where learners struggle the most. This study systematically identifies and analyzes recurring patterns of deficiencies in student essays, offering a foundation for targeted pedagogical interventions. Addressing these gaps requires a dual approach: refining curricula to align with the specific demands of IELTS Writing Task 2 and implementing targeted support strategies. For instance, findings related to coherence and cohesion errors may inform the development of exercises focused on paragraph structuring and logical transitions, while grammatical accuracy issues may prompt the introduction of grammar-focused workshops [9].

Furthermore, this research highlights the broader implications of addressing writing errors in EFL contexts. Beyond improving performance in high-stakes tests like IELTS, understanding and addressing these errors can contribute to long-term improvements in academic and professional writing. By enhancing students' writing proficiency, this study supports their global readiness and promotes success in environments where advanced English skills are indispensable.

Ultimately, this study not only contributes to the growing body of literature on language proficiency assessments but also provides practical recommendations for bridging the gap between academic writing instruction and standardized test preparation. By addressing the specific challenges faced by Indonesian students, this research aims to enhance their readiness for global academic and professional opportunities while promoting long-term improvements in writing proficiency.

2 Method
2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design to analyze the recurring errors in students' IELTS Writing Task 2 responses. This approach was chosen to provide a detailed understanding of the deficiencies in student writing and their alignment with the IELTS Writing band descriptors. The focus on qualitative analysis allowed for an in-depth exploration of the types, frequencies, and implications of errors in student essays.

2.2 Participants

The participants of this study were 72 undergraduate students enrolled in the English and Literature Department at the State University of Medan. These students were selected based on their enrollment in a writing course aimed at preparing them for the IELTS Academic Writing test. All participants had completed at least one academic writing course and had no prior experience taking the IELTS. The participants' ages ranged from 19 to 23, with varying levels of English proficiency based on their coursework performance. Participation in this study was voluntary, and written consent was obtained from all students.

2.3 Data Collection

Data were collected from student responses to two IELTS Writing Task 2 prompts. The prompts were selected to reflect common IELTS Academic Writing topics related to education and global challenges, ensuring their relevance and comparability to actual test conditions. Students were given 40 minutes per essay to complete the tasks in a controlled classroom setting, simulating real IELTS testing conditions. A total of 144 essay responses (two essays per student) were collected for analysis.

2.4 Data Analysis
2.4.1 Data Analysis

The collected essays were analyzed using an error analysis framework aligned with the four IELTS Writing band descriptors:
   a. Task Response – Errors in addressing all parts of the question, irrelevance, or underdeveloped arguments.
   b. Coherence and Cohesion – Disorganized structure, misuse of cohesive devices, and lack of logical progression.
   c. Lexical Resource – Limited vocabulary, inappropriate word choice, and repetition.
   d. Grammatical Range and Accuracy – Errors in verb tense, subject-verb agreement, sentence fragments, and run-on sentences.

2.4.2 Limitation

This study was limited by its reliance on a specific set of essay prompts, which may not capture the full range of challenges faced by students in other IELTS Writing Task 2 scenarios. Additionally, the findings are context-specific and may not be generalizable to all EFL learners or other educational settings. Further studies involving a more diverse range of prompts and participants are recommended to enhance the generalizability of the results.

3   Result and Discussion
3.1   Result

The analysis of 72 essays revealed distinct patterns of errors across the four IELTS Writing band descriptors: Task Response**,** Coherence and Cohesion**,** Lexical Resource**,** and Grammatical Range and Accuracy**.** Errors in grammatical accuracy were the most frequent, followed by coherence and cohesion issues. Lexical resource limitations and task response deficiencies were also prominent. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to address recurring challenges in students' writing.

3.1.1 Task Response

Task Response is a key assessment criterion in IELTS Writing, measuring how well a candidate addresses all aspects of the prompt. The following errors were identified in the analysis of the 72 essays:

A.   Failure to Address All Parts of the Prompt

One of the most common issues in 35% of essays was students failing to address all parts of the prompt. These essays often provided a partial response, focusing on one aspect of the task while neglecting the other part(s).
Examples of this error include:
a.   Prompt: Discuss both the advantages and disadvantages of online education.
Student Response: 'Online education allows students to learn at home and save time.'
Issue: The student fails to mention the disadvantages of online education, addressing only the positive side.
b.   Prompt: What are the causes and effects of air pollution?
Student Response: 'Air pollution is caused by factories.' Issue: The essay focuses only on the cause of pollution, without addressing the effects as required by the prompt.
This issue often stems from a lack of careful reading or misunderstanding of the prompt, resulting in incomplete responses.

