

## **The rhetorical problems experienced by Indonesian lecturers in social sciences and humanities in writing research articles for international journals**

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The publication rate of Indonesian academics in reputable international journals is far below those of neighbouring countries. This is because Indonesian academics are not familiar with the appropriate rhetorical style of English research articles although they can write academic texts in English reasonably well. This study investigated the rhetorical problems experienced by Indonesian lecturers in social sciences and humanities when writing research articles for international journals. In this study, all sections (abstract, introduction, methods, results and discussion) of research article drafts written by Indonesian academics were analysed based on their rhetorical styles following the models suggested by Swales (1990, 2004), Swales and Feak (2009), Lim (2006), and Peacock (2011). The results show that Indonesian authors have significant rhetorical problems in writing the introduction, results and discussion sections but few problems with writing abstracts and the methods section. The majority of these academics fail to write a convincingly argumentative introduction and discussion because they either do not use relevant references at all or they use them in improper ways. The study concludes that Indonesian authors must learn the ideal rhetorical styles of research article introductions and discussions, especially the use of references, in order to be accepted in international journals.

**Keywords:** Research article; genre-based analysis; Indonesian academics; reputable international journals; English academic writing; Indonesia

### **Introduction**

University students, particularly postgraduate students, and faculty members all over the world are expected and encouraged to publish their research results in international journals (Adnan, 2014; Arsyad & Adila, 2018; Coleman, 2014; Day, 2008; Dujsik, 2013). The degree of pressure to publish varies between countries depending on the prevailing academic atmosphere and research practice (Adnan, 2014). The pressure to publish internationally in Indonesia and other developing countries is less strong than in developed countries because the academic tradition in Indonesia is relatively new. For Indonesian authors, the most likely language for international publication is English.

However, many Indonesians seem to be unsuccessful in international journal publication. This is because writing research articles is very challenging and writing them in a foreign language is even more demanding (Arsyad & Arono, 2016).

Indonesian academics' publication rates increased significantly from 2010 to 2016 (Kemristekdikti, 2016) although they remain low when compared with neighbouring countries such as Malaysia and Singapore. The number of publications by Indonesians in Scopus and Web of Science (Thomson) indexed international journals increases significantly year by year and exceeds that of Filipino academics (Kemristekdikti, 2016). This increase is very encouraging because it debunks the myth that the English competence of Indonesian academics is below that of Filipino academics, and because it implies that English mastery is not a significant obstacle for Indonesian academics who wish to publish in international journals. The possible causes for the generally poor publication performance in Indonesia are that most Indonesian academics (1) do not publish in journals at all, (2) only publish in local or national journals and (3) only publish in the form of research reports, seminar proceedings or conferences in Indonesian.

Despite recent increases, Indonesian rates of academic publications in indexed international journals are still relatively low. For example, data from the Scimago Journal and Country Rank for international journal publications between 1996 and 2015 rank Singapore as 32nd, Malaysia as 35th, Thailand as 43rd and Indonesia as 57th. Theoretically, the publication rate in Indonesia should be above those of neighbouring countries by virtue of its larger population and larger number of academics. Also, the Indonesian government has, since 2012, required every Indonesian student especially those who are studying at the doctoral level to be published in international journals before they can graduate.

Indonesian academic publications are mostly in fields related to science, technology, health and medicine such as engineering (15.14%), medicine (10.64%), computer science (10.2%), agriculture and biological sciences (9.57%), and physics and astronomy (5.39%), while publications in social sciences (4.74%) and arts and humanities (0.91%) remain low (Kemristekdikti, 2016).

The particularly low international publication rates of Indonesian academics in social sciences and humanities warrants attention. Although the obstacles to research and publication in Indonesia are known, studies of these problems are few. Those that exist can be classified into non-linguistic studies and linguistic studies. The former have concentrated on obstacles related to: 1) policy and regulations; 2) academic attitude and practices at universities; 3) approaches to research. The linguistics studies concentrate on obstacles related to research articles (RAs), which include genre studies of research article texts; and rhetorical studies of strategies to structure RAs especially their abstract, introduction and discussion sections. The study reported here focuses on the rhetorical aspects of why Indonesian academics in social sciences and humanities are rarely successful in publishing their research articles in reputable international journals.

