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Title

Some Potential Problems for Research Articles Written by Indonesian Academics When Submitted to International English Language Journals
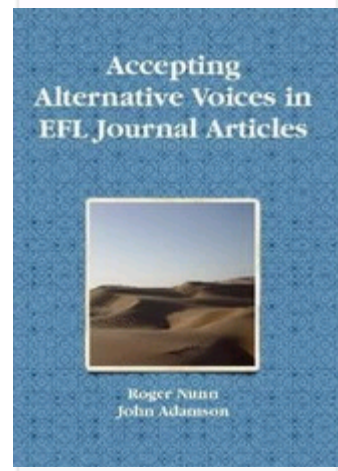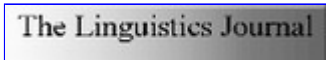
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Accepting Alternative Voices in EFL Journal Articles

Roger Nunn
John Adamson

Abstract

Publishing in international journals by non-native speakers of English has attracted considerable attention recently (Flowerdew, 2001). With the exception of Mirahayuni (2002), no author has looked at feedback to articles written by Indonesian authors when submitted to international English language international journals. This paper presents such issues concerning Indonesian research articles. The data are drawn from an analysis of 63 Indonesian research articles (RA) using the CARS model (Swales 1990), interviews with national and international journal editors, and recent literature on publishing in international journals by non-native English speakers. Based on these the findings and the literature, this paper suggests that emphasis should be put on teaching RA rhetorical structure acceptable to international journals. Further research into English manuscripts by Indonesian and other Asian authors is also recommended.

Introduction

Issues related to publishing in international English language journals by non-native speakers of English have attracted considerable attention from both the Indonesian government authorities, specifically the Directorate of Higher Education (abbreviated in Indonesian as DIKTI), as well as universities and researchers. DIKTI has provided both 'carrots and sticks' to encourage academics to publish internationally. 'Carrots' (incentives) have been presented in the form of financial incentives for researchers to publish internationally; and 'sticks' (pressures) in the form of stricter requirements for academics at senior level for promotion unless they publish internationally (interview with Director of Research and Community Service at the Directorate of Higher Education in 2000).

For their part, many universities have organised a series of workshops to improve the skills of their academics to publish their research in journals. For example, Airlangga University recently organised a workshop for this purpose (11-12 September 2005). Among researchers who have undertaken research into these issues are Gosden (1993), Canagarajah (1996), Flowerdew 1999a, 1999b, 2000, Mirahayuni (2001, 2002), and Swales (2004). With the exception of Mirahayuni (2001, 2002), no author has looked at the possible problems articles written by Indonesian authors would experience when reviewed by international English journal editors. This paper considers these issues, but first it will review the literature. This review will be followed by the methodology, results, discussion, conclusion and practical suggestions, and implications for further research.

Literature Review

The study by Gosden (1993) surveyed editors in hard sciences (shortened as MIPA in Indonesian) in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America (USA) focusing on their attitudes toward and treatment of RA manuscripts from Non-Native Speakers of English (NNSs). He found a number of problems such as lack of clarity in presenting results, isolation, the longer time taken to write RAs (and submit), and mediocre research methodology. Isolation refers to many causes such as "not carefully reading 'Instructions to Authors', unfamiliarity with the journal and its academic level, not reviewing previous literature well and relating own study with other studies …" (p. 33).

In Hong Kong, Flowerdew (1999a; 1999b; 2000; 2001) has conducted extensive research examining different aspects of publishing in international journals. His informants were mainly Hong Kong scholars who used English as their instructional language. He has surveyed these scholars' experience and views on publishing in international journals (Flowerdew 1999b); conducted in depth interviews (Flowerdew 1999a); and undertaken an ethnographic case study of the process of submitting manuscripts by one of those scholars (Flowerdew 2000). These studies concentrated mainly on authors trying to have their RAs published in international journals. Flowerdew (2001) has also looked at the 'other side of the coin' i.e. the international editors' side of the story, and in particular the common problems they found in NNSs' manuscripts. He conducted in depth interviews with editors of major international journals in applied linguistics and language teaching. Some of these journals are: *Applied Linguistics, English Language Teaching Journal, English for Specific Purposes Journal, Journal of Second Language Writing, TESOL Quarterly* and *World Englishes.*