B.   Underdeveloped Ideas
In 24% of essays, students presented ideas that were underdeveloped. These responses typically made general statements or assertions without adequate explanation, supporting examples, or detailed reasoning.

Examples of underdeveloped ideas:
a. 'Technology is good for education.'
b. 'Pollution is bad for the environment.'
c. 'History is important for understanding the past.'

While these statements are valid, they lack depth, specific examples, or elaboration. A full response would include further explanation or examples, demonstrating the student's ability to expand on their ideas in a coherent and structured way.

This issue is often linked to a lack of preparation, where students may be unable to develop their ideas fully during the timed writing task. Another contributing factor is students not planning their responses effectively, which leads to vague statements rather than comprehensive discussions.

C. Misinterpretation of the Prompt

Misunderstanding the prompt occurred in a small but significant proportion of essays. This happened when students either misread the question or failed to comprehend the specific task being asked, leading to off-topic or irrelevant responses.

Examples of misinterpretation include:
a. Prompt: To what extent do you agree or disagree that governments should spend more on public transportation?
Student Response: 'It is important to use private cars less to reduce pollution.'
Issue: The response discusses the use of private cars, rather than addressing the need for government spending on public transportation as required by the prompt.
b. Prompt: Discuss both views: History or science as the more important subject. Student Response: 'Science helps us innovate, and technology is part of science.' Issue: The essay focuses only on science and fails to discuss the importance of history, which was required by the prompt.

This error is often a result of misinterpreting key terms or failing to recognize the specific question type (e.g., agree/disagree, causes/effects, advantages/disadvantages). It may also reflect a lack of familiarity with the language or structure of the prompt.

D. Lack of Argument Balance

In some essays, students provided a one-sided response when the prompt required a more balanced argument. In the case of advantages/disadvantages prompts, for instance, many students failed to discuss both sides in equal measure, focusing only on the positive or negative aspects.

Example of lack of balance:

Prompt: Discuss both the advantages and disadvantages of social media. Student Response: 'Social media allows people to stay connected with friends and family.' Issue: The essay focuses only on the positive aspects of social media, failing to address the disadvantages, as required by the prompt.

This issue arises when students do not properly allocate their writing time to address both parts of the task, leading to unbalanced responses that do not fully meet the task requirement.

3.1.2 *Coherence and Cohesion*

Coherence and Cohesion assess the organization of ideas, the logical flow of information, and the effective use of cohesive devices to connect sentences and paragraphs. The analysis of 72 essays revealed several recurring issues in this area. Below is a detailed breakdown of the errors related to Coherence and Cohesion.

A. Poor Paragraph Organization
One of the most common issues in 42% of essays was poor paragraph organization. Students often failed to structure their paragraphs logically, leading to disorganized and unclear writing. Unrelated ideas were mixed within the same paragraph, or related points were scattered across different sections of the essay.
Examples of this error include:
a. 'Globalization improves trade. It is bad for culture. Trade helps countries grow.' Issue: The ideas about trade and culture should be separated into distinct paragraphs. The paragraph lacks a clear focus and logical progression.
b. 'Technology helps students to study. Teachers should motivate students. Schools should teach sports.' Issue: The paragraph contains unrelated points about technology, teaching, and sports, making it confusing to the reader.
c. 'Pollution damages the environment. People should recycle. Recycling helps save the planet.' Issue: The ideas are not connected cohesively, and the focus shifts too abruptly from pollution to recycling.

The lack of paragraphing skills often results in essays that are difficult to follow, as readers are unsure of how ideas relate to each other within the paragraph.

B. Misuse of Cohesive Devices
In 31% of essays, students misused cohesive devices, such as 'however,' 'moreover,' 'therefore,' and 'on the other hand.' These devices were either overused or used inappropriately, causing the logical flow of ideas to break down or sound forced.