### **Literature review**

The literature on how to increase publication in international journals is sparse. Linguistic studies examine RAs written by Indonesian authors either in Indonesian or in English using the perspectives of English for Specific Purposes pioneered by Swales (1981, 1990, 2004), and followed by researchers such as by Bhatia (2001), Holmes (1997), Hyland (1996, 1999, 2000, 2002) and Samraj (2002, 2005). Swales (1984) employed a functional approach to the study of the rhetorical structure of RA introductions (RAIs). He developed the moves and steps model known as the CARS (create a research space)

model, which has inspired many subsequent studies. Swales' model is fully explored in his seminal book *Genre Analysis* (Swales, 1990). He later revised his model (Swales, 2004) but this new version of the model seems to be less successful than his original model which continues to be used in many studies around the world, perhaps due to its clarity and ease of use. Rhetorical studies with many different language backgrounds have been published including in Arabic (Najjar, 1989) and in Malay (Ahmad, 1997). A number of studies have been conducted on the RAs of Indonesian authors (Adnan, 2014; Arsyad, 2001; Arsyad & Adila, 2018; Arsyad & Arono, 2016; Arsyad & Wardhana, 2014; Basthomi, 2006; Mirahayuni, 2002). The main findings of these studies are that there are important differences in rhetorical patterns between standard English RAs and those written in Indonesian or English by Indonesian authors.

Rhetorical studies mainly focus on how authors structure RAs especially the abstract, introduction and discussion sections in a way which is acceptable to international audiences. These studies assume that Indonesian authors who are used to Indonesian rhetorical patterns would tend to encounter problems when writing RAs for international journals in English. This assumption is based on the research findings in second language acquisition studies, which suggest that learners of a second or foreign language transfer rhetorical patterns of their native language when using the second or foreign language (Gass & Selinker, 1992; Nitschke, Kidd, & Serratrice, 2010). This theory is supported by an empirical study (Arsyad, 2014) which suggests that research articles written by Indonesian authors published in Indonesian-based national or international journals tend to employ Indonesian rhetorical patterns. However, these studies looked at RAs as finished language products; that is, they were articles that were already published in journals. These articles might have gone through editing processes conducted by journal editors and/or reviewers and the authors themselves. Thus, any linguistic problems identified in those articles were not really problems in the sense that they had not prevented publication. Any real problems were not visible because they had either already been edited out, or had occurred in papers which had been rejected. Therefore, the current study investigated the rhetorical problems in the drafts of RAs written by Indonesian authors for eventual submission in social sciences and humanities journals. The study looked for rhetorical problems in all sections of the draft articles (i.e., abstract, introduction, methods and results, and discussion).

### ***Research questions***

The following research question was used in this study:

What common rhetorical problems are encountered by Indonesian authors in social sciences and humanities when writing:

- a. an RA abstract
- b. an RA introduction section
- c. an RA methods section
- d. a results and discussion section of their RA

### **Research methods**

Following (Irawati, Lulus, Saukah, & Suharmanto, 2018), the study used a content analysis approach to analyse the rhetorical moves found in the sections of English RA drafts written by Indonesian faculty members in the fields of social sciences and humanities.

***The corpus of the study***

The corpus consists of 20 articles written by lecturers or researchers in the social sciences and humanities disciplines from five universities in Bengkulu city in Indonesia<sup>1</sup>. All the articles used the same structure consisting of introduction, methods, results and discussion, and conclusion (IMRDC) sections. The topics of the articles varied but they were all within the fields of social sciences and humanities (see Table 1 for example topics). The lecturers were asked to submit an RA draft written either in Indonesian or English. As is common in academic writing, each RA was written by varying numbers of authors. In general, the articles have between one and five authors. The total number of authors across the 20 articles in the corpus is 58. The authors are all Indonesian nationals working as university lecturers and hold at least a master's degree, some have a doctoral degree and others are in the process of completing their doctoral degrees. So, although the writers of the RA drafts are not senior academics they already have some experience of writing RAs in Indonesian and/or English. In Indonesia, even the most junior academic staff have some experience of writing for publication because as postgraduate students they will have been required to publish their research results in a national accredited journal or an indexed international journal before they can graduate.