In his studies of Hong Kong scholars submitting papers to

international journals, Flowerdew (1999b) found difficulties in writing the Introduction and Discussion sections, particularly with rhetorical or discursive structures. For example, the scholars found it problematic to structure a literature review, to imply or emphasise the significant contribution of the study, and to make convincing arguments. Flowerdew considered that such issues could 'critically affect what gets published by NNSs on global scale' (p. 259). Indeed, difficulties in writing the Introduction and Discussion sections have also been identified by other scholars as it is from these sections that editors judge whether the research reported in the article is 'sound, significant, and worthy of publication' (Atkinson, 1990; Swales, 1990, cited in Flowerdew, 1999b).

In his 2001 study on 'the other side of the coin', Flowerdew explored publishing problems from the perspective of editors through in depth interviews. He found that the two sections i.e. introduction and discussion sections were also problematic for the NNS authors to write. One of the major problems was a failure to establish a niche (Swales 1990) through an adequate literature review. The problem regarding establishing a niche means that the author failed to show the reader where their study stands in relation to other studies, and subsequently why the study is important to the field.

These studies have contributed significantly to our understanding of issues related to publishing in international journals. However, all of them were conducted specifically in the Hong Kong context where authors use English as their instructional language, a significant contrast to most Indonesian teaching contexts.

Mirahayuni (2002) studied RAs written by Indonesian authors. She examined the rhetorical patterns of the crucial but difficult sections of RAs namely the Introductions and Discussions of three groups of articles, namely (1) 10 English articles written by native speakers (NSs) of English, (2) 10 English articles by non-native speakers (NNSs) of English (Indonesian authors), and (3) 10 Indonesian articles written by native speakers (NSs) of Indonesian. Mirahayuni identified some major problems she found in Indonesian RAs. These problems were also found in the 'introductions' and 'discussions' of the RAs she analyzed. In the 'introduction' section Mirahayuni inferred problems from her findings, which support Flowerdew's findings namely (1) parochialism and (2) a lack of literature review. In terms of parochialism, Mirahayuni found that the 'introduction' opening strategy of both the English articles written by the Indonesian authors and those articles written in Indonesian 'tend to be oriented around localized space and time rather than towards the general knowledge in the area of study' (p.38). With the second problem i.e. the lack of literature review, Mirahayuni found that the majority of the Indonesian RAs reviewed literature that situate their study amongst other studies much less than the native English RAs. Similar findings were also found in Safnil's study (Safnil 2000).

The above findings contribute considerably to our understanding of problems Indonesian could have when their RAs are sent to international journals. However, Mirahayuni's sample data was too small to represent RAs written by Indonesian authors. She used only 30 RAs (10 RAs written in Indonesian by Indonesian authors (Ind. NSs), 10 RAs written in English by Indonesian authors (English NNSs) and 10 RAs written by native speakers of English (Eng NSs). All these RAs belonged only to one discipline i.e. Language and Language Teaching. So, it is difficult to generalise from them. My study attempted to overcome these methodological problems by using a much bigger and broader data size with RAs representing 3 disciplines.

My basic theoretical assumption of my argument in this paper is that of language transfer (Selinker & Gass 1992, Ellis 1994, Oldlin 1989), which essentially postulates that writers tend to transfer elements and patterns of their first language when they perform in a second or foreign language.

The Issue of Language Transfer

The issue of language transfer from one's first language to their second language has been widely debated. Some researchers view transfer negatively as an impediment for second language acquisition, but others see positively as a resource that helps leaners in their performance in the second language. However, Ellis (1994: 343) concludes that there is 'clear evidence' that transfer is a factor that influences performance in a second language. Never the less, in regard to the possible problems that Indonesian authors may face when writing in English for international journals, transfer could be seen as an impediment to successful publication of their papers if editors or reviewers reject the papers. Reasons for rejections can include inability to follow the flow of ideas in their papers or if they don't find them convincing when they are influenced by the authors' first language discourse patterns.

