English Research Articles Written by Indonesian Academics: Coping with Common Practices and Rhetorical Diversity

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Abstract
This paper discusses English research articles (RAs) written by Indonesian academics in terms of the generic structure and rhetorical features. The corpus was 50 RAs of applied linguistics discipline that were published in the accredited journals in Indonesia. The investigation reveals that the generic feature of English RAs published in the accredited journals in Indonesia follow the conventional format of English RAs; however, the common practices of the writing and publishing English RAs in Indonesia suggest that rhetorical diversity has evolved. It is assumed that the diversity of rhetorical features in the writing English RAs is influenced by the Indonesian writing tradition and cultural background. This detailed analysis is essential in order to grasp important differences of the rhetorical strategies between English RAs written by Indonesian academics and English RAs for international publication.

Keywords: research article, rhetorical features, rhetorical diversity

Introduction
English is the most important language that has power and effectiveness in dissemination of research findings (Swales, 1990, 2004). According to Gibbs (1995) valuable work that is published in unfamiliar languages is often simply lost. As the primary aims of writing of scientific article should be “to have as many people as possible read it, understand it and be influenced by it” (Lindsay, 2011, p.5), the role of English as the main communicative medium has left little choice for non-English speaking researchers but to publish in the language that reaches a wider scope of readerships, that is in English.

However, the writing and publishing of English research articles (RAs) in international mainstream journals has received a lot of consideration as it is regarded as difficult task for writers of non-native English speaking background to accomplish (Canagarajah, 2010; Moreno, 2008). There are many requirements in order to meet certain conditions set by the English academic discourse community. This difficulty has been attributed to different traditions, norms, first languages and cultural backgrounds that lead to different practices of writing and publishing research articles in many non-Anglophone countries (Ahmad, 1997, Bhatia, 2008, Canagarajah, 2002, Cruz, 2008, Fakhri, 2009, Moreno 2010). Furthermore, these different traditions and norms between English and non-English speaking countries constrain the opportunities of non-English speaking writers to be involved in worldwide discourse community conversation (Salager-Meyer, 2008).

Previous studies of English RAs written by Indonesian academics reported in Mirahayuni (2002) reveals that authors of Indonesian RAs are familiar enough with the conventional generic structure of English RAs based on the IMRD (Introduction-Method-Result-Discussion) framework (Swales, 1990). Another study conducted by Safnil (2000) reveals that the structure of RAs in Indonesia is basically similar to the organizational
structure of undergraduate theses that have already been established in the Indonesian academic environment. In general, the core sections of RAs written by Indonesian academics does not differ distinctly from those written by English speaking academics (Basthomi, 2006). However, Mirahayuni (2002) found that there are some unfamiliar sections used, such as a section of ‘Benefit of the Study’ and ‘Recommendation’ that are not found in English RAs by native speakers. The present study assumed that English RAs published in the accredited journals in Indonesia have been written following the conventional IMRD format (Swales, 1990).

Being non-native English writers, Indonesian academics have experienced some difficulties of writing and publishing English research articles. This appears from the relatively low number of Indonesian scientists publishing in international journals compared to other Asian countries, such as Thailand, Japan, and China. This concern has been expressed by the Indonesian Government, in particular The Directorate of Higher Education (henceforth called DIKTI). In addition, the low rate of Indonesian publication might be due to the fact that indexing services, such as the Scientific Citation Index (SCI) in America, index only English language research. Canagarajah (2010) emphasizes other challenges of non-English speaking authors appear because wider or international contribution may be restricted as researchers are limited by the number of journals available at their endorsement for spreading the information due to the language in which they write their research reports. From international editors’ point of view, however, the influence of the first language practice is assumed to be a factor that may prevent the acceptance in order to gain international readership (Flowerdew, 2002, Moreno, 2008, 2011).

Under the Republic Indonesia Act no 24/2009 of the status of Flag, Language, and National Emblem (a.k.a. Undang-undang RI nomor 24 tahun 2009 tentang Bendera, Bahasa, dan Lambang Negara serta Lagu Kebangsaan), the writing and publishing of RAs in English becomes the main consideration for Indonesian academics. It is stated in the verse no 35 sequence 1 (Pasal 35 ayat 1) that the Indonesian language should be used as the compulsory medium in writing and publishing research articles. However, this restriction is followed by a condition stated in Pasal 35 ayat 2 that writing and publication for a specific research purpose can be presented in a local language or in a foreign language. This recent policy of the function of English as a foreign language in Indonesia opens more spaces for Indonesian academics to be involved actively in the world scientific conversations through writing and publishing RAs in English. In response, more and more journals in Indonesia are recently becoming bilingual journals to allow an equal opportunity for RAs published in English and in the Indonesian language.