Table 1. Example topics of articles within the corpus

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Deixis of Minangkabau Language in Sangir Batang Hari District in South Solok Regency

Students' Perspectives on the Implementation of Extensive Reading

Willingness to Communicate in Foreign Language: What are the Factors Affecting the Enthusiasm of High-Ability-Students to Communicate in the Classroom

Smoking in Local Wisdom and Social Environment Perspective

Students With Mild Intellectual Disabilities at Higher Education: The Invisibility and Possibility to Adjust in the Classrooms.

The 20 drafts provided by the lecturers were analysed using rhetorical models of RA sections as suggested by previous researchers (Lim, 2006; Peacock, 2011; Swales, 1990, 2004; Swales & Feak, 2009). The models are summarised in Table 2. Every section of an RA written in English and published in international journals has a standard rhetorical model. These models were used as a guideline in analysing the 20 RA drafts in this study. These rhetorical models were chosen because they are deemed suitable for RAs in social sciences and humanities (although it should be noted that the authors reviewed above also suggest other models). Swales (2004) claims that his CARS model is effective in capturing necessary rhetorical moves in English RA introductions across disciplines because it is "simple, ... functional ... and corpus-based" (p. 26). Models for other sections have been suggested by other authors but they are not significantly different. Moyetta (2016), for example, found that although different from their English counterparts, the discussion section of RAs in Spanish in the field of psychology has at least two compulsory moves, which are (1) stating the results and (2) referring to previous studies. Similarly, Irawati et al. (2018) used the rhetorical move model suggested by Swales (1990) when analyzing RA discussion sections written by Indonesian authors in English

and Indonesian in the field of applied linguistics. Other authors (for example, Basthomi, 2006; Mirahayuni, 2002) also used the rhetorical model suggested by Swales (1990). Holmes (1997) suggested a rhetorical model of RA discussions in social sciences and humanities. That consists of eight moves similar to those of Swales (1990) although with slightly different names. Similarly, Loi, Sweetnam Evans, Akkakoson, Shabbir, and Ahmed (2015) analyzed the rhetorical moves in RA discussions written in Malay in the field of education. They used the rhetorical model suggested by Peacock (2002) which also consists of 8 moves, namely: information, finding, expected or unexpected outcome, reference to previous research, explanation, claim (contribution to research or sometimes with recommendation for action), limitation, and recommendation. This model is similar to that of Swales (1990), although the moves are given slightly different names.

Table 2. Models for research article sections (based on, Lim, 2006; Peacock, 2011; Swales, 1990, 2004; Swales & Feak, 2009)

RA Sections	Structural Moves	Description of Their Functions
Abstract	Move 1: Introduction	Statements about the research topic or what do we know about the topic? Or why is the topic important?
	Move 2: Objectives/ purposes	Statements about the objective of the research or what is this study about?
	Move 3: Methods	Statement about how a study has been conducted or How was it done.
	Move 4: Results	Statement about what have been found in the research or what was discovered?
	Move 5: Conclusion	Statement about the conclusion, implication or recommendation of the research findings or what do the findings mean?
Introduction	Move 1: Establishing a territory	Statement about showing that the general research area is important, central, interesting, problematic, or relevant in some way or introducing and/or reviewing items of previous research in the area
	Move 2: Establishing a niche	Statement of indicating a gap in the previous research and/or extending previous knowledge in some way
	Move 3: Occupying the niche	Statement about presenting the present work by outlining the purpose, listing the research questions, announcing the principal findings, stating the value of the present research and indicating the structure of the research article
Methods	Move 1: Describing data collection procedure/s	Description of data collection techniques including: 1) description of location of the sample, the size of the sample/population, characteristic of the sample, sampling technique or criterion, 2) recounting steps in data collection, and 3) justifying the data collection procedures
	Move 2: Delineating procedurals for measuring variables	Description of research procedures including: 1) presenting an overview of the design, 2) explaining the method of variables, and 3) justifying the methods of measuring variables