   Transfer can occur at different levels including lexis, grammar and discourse (p. 334). A PhD study by Mirahayuni (2001) shows how discourse patterns of the first language of Indonesian authors appear in their articles published in English. Another PhD study by Rusdi (2002) also suggests the transfer of information sequence (discourse structure) when Indonesian and Australian students gave presentations in their respective second languages. So, there is little doubt that the first language discourse patterns of Indonesian authors can influence their writing in English.

   I will now turn to the methodology employed in this study and then present some of the findings of the study, outlining some possible problems Indonesian RAs may experience when they are sent to international journals.

Methods

Primary Data

The corpus consists of 63 RAs, twenty-one from each of the disciplines of Education, Linguistics and Social and Political Sciences. They were selected randomly from accredited journals published by major research institutes and universities. These journals were selected mostly because of their accreditation status and quality. Three were not accredited, but were chosen because they are well known for their quality. The selected editions were published between 1990-2000. See Appendix 1 for the details of the journals.

Secondary Data

   The secondary information was gathered from interviews with national and international editors, authors and academics. The interviews were conducted with four groups of people, namely: (1) nine Indonesian journal editors (three from each discipline), (2) nine authors, (3) 6 international editors, and (4) 15 Indonesian academics. The interviews with international editors were conducted during several conferences in Hong Kong (2000), Adelaide (2004), and Brisbane (2005), while the interviews with Indonesian authors and editors were conducted in Indonesia during my field-work visits to Indonesia in December 2002-January 2003 and December 2004-January 2005. The interviews were conducted on campuses in cities including in Padang (West Sumatra), Jakarta, Yogyakarta (Central Java), Malang (East Java) and Singaraja and

Denpasar (Bali).

Informants were from different universities and Institutes of Sciences (LIPI). The interviews were semi-structured in that some basic questions were prepared, but some of them were expanded to probe more detailed information. The purpose of the interviews with the editors was to collect information concerning the editors' criteria for selecting (and rejecting) articles and other relevant matters. Examples of the questions are 'What are the criteria you use to accept or reject an article and why?' 'Do you expect authors to critically review the literature in their introductions?' The purpose of the interviews with the authors was to discover the ways they structured their RAs and problems they have in preparing and writing RAs. Two examples of the questions is 'Can you describe the structure you follow when writing your article introductions and why?'; 'Do you critically review other relevant studies in your introductions?'. The information was basically employed to either confirm or otherwise the findings from the primary data and to explain them.

Data Analysis of Rhetorical Patterns of the Introductions
A number of models have been proposed for the study of Introductions, but in the research for this paper only the CARS model was used because it was the most famous and widely used model. The CARS model was also considered the most robust model among the models that were developed based on English RA introductions (RAIs) and has been supported by findings in other studies on English RAs, e.g. Samraj (2005), and Mirahayuni (2002). So, it can be argued that this model is the most representative of the rhetorical patterns of English RAs, especially those that follow the Introduction-Method-Results-Discussion (IMRD) pattern. Before detailing the CARS model, I should describe briefly an important and essential aspect of the model, that of 'discourse community'.

Discourse Community
A 'discourse community' is defined as a specialised group of people. They share six characteristics, i.e. common goals, a participatory mechanism, information exchange, community specific genres, a highly specialised terminology, and a high general level of expertise (Swales, 1990: 29). When applying these characteristics in an academic context, the 'discourse community' will not consist of members of the general public, but of researchers belonging to a particular discipline or field of study.

The CARS Model
As shown in Figure 1, this model was introduced by Swales who used an ecological analogy to describe the model (Swales, 1990, p. 140). The introductions Swales used to describe his model were taken from hard sciences (natural sciences) (Swales, 1990, p. 141). The model consists of three obligatory moves: (1) Establishing a territory, (2) Creating a niche, and (3) Occupying the niche. These moves have a number of obligatory and optional steps. The notes used on the right hand column of the figure, i.e. 'Declining rhetorical effort', 'Weakening knowledge claim' and 'Increasing explicitness' are original. These notes indicate the state of rhetorical efforts made by the RA authors. They start with a strong rhetorical effort in order to persuade or convince the readers to accept the RAs and continue reading (Steps 1 and/or 2 of Move 1). This rhetorical effort decreases as the authors review previous studies, which represent a

strengthening of knowledge. This knowledge claim weakens as the authors begin detailing their studies in Move 3.