Examples of misused cohesive devices include:
a. 'Moreover, education helps people. However, it is good for jobs. On the other hand, teachers like it.'
Issue: The use of 'however' and 'on the other hand' creates confusion because these words are typically used to show contrast, but no contrasting ideas are presented.
b. 'However, globalization has benefits. Moreover, people can travel. On the other hand, trade is important.'
Issue: The cohesive devices used do not logically connect the ideas. 'Moreover' and 'on the other hand' should be used to introduce ideas that add or contrast with the previous statement, but here, the ideas are disjointed.
c. 'Pollution is bad. However, it can be fixed. Moreover, recycling is important.'
Issue: 'However' introduces a contrast, but the sentence doesn't present a contrasting idea, making it awkward and unclear.

Misuse of cohesive devices reflects a lack of understanding of their function in writing. Overusing certain words, such as 'however' or 'moreover,' without proper consideration of context makes the essay sound unnatural and disjointed.

C. Repetition of Ideas

Another issue observed in 38% of essays was the repetition of ideas within paragraphs or across different parts of the essay. Many students restated the same point using slightly different language, which led to redundancy and weakened the overall argument.

Examples of repetitive ideas include:

a. 'Pollution is bad for the environment. Pollution makes people sick. Pollution damages nature.'

Issue: The idea of pollution's negative impact is repeated without providing new information or depth.

b. 'Education is important for jobs. Education helps people get jobs. Jobs are important for people.'

Issue: The repetition of the same concept (education's importance for employment) weakens the argument and leads to redundancy.

c. 'Globalization helps countries. Globalization allows trade. Countries trade with globalization.'

Issue: The point about globalization helping countries is repeated in different forms, without any additional analysis or supporting details.

Repetition often occurs because students lack depth in their ideas or fail to fully elaborate on their points. This redundancy leads to weakened arguments and results in a less sophisticated essay overall.

D. Lack of Clear Topic Sentences

In some essays, 28% of students failed to include clear topic sentences that indicated the main point of each paragraph. Without a clear topic sentence, the reader can struggle to follow the writer's argument.

Examples of missing or unclear topic sentences:

a. 'Technology is very important. It helps people in many ways.'

Issue: The paragraph lacks a clear statement of what the paragraph will discuss or how it connects to the overall argument.

b. 'Pollution is bad. It affects everything.'

Issue: This sentence does not introduce the main idea of the paragraph, which should be about specific aspects of pollution or its effects.

c. 'The internet is a useful tool. People use it every day.'

Issue: The topic sentence does not clearly establish the focus of the paragraph, making it harder to follow.

Lack of clear topic sentences leads to disorganized paragraphs where the reader may not understand the purpose of the paragraph or how it fits into the overall argument.

3.1.3 Lexical Resource: Analysis

Lexical Resource evaluates the variety, accuracy, and appropriateness of vocabulary used in writing. The analysis of 72 essays revealed several patterns related to vocabulary choice,

ranging from overuse of simple words to incorrect word choices, and literal translation errors. Below is a detailed breakdown of errors observed.

A. Overuse of Basic Vocabulary

One of the most common lexical errors observed in 60% of essays was the overuse of basic, simple vocabulary. Words like 'good,' 'bad,' and 'important' were repeated multiple times, leading to monotonous and unsophisticated writing. This lack of variety limits the ability to express ideas more precisely or nuancedly.

Examples of overused vocabulary include:

a. 'Technology is good. It is very good for students. It helps them learn better.'
   Issue: The word 'good' is overused without offering more specific descriptions or synonyms.

b. 'Pollution is bad. It is very bad for the environment.'
   Issue: 'Bad' is repeated without offering a more precise word (e.g., 'harmful,' 'detrimental').

c. 'Education is important. It is very important for jobs.'
   Issue: The repetition of 'important' limits the ability to convey a more sophisticated argument.

To achieve higher band scores, candidates should demonstrate the ability to use a wider range of precise and varied vocabulary relevant to the topic, rather than relying on basic terms.

B. Incorrect Word Choice

In 28% of essays, students exhibited problems with word choice. This included the use of incorrect words, misused synonyms, or awkward phrasing that did not fit the context. Incorrect word choice can confuse the reader or weaken the clarity of the argument.