	Move 3: Elucidating data analysis procedure/s	Description of the process of data analyses including: 1) statistical calculation for quantitative research, 2) justifying data analyses procedures, and 3) previewing results
Results & Discussion	Move 1: Background information about the research	Statement about 'theoretical and technical information' as already addressed earlier in the RA
	Move 2: Statement of results	Claim made by the writer as the direct answer to their research question
	Move 3: Statement of (un)expected findings	Statement or comment on whether or not the research results or finding are as they are expected
	Move 4: Reference to previous relevant studies	rhetorical attempt of writer/s to link the present research finding/s to the available relevant knowledge or information for the purpose of comparison or to support the present findings
	Move 5: Explanation of research results	Author's rhetorical attempt to logically convince readers why such unexpected or extraordinary results or findings of the present study occur
	Move 6: Illustration to support the research results	Illustration or samples to strengthen or support the explanation of research findings
	Move 7: Deduction and hypothesis or Interpretation of research findings	Author's claim about the interpretation of the research findings to a larger scope of topic or area
	Move 8: Suggestions or recommendation	Author's suggestion on the application or implementation of the research findings in practical ways and/or suggestion for further studies in the same or similar topic

### ***Data analysis procedures***

The communicative units in the RA drafts were identified using the process developed by Dudley-Evans (1994). First, the titles, the abstracts and the key terms in each of the articles were read in order to get a general understanding of the research activities being reported. Second, the entire article was read to identify its main sections. Third, each section of each RA draft was read again with reference to the models presented in Table 2 to identify the linguistic and discourse clues which signal the communicative units. Fourth, the moves and steps were identified and coded with the help of linguistic and discourse clues such as subheadings, paragraphs as units of ideas, specific lexicons, discourse markers, and/or inferred from the text. Finally, four independent raters were asked to identify the moves and steps found in all sections of the RA drafts in order to ensure the inter-rater reliability of the results.

### ***Validity and reliability of the data***

The four independent raters involved in this study were postgraduate students in the English Education Postgraduate Programme of the Education Faculty of Bengkulu University. They were first trained in how to identify moves in the texts with examples

following a particular rhetorical analysis procedure as commonly found in text analysis studies. Then, they were given two weeks to complete the move identification analysis of the 20 RA drafts. Inter-rater correlation agreement was then calculated and the results show an 80% agreement which is considered an excellent inter-rater agreement (Orwin, as cited in Kanoksilapatham, 2005). Differences among the independent raters occurred only in relation to introduction and discussion sections while almost no differences occurred in coding the other sections of the RA drafts. After a few discussions between the researcher and the co-raters, full agreement was finally achieved.

## Results and discussion

### Results

#### *The abstracts*

The first analysis looked at the moves found in the abstracts of the RA drafts (Table 3). It is clear that the majority of abstracts in the RA drafts have four moves (Moves 1 to 4) while about half also had a fifth move. A particular focus is given to Move-1 because it can be used to attract readers attention since it includes the first sentences of the article. In this move, authors argue for the importance of their research topic by a particular argumentative rhetorical style. Example 1 shows Move-1 from one of the draft articles where, unlike most other Indonesian authors, these authors state the importance of their study at the beginning of their abstract. They do this by claiming that geographically, Indonesia is in an area experiencing frequent earthquakes and therefore, Indonesian people must be educated how to behave when an earthquake happens. They go on to suggest that education can play an important role in this case. By stating this Move-1 (statements about the research topic/what we know about the topic/why the topic is important), these authors have behaved differently from their Indonesian peers, and in doing so have made this abstract, and probably the whole article, more interesting to read.