Figure 1 the CARS model (Swales, 1990: 141)

MOVE 1: Establishing a territory
Step 1 Claiming centrality
and/or
Step 2 Making topic generalization(s)
and/or
Step 3 Reviewing items of previous research   Declining rhetorical effort
MOVE 2: Establishing a niche
Step 1A   Counter claiming
or
Step 1B   Indicating a gap
or
Step 1C   Question-raising
or
Step 1D   Continuing a tradition

MOVE 3: Occupying the niche
Step 1A   Outlining purposes

Weakening knowledge claim
or
Step 1B   Announcing present research
and
Step 2   Announcing principal findings
Step 3   Indicating RA structure
Increasing explicitness

Move 1: Establishing a territory

When establishing a territory, Swales shows that a writer needs to 're-establish in the eyes of the discourse community the significance of the research field itself' (Swales 1990: 142). This may be carried out by one or more of these steps: Step 1 (Claiming centrality), Step 2 (Making topic generalisation[s]), Step 3 (Reviewing items of previous research). Steps 1 and 2 are optional.
    In Step 1, an author can indicate that the topic to be reported has received interest previously, e.g.
          Recently, there has been a spate of interest in how to …
          (Swales 1990: 144)
Hence, in claiming centrality RA authors may claim that there is considerable interest in the field by researchers (1990: 144).

    Step 2 is making topic generalisations. RA authors may make a topic generalisation by making a statement about the current state of *knowledge* or *practice* (italics in original) such as techniques, or current requirements for future progress. For example,
          'There is now much evidence to support the hypothesis that …'
(Swales 1990: 146)
Or, they may make a statement about current phenomena, e.g.
'… is a common finding in patients with …'
          (Swales 1990: 146)
    Step 3 Reviewing the literature is obligatory. The author should review what studies have been conducted and by whom, what has been found, and what their view is in regards to those studies (Swales 1990).

Move 2: Establishing a niche
Step 3 of Move 1 leads to Move 2, i.e. Establishing a niche. A niche can be established by one or more of the following options: Step 1A (Counter claiming), Step 1B (Indicating a gap), Step 1C (Question-raising), and/or Step 1D (Continuing a tradition). At least one of these should be present in a RA Introduction.

In Step 1A, an author makes a counter claim against a previous claim or view made in a previous study(s) by indicating its shortcomings, problems, or limitations. For example, (all examples here are taken from Swales 1980: 154-156)
'*However,* the previously mentioned methods *suffer from some limitations ...*'
This step is usually marked with an adversative sentence connector such as 'however', 'nevertheless', 'yet', or 'unfortunately'.

The author may also take Step 1B, i.e. indicating a gap of knowledge in the literature reviewed in Move 1. For example,
'The first group *cannot* treat ... and is *limited to ...*'
In Step 1C, i.e. raising a question(s), an author raises a question(s) which has not been answered in previous studies, e.g.
'A question remains whether ...'
In Step 1D, continuing a tradition, an author may indicate that he/she is continuing a research tradition developed in one or more of previous studies. For example,
'The differences need to be analysed...'

Move 3: Occupying the niche
Move 3 is a statement about how the author(s) will occupy the niche. This may be done by four possible steps: Step 1A (Outlining the purpose of the present research), Step 1B (Announcing the present research), Step 2 (Announcing principal findings), and Step 3 (Indicating RA structure).

In summary, Move 1 is an attempt to convince the audience that the research to be reported is of significance to the research field. This should be shown at least by reviewing what previous studies have been conducted. Move 2 is an attempt to convince them that there is a 'space' in the research field that is significant to be investigated; and in Move Three, the author shows how the space is to be occupied.