This current demand has been challenging for the Indonesian academic environment. In recent times, journals in Indonesia have been publishing research articles in both the Indonesian language and in English. Most of the accredited journals in Indonesia have now become bilingual journals where both the Indonesian RAs and English RAs have the same opportunity to be published. In addition, there are journals that have been designed as monolingual journals that only publish RAs in English, such as TEFLIN (Journal of Teaching English a Foreign Language in Indonesia), Indonesian JELT (Journal of
English Language Teaching), and ‘K@ta’ the biennial journal of English Language Teaching in Indonesia. This publication of English research articles only is intended to provide other means for Indonesian academic to express their work, research, and commitment through English journals.

This paper aims to discuss the common practices and rhetorical diversity of composing English RAs written by Indonesian academics, which were published in the accredited journals in Indonesia.

**Literature Review**

Developing a good English research article requires a certain organizational structure to ensure that the paper can be read and understood clearly by the targeted readers of a particular scientific community. The common sections that conventionally appear in English RAs are known as the Introduction, the Method, the Result, and the Discussion (shortened as IMRD). This IMRD format, which is derived from authentic English texts (Swales, 1990), now has been used as the basic organizational structure of RAs written in English in many non-English speaking countries including Indonesia. Regardless of the discipline and the model the writers used, there are just three immutable characteristics of good scientific writing that distinguish it from all other literature, namely: precision, clarity, and brevity (Lindsay, 2011, p. 4).

As well as the use of IMRD format in structuring RAs, there may be other organizational features set by journal guidelines to meet the expectations of the target audiences of the journals. The generic structure of English RAs can be organized in various ways in different disciplines, such as in social sciences, humanities, and in computer sciences or information technology. In the discipline of computer sciences and information technology, the structure of RAs is commonly organized through Abstract, Introduction, Material and Methods, Results, and Discussion or shortened as the ‘AIMRaD’ structure or its variation of the ‘AIRDaM’ format, where the ‘Method and material’ is positioned as the final section (Cargill & O’Connor, 2009). In addition, Lindsay (2011, p. 28) argues that some scientific journals are now relegating the Material and Methods section to a sort of appendix at the end of the article and presenting it in smaller font. This change of structuring RAs suggests that the core section of RAs in different disciplines may vary considerably. In English RAs written by Indonesian academics, the core sections of the IMRD format have evolved in a more varied section with subtitles.

In regard to English RAs written by Indonesian academics, it was found that all RAs begin with an abstract and finish with a reference list. In between, there are sections that are commonly called Introduction, Method, Result, Discussion, and Conclusion (IMRDC). It appears that the generic IMRD structure has been broadly followed; however, it was found that English RAs written by Indonesian academics are presented in a slightly different style. The investigation of RAs published in some of the accredited journals in Indonesia reveals that variation in styles among journals is noticeable. This variation in the surface structure of RAs written in English includes the ways of writing the abstract and the organization of subtitled sections.
It appears that each of the accredited journals maintain their own journal house-style as part of the journal tradition. They provide guidelines in order to give general groundwork that must be followed by contributors. The specific guidelines to contributors include some details and technical requirements of how to write an article that fits to the journal style. Indeed, most of the journals accept different kinds of articles for submission, for example, research reports, conceptual papers, literature reviews, theoretical essays as well as a book reviews. Accordingly, these diverse contents might influence the way the sections are labeled as well as the types of subheadings within these sections.

This discursive practice might have been influenced by a demand for publishing RAs written in English. This demand changed the editorial policy of some journals that now prefer publication of RAs in English. To answer the challenge, nowadays most of the accredited journals in Indonesia are becoming bilingual journals, which give more priority for RAs written in English. Meanwhile, there are some journals that are initiated as monolingual journals which publish only RAs written in English, such as the journal of Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Indonesian (TEFLIN Journal), Cultural and English Language Teaching Journal (CELT), K@ta Biennial Journal, and the Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching (JELT). In this study, therefore, the selected sample of English RAs are taken from both monolingual and bilingual journals which have been certified as accredited journals by The Indonesian Institute of Sciences, known as LIPI, (Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia) and the DIKTI.