Table 3. The distribution of moves in the RA abstracts

Move	Description	Frequency	%
Move-1	Background/introduction/situation	15	75%
Move-2	The purpose of the research	14	70%
Move-3	Methodology/materials/subject or the procedure how research is conducted	17	85%
Move-4	Results/findings	17	85%
Move-5	Conclusion/significance	9	45%

#### **Example 1:**

Indonesia is located in the ring of fire and frequently hit by tectonic earthquake. Education could be one the strategic and effective effort to reduce the earthquake risk.

(Move-1 from RA8. Article title: *Disaster Risk Reduction for Earthquake Using Mobile Learning Application to Improve the Students Understanding in Elementary School*)

*The introduction section*

The second analysis investigated the moves in the introduction section of the RA drafts (Table 4). The analysis shows that the majority of RAs in this study do not have complete moves in their introductions and particularly only about half of them (55%) contain the important Move-2 (establishing a niche). This is an important move because it provides authors with an opportunity to justify or support the importance of their research through reference to the findings of previous studies. Example 2 illustrates authors justifying their research.

Table 4. The distribution of moves in RA introduction

Move	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Move-1	Establishing a territory		
Step-A	Claiming centrality	9	45%
Step-B	Making topic generalization	11	55%
Step-C	Reviewing items from previous research	8	40%
Move-2	Establishing a niche		
Step-A	Counter claiming	4	20%
Step-B	Indicating a gap	7	35%
Step-C	Question-raising	-	0%
Step-D	Continuing a tradition	-	0%
Move-3	Occupying a niche		
Step-A	Outlining purposes	2	15%
Step-B	Announcing present research	11	55%
Step-C	Announcing principle findings	2	10%
Step-D	Indicating research article structure	-	0%

**Example 2:**

So far, interjections are treated as peripheral in a language and do not attract attention of linguist, especially Indonesian linguists. In Indonesian, some linguists such as Kridalaksana, Ramlan, and Moeliono<sup>2</sup> categorise it as function word. However, the explanation about it is restricted on its simple definition and insufficient classification of its function. A comprehensive research on the meaning, function, and the role of interjections in Indonesian is still limited. Based on this background, the writer is interested in analysing comprehensively the specific features of interjection in Bahasa Indonesia.

(Move-2 from RA2. Article title: *Interjection in Bahasa Indonesia*).

Although in Example 2 the author mentions several previous studies relevant to her present study, she does not evaluate their results and then she subjectively claims that detailed or comprehensive studies on this topic, as far as she is concerned, are still rare and therefore, the current study is necessary or important. Although, this can be considered argumentative, it is rather weak and less convincing since the author does not show the gap in knowledge in the literature to be filled by the current study. The gap in

knowledge can only be claimed if authors are able to negatively evaluate the previous studies that they review because that evaluation creates a research gap.

#### *The methods section*

The third analysis looked at moves in the methods section of the RA drafts (Table 5). The majority of the RA drafts have complete moves (Move-1, Move-2 and Move-3) in their methods section. This may imply that, for Indonesian authors writing the methods section of an RA does not present a serious rhetorical problem. Example 3 shows how the author introduces the subject, instrument, data collection technique and the data analysis technique in the methods section of her study. It complies with all three necessary moves in the methods section of a research article (Move-1: Describing the data collection procedure/s, Move-2: Delineating procedurals for measuring variables and Move-3: Elucidating data analysis procedurals) as suggested by Lim (2006). Therefore, it can be claimed that in terms of writing the methods section in a research article, the Indonesian authors do not have serious problems.