Examples of incorrect word choices include:

a. 'People can take a big opportunity from this.'
   Issue: The phrase 'take a big opportunity' is awkward and not commonly used. 'Seize a significant opportunity' would be more appropriate.

b. 'This is a very good thing for children.'
   Issue: 'Very good' is too informal and vague; a more specific term like 'beneficial' or 'advantageous' would be more precise.

c. 'Pollution is a serious danger for health.'
   Issue: The word 'danger' is used inappropriately. A better option would be 'threat' or 'hazard.'

Incorrect word choices detract from the clarity and accuracy of the writing, preventing students from fully expressing their ideas and arguments in an academic style.

3.1.4 Grammatical Range and Accuracy: Analysis

Grammatical Range and Accuracy evaluates the diversity and correctness of sentence structures, tenses, and overall grammatical control. The analysis of 72 essays revealed frequent errors related to subject-verb agreement, tense consistency, sentence variety, and the correct use of complex grammatical structures.

A. Simple Sentence Overuse

A significant number of students relied on simple sentences, which resulted in monotonous writing. This overuse of simple structures often made the writing sound basic and limited the ability to convey more complex ideas.

Examples of simple sentences overuse:
a. 'Technology is good.'
b. 'It helps students.'
c. 'It is important for jobs.'

While simple sentences are necessary, overreliance on them limits the range of expression, especially in an academic setting like the IELTS Writing task. Higher-band essays typically feature a variety of sentence structures, demonstrating the ability to express ideas more fully and coherently.

B. Compound Sentences

While students attempted compound sentences, there was frequent incorrect use of conjunctions, leading to run-on sentences or awkward constructions. This was evident in 41% of essays.

Examples of compound sentence errors:
a. 'Pollution is harmful, and it causes health problems but it is not easy to solve.'
   Issue: The conjunction 'but' is improperly used in this sentence. A better sentence would be, 'Pollution is harmful, and it causes health problems, but it is not easy to solve.'
b. 'Education is important, and it helps people learn but some people do not have access to it.'
   Issue: The conjunction 'but' is used to connect ideas that do not contrast sharply enough, leading to a grammatically awkward sentence.

The frequent misuse of conjunctions and improper punctuation creates a lack of clarity and limits the fluency of the writing.

C. Complex Sentences

In 48% of essays, students showed limited ability to construct complex sentences correctly, despite attempts to use subordinate clauses. Many errors in complex sentence construction involved incorrect punctuation or subordinating conjunctions.

Examples of complex sentence errors:
a. 'Because education is important people should invest in it.'
   Issue: The dependent clause 'Because education is important' needs a comma to separate it from the independent clause.
   Correct: 'Because education is important, people should invest in it.'
b. 'Although technology is beneficial it also causes distractions.'
   Issue: Missing a comma after the dependent clause 'Although technology is beneficial.'
   Correct: 'Although technology is beneficial, it also causes distractions.'
c. 'Students can learn better if they use online resources but it is hard for some students.'
   Issue: The conjunction 'but' incorrectly connects two independent clauses. A better

way would be: 'Students can learn better if they use online resources, but it is hard for some students.'

The inability to form complex sentences accurately limits the range of expression and can impact the clarity and sophistication of the essay.

D. Sentence Fragments and Run-On Sentences

36% of essays contained sentence fragments or run-on sentences, both of which affect clarity and readability.

Examples:

a. Run-On Sentence:

'Education is important it helps people it makes the world better.'

Issue: The sentence contains multiple independent clauses joined without proper punctuation.

Correct: 'Education is important because it helps people, and it makes the world better.'

b. Fragment:

'Because globalization is growing.'

Issue: This is an incomplete sentence. It needs an independent clause to form a complete thought.

Correct: 'Because globalization is growing, international trade is increasing.'

E. Incorrect Verb Tenses

Tense errors were frequently observed, particularly with verb tense consistency. 43% of essays contained shifts between tenses or incorrect use of tense forms.

Examples of verb tense errors:

a. 'Yesterday, I go to the library and read books about technology.'

Issue: The verb 'go' should be in the past tense to maintain consistency.

Correct: 'Yesterday, I went to the library and read books about technology.'

b. 'In the future, people were going to use technology more.'

Issue: The tense 'were going to' should be 'will go.'