The common practices of writing and publishing English RAs in Indonesia

The writing and publishing of English RAs in Indonesia is considered relatively a new tradition. Although most of the accredited journals have started publishing English RAs, the majority of the target readers are Indonesia academics. This condition might influence the editing process of the rhetorical variety use and the author’s preference that is familiar to the Indonesian discourse community. As reported in (Basthomi, 2007), the editors/reviewers tend to be modest in that they have restricted their imagined readers to be those in the confines of the Indonesian setting and, subsequently, have not thus far inculcated the Indonesian writers of English research articles to entertain on the need to orient their English RAs to the larger context of international audiences.

The first evidence of variation in English RAs written by Indonesian academics is found in the Abstract section. In terms of physical appearance, all the English RAs are preceded by abstract followed by key words. However, the abstracts were written in three different ways, i.e. in Indonesian, in English, or both in Indonesian and in English. This practice is, in fact, explicitly written in some of the bilingual journals’ guidelines (e.g. Bahasa dan Seni, Humaniora, Linguistik Indonesia, and Kajian Linguistik dan Sastra). For instance, the guidelines of some journals state that if the RAs are written in English, the abstract must be in Indonesian, or both in Indonesian and English. This regulation is basically to facilitate the Indonesian readers that may have difficulty understanding English texts. It is supposed that if RAs are written in English, the Indonesian reader still can grasp the general content provided by an abstract written in Indonesian. In the case of monolingual journals that only publish RAs in English like TEFLIN Journal, JELT, and K@ta, however, the abstract is written only in English. This practice might be motivated by the
fact that readers of those journals mostly belong to the English teaching discourse community and their associations.

The abstract section becomes one of the sections of RAs that have been given specific attention by most of the accredited journals, that is, by setting a limit to the number of the words, for example, no more than 200 words (as specified in Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan, Kajian Linguistik dan Sastra, and TEFLIN Journal), 50 – 75 words in Humaniora, 75 – 150 words in Bahasa dan Seni, while Linguistik Indonesia has settled with ‘more and less’ 150 words. In sum, all English RAs employ the abstract section but have three variations, those written in English and Indonesian only or both in English and Indonesian.

Following the abstract, the majority of the accredited journals in Indonesia arranges the Introduction of RAs in two ways: presented with or without the explicit label of ‘Introduction’. This evidence was found in several journals, i.e. TEFLIN Journal, Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan, Bahasa dan Seni, and Humaniora. As written in the journals’ guidelines, those journals require the writers not to use an explicit subheading for the introductory section; instead, they are required to directly present the introduction after the Abstract. On the other hand, other journals, such as Linguistik Indonesia, and Kajian Linguistik dan Sastra, require authors to write an explicit title of the introduction. However, none of the accredited journals provide specific information on how the Introduction must be written; i.e. the journals do not specify what certain communicative purpose should be accomplished or a certain model to which the authors should conform.

Several guidelines provide details about what should be included in the Introduction section. As stated in TEFLIN Journal, for example, the introduction should be written without heading, and must contain review of related literature and research purposes. The other journals, for instance Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan, require that the Introduction section should provide particular elements, such as background of the study, a little bit (sedikit) of literature review, and aims of the study; while the journal of Bahasa dan Seni requires review of the most important and relevant theoretical concepts and aims of the study to be presented in the Introduction section. Some other journals have similar instructions, but among the accredited journals, Journal of Linguistik Indonesia has the most limited information in its journal guidelines, which simply explains about the RAs division, the length of article, how to write the abstract and how to write citations. Besides these two variations, the introduction section is sometimes replaced with another label, ‘Background’ and ‘Background of the Study’.

The variation also appears in presenting the Method section. In the accredited journals in Indonesia, the method section is labeled almost uniformly as Method. This section is usually written in a very brief and straightforward manner in one or two paragraphs. However, in the end of the Method section, some RAs provide extra subtitles to particular constituents of the Method, e.g. the Data, Research procedure, Questionnaire, Observation, or the Interview procedure. As seen in D-ERA/RDI, for example, an article published in Linguistik Indonesia (August 2006), the authors altered the method section into three subsections, namely: The Aims of the study, The data, and Contrastive Rhetoric.
Although some authors state that the articles are based on research, many of RAs have been presented with different labeling conventions using other terms that might be considered to accommodate more specific content focus of the section, e.g., Aims of the study, Data, Sample, and Research Procedure. Such variations might have been practiced as a flexible house-style, for example, in *Humaniora* and *Linguistik Indonesia*. The use of various titles within the method section shows that uniformity of the sections title may not receive specific attention from both the writer and editorial member who is responsible for the editing of the article.