Table 5. The distribution of moves in RA methods section

Moves	Description	Frequency	%
Move 1	Describing the data collection procedure/s	20	95%
Move 2	Delineating procedurals for measuring variables	21	100%
Move 3	Elucidating data analysis procedurals	13	62%

#### **Example 3:**

A total of 110 undergraduate EFL university students from seven classes Kanjuruhan University in East Java involved in this present research including male (35%) and female (75%). The majority of the participants (30.21%) was aged 18-20, 47.73% aged between 21-23, and the remaining 22.06% over the age of 24. All of them selected based on the result of TOEFL and GPA scores are studying English Language Teaching as an academic major. They are frequently provided communicative activities in the classroom which lecturers use English as medium language instruction. The students possess a high English ability but unwilling to communicate in respective classrooms. Hence, asking them related to the raised questions in this research are appropriate.

(Move-1: Describing the data collection procedure/s; Move-2: Delineating procedurals for measuring variables and Move-3: Elucidating data analysis procedurals. From RA15. Article title: *Exploring Factors Influencing on Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in EFL Learners*)

#### *The results and discussion section*

The final analysis of the RA drafts focused on the results and discussion section (Table 6). The majority of the drafts have only two moves (Move-2: statement of results, and Move-4: explanation or interpretation of results) in the results and discussion sections. About half (55%) also have a Move-5 (reference to previous research) which is an important move for this section. Example 4 shows a discussion section where the author only restates descriptively the important results of her study but does not state the

interpretation or cause of his/her research findings supported with references in order to be convincing. The author does not compare or contrast his/her research findings with those of relevant studies found in the literature. The lack of Move 5 (reference to previous research results/findings) has made the discussion section of this RA very descriptive and less argumentative and therefore less interesting to read. It is also hard to see whether the findings of this study contribute to current knowledge on the topic.

Table 6. The distribution of moves in RA results and discussion sections

Moves	Description	Frequency	%
Move-1	Background information	15	75
Move-2	Statement of results	16	80
Move-3	Un/expected outcome	-	0
Move-4	Explanation or interpretation of results	16	80
Move-5	Reference to previous research results/findings	11	55
Move-6	Exemplification	2	15
Move-7	Deduction and hypothesis	6	30
Move-8	Recommendation	4	20

**Example 4:**  
DISCUSSION

At the first meeting the teacher explained the learning steps using TAT and easy to find students in the surrounding environment. At the beginning of the student's learning looks still hesitant to try what the teacher has explained. At the second meeting from the beginning of the student learning looks so enthusiastic even on the aspects of blending the colour of students look very enthusiastic. With some of their language chatter that makes the learning atmosphere livelier. With the guidance of teachers the students try to draw with natural dyes according to the techniques and steps that have been described teachers. Each student is assigned to draw 1 picture with the charcoal, 1 picture with clay, 1 picture with the colour of plants.

(Discussion from RA12. Article title: *Drawing Lesson with TAT Dyes*).

## Discussion

The first area addressed in this study is the common rhetorical problems experienced by Indonesian authors in social sciences and humanities when writing RA abstracts. The majority of authors in this study wrote an incomplete abstract with only four moves, most of them did not write Move-5 (conclusion or suggestion). This implies that the authors in this study are already aware of the importance of addressing moves in their abstracts, especially Move-1 (background/introduction/situation). According to Zhang, Thuc, and Pramoolsook (2012), the existence of Move-1 and Move-5 (conclusion and significance) will make RA abstracts more effective in attracting readers and through Move-1, especially, authors can convince readers that the topic of the research is important.

This finding contrasts with Arsyad (2014) who found that the majority of RA abstracts written by Indonesian authors in social sciences and humanities and published in national journals in Indonesia have only three moves (i.e., the purpose, methods, and

results of the research) and very few of them have a Move-1 (introduction). This may be because, according to Ibnu (2003), some journals in Indonesia limit the length of abstracts to be included in an RA. Similarly, Waseso (2003) suggests that every journal usually adheres to a particular publication style which impacts on the writing of the abstract, e.g. the Indonesian Institute of Science style (LIPI); or the American Psychological Association style (APA). Since the RA authors in this study had not yet decided which journal they would submit their manuscript to, they had not yet adjusted the length of their abstracts. Later, if they submitted the abstracts to a particular journal that limits the number of words in the abstract, they may have deleted Move-1 to save space and this would have left only three moves (Move-2, 3 and 4).