Correct: 'In the future, people will use technology more.'

3.2 Discussion

The analysis of 72 essays from undergraduate students at the State University of Medan has highlighted several challenges these students face in the IELTS Writing Task 2. Despite achieving high grades in academic writing courses, students exhibited difficulties in areas such as Task Response, Coherence and Cohesion, Lexical Resource, and Grammatical Range and Accuracy.

3.2.1 Task Response

One significant issue identified was the failure to address all parts of the prompt, observed in 35% of the essays. This highlights a misunderstanding or lack of focus on task requirements, which is detrimental in high-stakes tests like IELTS. According to [10], ESL students in higher education often struggle with prompt comprehension due to linguistic and cognitive challenges, leading to incomplete task responses. Additionally, Giridharan[14] notes that such gaps often stem from limited exposure to diverse prompt types and insufficient training in breaking down task requirements.

Another prevalent issue was underdeveloped ideas, identified in 24% of the essays. ESL students often fail to provide sufficient explanation or support for their arguments, a challenge commonly attributed to time constraints and limited brainstorming strategies [11]. Developing a strong argument requires not only presenting an idea but also elaborating on it with examples and reasoning, a skill that many students lack. As suggested by Richards[7], incorporating exercises on idea expansion and structured planning can help students improve the depth of their responses.

3.2.2 Coherence and Cohesion

Issues with coherence and cohesion were evident in 42% of the essays, with students struggling to organize ideas logically. According to [12], coherence plays a central role in academic writing, and its absence often reflects a lack of understanding of essay structure. Many ESL students fail to create clear paragraph divisions, resulting in fragmented arguments and reduced readability.

A notable problem was the misuse of cohesive devices, such as "however" and "moreover," observed in many essays. As highlighted by [13], overuse or incorrect application of cohesive devices can disrupt the flow of writing and make essays sound mechanical. Providing students with a broader range of transition words, as well as teaching their appropriate use, is essential for improving cohesion.

Additionally, repetition of ideas, noted in 38% of essays, weakens the depth and complexity of arguments. Students often recycle phrases and struggle to express ideas in varied ways, which limits their ability to engage with higher-level language requirements. Expanding students' vocabulary and teaching rephrasing techniques, as recommended by Evans et al.[10] , can help them build more sophisticated and engaging arguments.

3.2.3 Lexical Resource

The analysis revealed that 60% of students over-relied on basic vocabulary, using generic terms such as "good," "bad," and "important." This reliance limits precision and sophistication in writing, a common issue among ESL learners [11]. As [12] emphasizes, a broad vocabulary is critical for academic success, allowing students to articulate nuanced ideas and meet the expectations of advanced-level writing.

Incorrect word choices, found in 28% of essays, were another recurring problem. These errors often stem from limited exposure to academic language and poor understanding of word usage in context [14]. Educators can address this issue by incorporating vocabulary-building

activities, such as synonym exploration and context-based exercises, to enhance lexical variety and accuracy.

Literal translation errors, noted in 24% of essays, suggest that interference from students' native language frequently affects their ability to write naturally in English. Such errors lead to awkward phrasing, as students rely on direct translations that do not account for idiomatic or cultural nuances [15]. Encouraging students to think in English and providing opportunities for real-world communication practice can reduce these issues.

3.2.4 Grammatical Range and Accuracy

Challenges in Grammatical Range and Accuracy were particularly pronounced, including frequent errors in sentence variety, subject-verb agreement, and tense consistency. As [10] notes, over-reliance on simple sentence structures often leads to monotonous writing that fails to convey complexity or depth.

Errors in compound and complex sentences, particularly in punctuation and conjunction usage, were also common. These issues hinder clarity and limit students' ability to convey nuanced arguments. Structured grammar instruction and guided practice, as suggested by [13], can help students master advanced sentence structures.

Finally, verb tense inconsistency was a recurring issue, with students frequently switching between tenses or using incorrect forms. Maintaining tense consistency is essential for clear and cohesive writing. [15] recommends targeted grammar drills and frequent practice with tense application to address this challenge effectively.