This variation is continued to the end of the RAs sections, such as in the result and discussion sections. The results section and the method section of RAs seem to be generally regarded as a relatively unproblematic part of RA development (Holmes, 1997, Lindsay, 2011). The result section describes the factual findings of the research conducted and the description is quite individual in regard to the focus of study. In Indonesia, however, it is probable that the results and the discussion sections are presented side-by-side or together into one section called ‘Results and Discussion’ because the findings need to be discussed and interpreted immediately.

The Result section is regarded as a central section of RAs in the IMRD model; however, in the accredited journals in Indonesia, this section is mostly presented together under the Results and Discussion section. It was found that many of these combined sections then were divided again with the subtitle ‘Result’ or ‘Findings’ before commencing to the Discussion section. The Result section of English RAs published in Indonesia when used as a freestanding title is labeled as ‘Findings’ such as found in *Linguistik Indonesia*, however, the Result when it comes together with the discussion becomes the ‘Findings and Discussion’, which is frequently used as the preferred label in other accredited journals such as *TEFLIN Journal* and *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*.

Besides applying the IMRD convention, the Discussion section of some journals has been divided into subsections based on the focus of research findings. This practice can be found in the majority of the accredited journals, such as, *Kajian Linguistik dan Sastra, Linguistik Indonesia, and Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*. Several RAs present a lengthy interpretation of the research findings that amounts to more than 65% of the whole articles. While the Discussion is considered very important section, several RAs in journal of *Linguistik Indonesia* have been presented without the discussion or the closing section; instead, they moved directly from presentation of the result section to the reference list. This evidence shows that several RAs were not carefully edited or double checked before they were published.

The final sections of RAs written by Indonesian authors were the Conclusion, but variations in the heading as well as the content exist in some RAs. Although evidence is rare, some RAs finalize their structure heading with ‘Closing remarks’ instead of the Conclusion, but this section usually contains the conclusions and suggestions. This evidence is the most common practice found in the Indonesian RAs that labels the final sections as the ‘Conclusion and Suggestion’. In native English RAs, however, the recommendation, if any, will be put as one of the rhetorical feature in the Discussion section. Swales (1990, p. 173) maintained that because of the highly competitive research grant, the authors might not willingly share any recommendation for future research.
However in Indonesia, research is expected to contribute some kind of practical outcome that can be implemented by the Indonesian government or community. Therefore, the inclusion of suggestion and implication in the final section of RAs is urged. Thus, instead of IMRD format, English RAs published in accredited journals in Indonesia are organized as “I-M-(R&D)-C&S” format and its extra sub-titles variation.

**Rhetorical Diversity of English RAs written by Indonesian academics**

Swales (1990) has been advised that the reference of previous research should be integrated as specific rhetorical feature in the introduction section. However, many English RAs written by Indonesian academics organized a separate sub-section of ‘Literature Review’ and its variations with content-based sub-headings following the Introduction section. The Literature Review is usually placed at the end of the Introduction section after the Introduction is completed. It was mainly found in journals of *Linguistik Indonesia* and *Humaniora*, but occasionally also appears in *Bahasa dan Seni*. For example, it is seen in article “The Rhetoric of Article Abstract: A sweep through the literature and preliminary study” published in the journal ‘*Bahasa dan Seni*’ in 2006. This article has a distinct feature as it has five sub-titles after the Introduction is completed. These sub-titles are rewritten below:

*Abstract*

*Introduction (without title)*
- Of Guidelines for Abstract Writing
- Some Unsettled Questions
- Some More Conclusive Aspects
- Some Remaining Issues
- Of Abstract Writing By Indonesians: A Case

*The Data: The First Sentences of Abstracts*

*Findings and Discussion*

*Concluding Remarks*

*References*

As seen above, apparently, this article does not strictly follow the IMRD format. Although it is based on research, the article has been organized following a different structure from the conventional IMRD research article format, such as ‘The Data’ instead of Method and ‘Concluding Remarks’ instead of Conclusion. In between the Introduction and Method sections, this article provides five subsections following the introduction section more explicitly presented by focusing on the content-based subtitles, including a literature review that is covered in the section ‘Of Guidelines for Abstract Writing’.