Data Analysis of the Use of References (Citations)
To analyse how the authors use references, a set of citation functions was formulated based on findings from other studies (Swales 1990; Gilbert 1977; Safnil 2000). These functions are as follows:
1. to show the innovative aspects of the study,
2. to support an argument or points of an argument,
3. to provide background information or to elaborate upon a research topic,
4. to justify the choice of a particular approach or method to situate the study
   in the literature, and
5. to compare results or findings.

These functions were evaluated against the data.

Findings
Results of the Analysis of the Rhetorical Patterns of the Introductions
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Introductions show that the majority of the 63 RAs did not match the CARS model. Major problems were found in the absence of the obligatory steps of Moves 1 and 2. Most of the RAs (over 90%) match Move 3 of the model. Table 1 summarises the findings.

Table 1 Summary of the results of the analysis of the Introductions

Discipline	Number of RAs	Move 1	Move 2	Move 3
Education	N = 21	1 (4.76%)	3 (14.28)	20 (95.23%)
Linguistics	N = 21	7 (33.33%)	8 (38.09%)	19 (90.47%)
Socpol	N = 21	4 (19.04%)	9 (42.85%)	19 (90.47%)

Table 1 shows that overall, a small number of RAs employed Moves 1 and 2. The majority of the RAs did not fit Move 1, with only 1,7, and 4 RAs in their respective disciplines employing it. Likewise, only a marginally higher number of RAs employed Move 2 (3, 8, and 9 RAs in each respective discipline). This indicates that overall, the RAs failed to include crucial aspects of the CARS model. They fail to provide adequate literature reviews to situate their studies amongst previous studies, or show the innovative aspects of their research.

Use of references (Citations)

The results show that low numbers of references were used to show the innovative aspects of the RAs through reviews of previous studies. As shown in Table 2, Linguistics RAs used the largest percentage i.e. 16.29% of 21 RAs, Socpol RAs used 4.43% (of 21 RAs), and Education 1.58% of 21 RAs. The majority of references were used to provide background information including defining key terms, discussing the theoretical framework, and narrating the setting of the research etc.

Table 2 Summary of the Use of References in the 63 RAs

N = 63	Edu RAs	Ling RAs	Socpol RAs
To provide background information	57.91%	58.05%	54.74%
To support points of an argument or an argument	33.54%	16.20%	38.29%
To show innovative aspect (s)	1.58%	16.29%	4.43%
To compare findings	6.01%	4.11%	2.53%
To justify the use of a particular method or approach	2.53%	5.43%	0.00%

The 63 RAs also used a low number of references in order to compare their findings with the findings of other studies. In this case Edu RAs used the highest number, with 6.01% of the total references being used by the 21 Edu RAs; Linguistics used 4.11%, and Socpol RAs used only 2.53% of the total references cited in the 21 Socpol RAs.

These results suggest that the majority of the references were not used for the purposes that matter more for publishing in international journals, namely to emphasise the innovative

aspects of the research through reviewing literature, and to show the significance of the findings for knowledge development.

Discussion
The main question of this paper is: What are the possible problems Indonesian RAs could have when sent to international journals? To answer this question we need to interpret the findings from the results presented earlier.

If these findings are interpreted in terms of the findings in other studies reviewed earlier, we will experience the following crucial problems:
- Lack of rhetorical 'appeal to an international discourse community to accept
    the article (Swales, 1990)
- Parochialism (Flowerdew, 2001)
- The lack of appropriate literature reviewed (Flowerdew, 2001)
- Lack of efforts to show the significance of the study findings in relation to the existing literature (Gilbert, 1977).

Lack of Rhetorical Efforts
According to Swales (1990), generally, RAs published in English appeal to the international discourse community to accept the paper. This is carried out by stating that the research to be reported belongs to a lively research field (Move 1, Step 1). For example, an author may state that the field has attracted a lot of studies, or that the subject is considered a complex issue for researchers. The majority of the RAs examined in this study did not do so. Instead, the majority began their introduction with a definition, a thesis statement, or a narrative about the origins of research in the field which presented no power to persuade the discourse community to accept and read on.

