

## An analysis on the circumstance of research article writing in English in Indonesia

Hamamah

Universitas Brawijaya, Jl. Veteran Malang, Indonesia  
e-mail: hamamah@ub.ac.id

### Abstrak

Banyak penelitian telah dilakukan mengenai beberapa aspek praktik akademisi *multilingual* dalam menulis artikel penelitian untuk publikasi di jurnal internasional berbahasa Inggris. Namun belum banyak publikasi yang membahas tentang praktik para akademisi dari Indonesia. Akhir-akhir ini pemerintah Indonesia berupaya meningkatkan performa akademisi Indonesia dalam hal publikasi di jurnal internasional. Upaya ini perlu berjalan seiring dengan upaya untuk memahami lebih banyak tentang situasi sosiokultural dan linguistic yang melingkupi akademisi Indonesia. Sehubungan dengan hal tersebut, artikel ini melaporkan temuan awal sebuah penelitian yang bertujuan untuk mengetahui praktik akademisi di Indonesia mengenai penulisan artikel berbahasa Inggris untuk publikasi internasional. Tujuan dari artikel ini adalah menjawab pertanyaan: bagaimana situasi di Indonesia yang melingkupi penulisan artikel hasil penelitian berbahasa Inggris untuk diterbitkan dalam jurnal internasional? Temuan pada artikel ini difokuskan pada tiga bidang: atmosfir akademis di perguruan tinggi di Indonesia, penulisan akademik dalam Bahasa Inggris, dan peraturan yang berkaitan dengan kenaikan pangkat kepegawaian untuk akademisi yang berkaitan dengan penulisan artikel jurnal. Saran diberikan untuk mendukung kelanjutan kinerja akademisi Indonesia dalam menulis dalam Bahasa Inggris untuk publikasi internasional yang bereputasi.

**Kata kunci:** *Publikasi Internasional; akademisi Indonesia; Penulisan Akademik*

### Abstract

There have been well documented studies looking into several aspects on multilingual/peripheral academics' practices in writing research article in English publications. Yet, the practices of multilingual scholars from Indonesia have been less documented. Lately the Indonesian government intends to increase the academics' publication performance. This attempt needs to go hand in hand with an endeavour of understanding more about the sociocultural and linguistic circumstances surrounding the academics. In relation to that, this article reports the preliminary findings of a study that was intended to find out the practices of academics in Indonesia on writing research article in English for international publication. This article is focused on the circumstances that might influence the performance of Indonesian academics in research article writing in English. The aim of this article is answering the question: how is the circumstance of research article writing in English in Indonesia? The findings are focused on illustrating the circumstance of research article writing in English in Indonesia within the three areas: the academic atmosphere in Indonesian higher education institutions, the academic writing for journal publication in English in Indonesia, and the regulatory agenda which relates to academics tenure and promotion. A suggestion is provided to

support the furtherance of Indonesian academics' performance in writing research articles in English for international journal publications

**Keywords:** International publication; Indonesian academics; Academic writing

### Introduction

The call for improving our understanding of the practices of peripheral scholars in relation to writing for publication of research articles in peer-reviewed English-medium journals has been voiced by many scholars including Canagarajah (2002 & 1996) and Curry and Lilis (2004). There have been well documented studies looking into several aspects on multilingual/peripheral academics' practices in writing research article in English publications, among others are the studies conducted by Uzuner (2008), Englander and Smith (2013), Flowerdew (2000), and Salager-Meyer (2008). Uzuner's (2008) study was a synthesis of 39 data-driven research studies on the participation of multilingual scholars in core/global academic communities. There are a diverse range of milieus which the scholars represent in Uzuner's (2008) study, including: China, Hong Kong, Japan, Iran, Sudan, Egypt, Hungary, Slovakia, Spain, Portugal, Poland, Finland, Italy, France, and Mexico. From Uzuner's work, there is one thing can be highlighted namely the practices of multilingual scholars from Southeast Asian countries, with the special reference to 10 Southeast Asian countries united as Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN), has been less documented.

Indonesia, one of the member countries of ASEAN, based on the established financial features (high-end, emergent, developing, and transition economies) in Southeast Asia, is categorised as a developing country (Postiglione, 2005). In terms of the publication, based on Times Higher Education ranking of ASEAN nations by total citation in 2010, Indonesia is positioned at the fourth rank after Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia. The Indonesian government has been attempting to improve research quality and increase the number of research article publication of Indonesian academics in international level.