This practice of giving more explicit subtitles following the introduction, however, does not change the basic structure of the whole RA organization convention. A further reading of each of the five subsections shows a comparable communicative function of Moves and Steps of the CARS model of the Introduction section suggested by Swales (1990, p. 137), which includes the similarity of one or two communicative purposes:

- Of Guidelines for Abstract Writing
  ⇒ Making topic generalization (Step 2/Move 1)
⇒ Reviewing items of previous research (Step 3/Move I)
• Some Unsettled Questions
  ⇒ Question raising (Step 1C/Move II)
• Some More Conclusive Aspects
  ⇒ Claiming centrality (Step 1/M1)
• Some Remaining Issues
  ⇒ Indicating a gap (Step)
• Of Abstract Writing By Indonesians: A Case
  ⇒ Announcing present research (Step 1B/M3)

All of the subsections have the same communicative functions intended in a conventional English RA introduction identified by Swales (1990). Furthermore, this difference in what is made explicit in sub-titles pertains to the rhetorical features of the introduction itself that can guide readers to have easier comprehensive understanding of specific information. Therefore, this subtitling technique might possibly assist readers more focus with the RA structure and rhetorical features. It is important to note that this uncommon RA format is an exceptional case but such a kind of variety in RA section headings are found in several journals, especially in Humaniora and Linguistik Indonesia, where the IMRD format is not followed in a strict manner.

In English RAs written by native speakers, Swales (1990) identified four core sections that are well known as the IMRD format of RAs organization. Thus, sections other than the Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion, might be considered as a dissonance of the conventional format. Whilst some authors tried to consistently follow the IMRD format, the majority of English RAs published in Indonesia end up with the Conclusion and completed with ‘Suggestions’. This specific practice actually encourages the Indonesian discourse community because the community has high expectations of its academics in general to provide recommendations of every research finding to be implemented to solve problems faced by Indonesian.

These additional sections that have been used by Indonesian academics in writing English RAs might be transferred from their writing tradition in the first language as well as from the Indonesian spoken convention, e.g. if there is an opening section, there be closing words of wishing and suggestions to mark the finished presentation. In some international English journals, however, the ‘Conclusion and Implications’ that has been inserted as a section following the Discussion is suspected as a “frustrated response to so many authors who try to discuss their works without concluding anything” (Lindsay, 2011, p. 41). Furthermore, Lindsay argues that these journals that have an obligatory section for ‘Conclusion’ pose a problem to good writers because good writers will already have the conclusion as an integral part of their discussion.

However, in a country like Indonesia, multiple practices of organizing RAs in scientific journals might be considered as part of the condition of the Indonesian people who naturally live in the ‘unity of diversity’. Although they have competence in performing English writing, as many of the authors have doctoral degrees from overseas, the Indonesian origin of a multicultural background cannot be abandoned. These practices might also reflect the Indonesian recognition and acceptance of the cultural, ethnical, linguistic, and religious diversity of its people that is represented in the Indonesian
national motto ‘Bhineka Tunggal Ika’ meaning ‘unity in diversity’ (Purwadi, 2007). To deal with this circumstance, practising diversification of rhetorical features might be considered as part of becoming a loyal member of the Indonesian discourse community. In line with this spirit, Susilo (2007) advises us to stop thinking that deviations occur in the texts of multilingual writers as errors. Instead, they are part of the multicultural background of writers that cannot be separated from having a multilingual competence.

Strictly speaking, there is a movement away from the assumption that rhetorical deviations from such native speaker rhetorical norms are seen as signs of un-proficiency experienced or interference (Canagarajah, 2006). Concerning to this phenomenon, Susilo (2007) emphasizes that the new rhetoric view argues that such rhetorical deviations from the normative should not be considered as signs of interference for the bi/multilingual writers, but rather as rhetorical choices that could become critical or alternate discourse. This view respects the bi/multilingualism norms as a great prospect of complex identity that might be considered as the basis of contrastive text analysis.

The analysis concludes that a variety in organizing English RAs structure is apparent in the Indonesian accredited journals in terms of the generic structure and rhetorical variation, but the main surface structure of IMRD+C section of RAs are consistently maintained. English RAs written by Indonesian academics do not strictly follow the IMRD format, but give extra sub-sections title following the main sections. The variety of English RAs generic structure might be due to the different journal guidelines that have been preserved as their own house-style. Another salient variation found in English RAs written by Indonesian academics is in the Conclusion section that is accompanied by the Suggestion section written explicitly as the final sub-heading section. This practice might be influenced by the Indonesian research tradition that the research findings should provide a direct solution for an identified problem in the community.

Finally, this rhetorical diversification might be result of acceptance by the Indonesian research community agreed upon the government policy as well as the guidelines set by the accredited journals that meets the Indonesian discourse community expectations. In addition, the diversity of rhetorical features in writing English RAs might evolve from the permissive attitude of the Indonesian norms that respect the diversity in written style. This leniency of the rhetorical features variation use in writing English RAs might not be seen as a sign of lacking awareness either by writers or editorial board members; however, Indonesian writers wishing to publish in international publication face uncompromising and restricted guidelines of English RAs.

References