Parochialism
Parochialism means having a location that is too specific, be it local, provincial or national in scope. Safnil (2000) and Mirahayuni (2001) also inferred a similar problem. Many authors began their introduction by referring to specific government documents such as the Indonesian Constitution, the national curriculum, a speech by a minister, etc.

This problem of parochialism is reinforced by the inclusion of practical benefits of the study. This was also found by Mirahayuni (2001) and Safnil (2000). However, this was only applicable to certain disciplines, especially education. Only a few of the Linguistics RAs included practical benefits of the study. So it cannot be generalised to all disciplines. The problem of parochialism is that because the parochial statements are too specific, they may not be relevant to an international audience.

Lack of proper literature reviews
According to the CARS model, the main purpose of reviewing literature is to situate the study amongst other studies, so that a clear narrative can be made between what has been previously studied and found, and what the current study has established and is presenting (Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1995). These two authors have candidly described how their biologist informant had to undergo a long process of correspondence with the editor of an international journal in order to develop the narrative. The majority of Indonesian RAs however, use other studies to define and develop a long discussion of their theoretical framework. Although making a definition and a theoretical framework is important, it should not be presented

at the expense of situating the study amongst other literature. This lack of effort to situate the study is reflected in the low number RAs that fit Step 3 of Move 1 (Review of the Literature), and Move 2 (Establishing a niche) of the CARS model. This is crucial for the acceptance of an article because it shows how the study contributes to the existing knowledge. Without it, there is no reason for publishing the article (interview with an editor in Hong Kong in 2000, and with another editor in Adelaide in 2004).

Lack of efforts to show the significance of the study findings to the existing literature
To show the significance of the findings of a study to the existing literature an author should relate and compare the findings of their study with those in previous studies (Gilbert, 1997). They should also show the significance of the study to the existing literature. The number of references used for this purpose was small suggesting a failure to do so.

Mirahayuni (2002) suggests that one of the reasons for the absence of the above crucial elements is unfamiliarity with English RA rhetorical structure. This could be the case because I have not seen any book that describes the common rhetorical structure of English RAs in the Indonesian market apart from the one published recently (Adnan & Zifirdaus, 2005). However, this is not to say that all Indonesian authors do not know how research should be presented at least in theses. My quick reading of about 10 Indonesian theses at Masters and PhD levels written by students at the University of Malang (previously IKIP Malang, East Java), Padjadjaran University (Bandung, West Java) and University of Bandung (formely IKIP Bandung) revealed that they do know how to write an introduction that fit the CARS model. One possible reason is that there is a belief that an article does not require such a pattern. One of my informants (an editor) from the Indonesian Institute of Sciences mentioned that when she asked an author to provide a proper literature review to situate his study, he replied that he was only writing an article, not a Ph.D thesis. So he declined to write it. However, some of my interview informants were unaware of the rhetorical structure of research article introductions as described in the CARS model.

One might argue that the authors of the 63 RAs written for Indonesian journals certainly would not meet the criteria of international journals. This argument might have some merit, but is not necessarily true for two reasons. First, as mentioned in the literature review, research by Mirahayuni (2001) shows that the articles written for English journals by Indonesian authors also followed basic rhetorical patterns found in the articles written in Indonesian. Second, here we are dealing with the issue of structural (discourse) transfer in Second Language Acquisition. The question is: Do speakers transfer the rhetorical structure from their first language (L1) to a second language (L2)? Research reviewed earlier strongly suggests that transfer does occur and it occurs not only at the morphology and syntax levels, but also at a discourse level.