4   Conclusion

This study examined the writing performance of 72 undergraduate students from the State University of Medan, focusing on their responses to IELTS Writing Task 2 prompts. The analysis identified recurring issues across the four key IELTS Writing assessment criteria: Task Response, Coherence and Cohesion, Lexical Resource, and Grammatical Range and Accuracy. These findings underscore the challenges that even academically proficient students face in achieving the required writing standards for high IELTS band scores.

In particular, Task Response issues, such as failing to address all parts of the prompt or presenting underdeveloped ideas, highlight the importance of careful prompt analysis and structured argument development. Coherence and Cohesion errors, including poor paragraph organization and misuse of cohesive devices, point to the need for clearer organization and logical flow in writing. The limitations in Lexical Resource, characterized by the overuse of basic vocabulary and incorrect word choices, suggest a need for targeted vocabulary development and awareness of context-specific usage. Finally, the frequent Grammatical Range and Accuracy errors, such as over-reliance on simple sentences and incorrect verb tense usage, emphasize the importance of mastering a variety of sentence structures and maintaining grammatical accuracy.

The findings from this study have several implications for curriculum development and teaching strategies. It is essential to integrate focused instruction on task analysis, essay structuring, vocabulary expansion, and grammatical accuracy into IELTS preparation programs. By addressing these common writing issues, educators can help students refine their writing

skills, improve their performance on the IELTS Writing test, and better prepare for academic and professional writing demands in English.

This study contributes to the broader understanding of the challenges faced by non-native English speakers in IELTS Writing and provides practical recommendations for enhancing writing instruction and test preparation. Further research could explore the effectiveness of targeted interventions in addressing the specific writing issues identified in this study and investigate how these interventions impact IELTS band scores over time.

References

[1]   IELTS Lounge, "Why IELTS writing is difficult: Understanding the challenges for test takers." [Online]. Available: https://www.ieltslounge.com/why-ielts-writing-is-difficult/

[2]   "My IELTS Tutor – Prepare for IELTS with Experts." Accessed: Nov. 20, 2024. [Online]. Available: https://myieltstutor.com/

[3]   bournemouth.ac.uk, "Undergraduate study," Bournemouth. Accessed: Nov. 20, 2024. [Online]. Available: https://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/

[4]   British Council, "IELTS for UK visas and immigration." [Online]. Available: https://www.britishcouncil.org

[5]   ielts.org, "Understanding IELTS test scores," ielts.org.

[6]   S. Moore and J. Morton, "Dimensions of difference: A comparison of university writing and IELTS writing," *J Engl Acad Purp*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 43–66, 2005, doi: 10.1016/j.jeap.2004.02.001.

[7]   J. C. Richards and W. A. Renandya, *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*. Cambridge University Press, 2002.

[8]   D. R. Ferris, *Treatment of error in second language student writing*. University of Michigan Press, 2011.

[9]   Y. Shalem, I. Sapire, and M. A. Sorto, "Teachers' explanations of learners' errors in standardized mathematics assessments," *Pythagoras*, vol. 35, no. 1, pp. 1–11, 2014, [Online]. Available: https://pythagoras.org.za

[10]   N. W. Evans, N. J. Anderson, and W. G. Eggington, *ESL Readers and Writers in Higher Education: Understanding Challenges, Providing Support*. Springer, 2016.

[11]   A. Lo-Yeung and A. B. Mohan, "Exploring Academic Writing Needs and Challenges Experienced by ESL Students," *SciEdUpress*, 2024.

[12]   Y. Chen and J. Y. Liang, "Academic writing in a second or foreign language: Issues and challenges facing ESL/EFL academic writers in higher education contexts," *Language in Society*, vol. 42, no. 5, pp. 598–599, Nov. 2013, doi: 10.1017/S0047404513000778.

[13]   M. Al-Gharabally, "Systematic Review: Challenges in Teaching Writing Skills for Upper-Level ESL Students," *Int J Eng Adv Technol*, 2015.

[14]   B. Giridharan, "Identifying Gaps in Academic Writing of ESL Students.," *ERIC*, 2012.

[15]   R. Akhtar, H. Hassan, A. B. Saidalvi, and S. Hussain, "A systematic review of the challenges and solutions of ESL students' academic writing," May 01, 2019, *Blue Eyes Intelligence Engineering and Sciences Publication*. doi: 10.35940/ijeat.E1164.0585C19.