The second finding of this study is that only a few of the participating authors support the importance of their research by showing some kind of limitation or weakness found in previous studies. The majority of the authors justify their research by claiming that there are practical problems to be solved in the discourse community. This finding is in line with those of Arsyad and Arono (2016) who also found that Indonesian authors tend to subjectively justify their research or do not support the importance of their study at all. According to that study, unlike international authors, Indonesian authors often justify their research by claiming that their study is important or because they find it necessary, not because there is a knowledge gap in the literature. This is because, according to Adnan (2014), Indonesian authors are reluctant to look at the weakness or limitation of previous studies because criticising the work of others in published academic texts “can result in disharmonized relationship” (p. 11).

The third finding in this research is that Indonesian authors seem to have few or no problems writing their methods sections. The majority of the RA drafts have included the necessary moves (Move-1: describing data collection procedures, Move-2: delineating procedurals for measuring variables; and Move-3: elucidating data analysis procedures). This implies that Indonesian authors are already familiar with the necessary moves in a methods section (as suggested by Lim, 2006; Peacock, 2011). This finding confirms that of Arsyad (2013a) who found that, like those in RAs published in international journals, the methods section of RAs written by Indonesian authors are descriptive and straightforward with less rhetorical effort. Thus, Indonesian authors find no rhetorical difficulty in writing this section.

The last finding in this study is that more than half of the RA drafts examined do not have a Move-5 (reference to previous research results/findings) in their discussion sections. This means that these Indonesian authors do not compare or contrast their research findings with those in previous studies. Similarly, Arsyad (2013b) also found that Indonesian authors rarely support their research findings with related references in their RA discussions, and suggests it is because Indonesian authors believe that they do not need to justify their research findings and it is, rather, for readers to accept the finding they claim. What is considered important by Indonesia authors, as Arsyad explains further, is elaboration, explanation and illustration or exemplification of the findings so that readers can understand and use them for their own studies. However, according to Liu and Buckingham (2018), the central function of the discussion section of an RA is to report and argue for the importance of the research findings and therefore it must be convincingly argumentative and this is frequently done by comparing and/or contrasting the research results or findings with those of relevant studies. If the discussion section is not written in a rhetorically correct and appropriate style, the article drafts will be rejected by reputable international journals (Flowerdew, 2001).

## Conclusion and suggestions

This study has found significant differences between the rhetorical style of introduction and discussion sections of RAs written by Indonesian authors and published in Indonesian journals and those written by international authors and published in international journals in English. The results of this study lead to the conclusion that Indonesian authors in social sciences and humanities have no significant problems in writing the abstracts and methods sections of their RAs, however, they may have problems when writing the introduction and discussion sections. The main problems are that Indonesian authors tend to avoid criticising the work of others and thus have difficulty in revealing a knowledge gap or niche to justify their research and they tend to write descriptive discussion sections without comparing or contrasting their research results or findings with those of relevant studies in the literature. This behaviour may reduce the quality of their manuscripts and the possibility of their RAs being accepted for publication in an indexed or reputable international journal publishing in English.

The differences in writing styles identified here may cause manuscripts to be rejected when submitted to international journals. It is suggested that Indonesian authors in social sciences and humanities should familiarise themselves with the rhetorical moves in the introduction and discussion sections of an RA as they are found in research articles published in reputable international journals in English and make use of them. Adjusting their rhetorical styles in this way is likely to increase the possibility of manuscripts being accepted by international journals.

## Notes

1. At the time of the study one of the institutions was a tertiary institute but has since become a university.
2. In this example, the writer of the RA is referring to: Kridalaksana (2005), Ramlan (1985) and Moeliono, Hasan Alwi., Soenjono Dardjowidjojo., and Lapoliwa (2003) but without accurate citation.

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