Conclusion and Suggestions
International editors expect RA manuscripts to contain certain information structured according to a certain rhetorical pattern. The manuscripts that do not follow this pattern with the relevant information are likely to encounter problems and even rejection as shown in the studies reviewed earlier. The CARS model represents this common pattern. The results of the study show that the large majority of the Indonesian 63

RAs did not follow the pattern, particularly its obligatory steps which expect critical information such as reviewing literature that situates the study among other studies, thus showing its innovative aspects and the significance of the study. Research has demonstrated that Indonesians tend to follow common Indonesian RA patterns when writing in English (Mirahayuni, 2002). Research by Rusdi (2000) has also demonstrated that Indonesian speakers transfer rhetorical structure when speaking in second language academic settings. Therefore, it is likely that Indonesian authors tend to write in a similar pattern as the majority of the 63 RAs examined in this study. Consequently, their manuscripts are likely to encounter problems and even rejection when sent to international journals. One might emphasize on the scientific/academic value of articles and ignore the importance of rhetorical patterns, but in practice, many articles *are* rejected because they are not written in accordance with the common rhetorical patterns. This problem is quite real as there have been many editors especially in the United States who simply reject articles from non-English speaker authors when their rhetorical patterns do not match the common rhetorical English patterns*.

To increase the likelihood of Indonesian manuscripts being accepted for publication in international journals, it is suggested that lecturers give more attention to developing awareness of the acceptable rhetorical patterns in international journals and provide adequate exercises for their students to write articles that follow the CARS model.

Implication for further research
This study only involves journal articles written by Indonesian authors in Indonesian and the problems are inferred from the results. A study on research articles written in English by Indonesian authors with a similar or larger data size is recommended to confirm the findings. This study only used articles in 3 selected Humanities disciplines. The use of articles from other disciplines especially those of Hard Sciences would also help confirm the findings. The findings of this study potentially apply to manuscripts written by authors from other Asian countries. Therefore, research on those scripts may also contribute to the field. Interviews with more English editors would also shed further light on the matter.

Notes: *Interview with William Eggington, a researcher on journal article publication and a presenter at Applied Linguistic Association of Australia (ALAA) Conference in Brisbane, Australia, on 8 July 2006.

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Appendix 12 See PDF file

Appendix 2: A sample of the introductions from the discipline of Education
(Translated from research article number 5, coded as Edu 5).

(1) Effectiveness of teaching is affected, among other things, by individual differences amongst students. (2) According to Witherington (1986), these differences are due to things such as (a) gender, (b) degree of intelligence, and (c) capability, including cognitive strategies and learning opportunities. (3) The implication according to Gagne (1974) is that (one needs to adopt) a teaching strategy that is closer to and relatively fulfils different individual needs, for example by small group work, tutorials, independent learning. This is known as an individual learning system (approach).

(4) So far, teaching at *Jurusan Teknik Mesin* (Department of Mechanical Engineering), FPTK (Faculty of Engineering), IKIP (Institute for Teacher Training) Malang, still uses mainly the classical approach, which in practice does not recognize individual differences (Sutadji 1990). (5) This applies also to the teaching method used in the Energy Converter unit. (6) The classical approach mostly uses lectures, with a small percentage of individual assignments. (7) Feedback from lecturers is general, overlooking both the nature and the degree of errors made by individual students.

(8) The learning outcomes achieved by students taught by the classical approach show up as variations in scores, (statistically) the curve skews to the left. (9) This means that the majority of the score is medium and low, with only a small number [of students] receiving higher scores. In other words, the internal effectiveness level of teaching in the Mechanical Engineering Department, FPTK IKIP Malang (including the Energy Converter unit) is still low. (10) This shows how important it is to find an alternative approach in order to increase teaching effectiveness.

(11) The alternative teaching method that has been tested, in search of higher effectiveness, is an individual approach. (12) This strategy (method) is developed based on *Aptitude Treatment Interaction* (ATI), which assumes one teaching method does not suit every learner (Jonassen, 1972).

(13) According to Gagne (1979), this method suits the individuals who study in a group of 25 people. (14) This number matches the number of students in a class including in the Energy Converter unit, Department of Mechanical Engineering, FPTK, IKIP Malang. (15) Therefore, in theory, this alternative strategy can be employed in the department's classes.

(16) Based on a review of the theories, an individual teaching strategy is better at achieving objectives as compared to the classical approach. (17) However, so far there has been no research to obtain empirical evidence to support this. (18) Hence, this kind of research is necessary in an attempt to develop an individual teaching strategy.