More pressure has been placed on individual Indonesian academic to write and publish in international journals which mostly use English-medium. The Indonesian government intention to increase the academics' publication performance needs to go hand in hand with the attempt of understanding more about the sociocultural and linguistic context surrounding the academics. This can help to reveal the academics' particular challenges and perceptions in writing research article in English for international publication purposes. In relation to that, this article reports the preliminary findings of a study that was intended to find out the practices of academics in Indonesia on writing research article in English for international publication. This article is focused on the circumstances that might influence the performance of Indonesian academics in research article writing in English. The aim of this article is answering the question: *how is the circumstance of research article writing in English in Indonesia?*

### Research Method

In order to find the answer to the question *how is the circumstance of research article writing in English in Indonesia?*, a research on available literature was conducted. The search for relevant studies was conducted within three databases namely Google Scholar, ProQuest, and JSTOR and available books and theses. The

search focused on looking at relevant publications within three areas that are able to describe circumstances influencing research articles writing and publication in English-medium international journals by Indonesian. The three areas are: the academic atmosphere in Indonesian higher education institutions, the academic writing for journal publication in English in Indonesia, and the regulatory agenda which relates to academics tenure and promotion.

## Findings

The findings presented here are focused on illustrating the circumstance of research article writing in English in Indonesia within the three areas detailed in the Research Method.

### 1. Academic Atmosphere in Indonesian Higher Education Institutions

The production of publications worthy of high-rank peer-reviewed international journals would require support from a strongly research oriented and well-resourced environment. Due to the limited availability of accessible publications on this topic, the discussion presented here is seen from the point of view of the development of education in Indonesia which is mainly referring to Buchori and Malik (2004) and Hill and Wie (2012).

The quality and quantity of academic staff are among the concerns of the Indonesian higher education system in increasing the quality and quantity of reputable research article publication by Indonesian academics. According to Buchori and Malik (2004), in 1997 out of 50,000 academic staff in state tertiary institutions, less than 4.8 per cent (4,200) held doctoral degrees and 29.2 per cent (14,000) had master degrees. The remaining majority, about 66 per cent, were college graduates. The Government initiated some efforts to accelerate Indonesian faculty members in getting advanced degrees. It increased cooperation with other countries, such as the US, European countries and Japan, to generate assistance to send academics to pursue advanced degrees overseas. In the 2000s, the government offered national scholarships for academics who worked as permanent staff at state and private institutions to pursue master's and doctoral degrees in Indonesia. Starting from 2008, the government has been providing national scholarships for studying master's and doctoral degrees overseas. However, a higher proportion of academics with doctoral and master's degrees is still needed. According to the Guidelines of Graduate Education Scholarship for Studying Abroad for Lecturer Candidates - Directorate General of Higher Education 2014 ("Panduan Penyetaraan Ijazah Luar Negeri Online", 2014), 2013 data show that only 10% (17,000 people) of the tenured faculty at universities in the Ministry of Education and Culture have doctoral degrees, and only 59% (102,000 people) have master's degrees. This percentage is still far from the target set in the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education and Culture. It is explained further that the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education and Culture also outlines that all university lecturers in Indonesia should have a minimum of a master's degree by the end of 2015. A lot of efforts still needed in advancing the educational background of Indonesian academics. The current condition on the level of education of Indonesian academics potentially shows a barrier in increasing the number and quality of research article publication in Indonesia.

Meanwhile, the rapid expansion of higher education institutions in Indonesia together with modest expenditure and restrained governance has resulted in some perplexing consequences in Indonesian higher education, as described by Buchori and Malik (2004), and Hill and Wie (2012). First, there are not enough trained lecturers to keep pace with the growth of national student enrolments. Second, low financial remuneration forces academics to put their energies into multiple occupations. Third, promotion among academics is based largely on seniority. Fourth, there is scarcity of essential infrastructure and resources such as laboratory space and equipment, information technology facilities, and international journal subscriptions. Fifth, there are few opportunities for intellectual engagement via participation in events such as international conferences and seminars. Also, sabbaticals are not available. Sixth, inter-institutional academic mobility is practically non-existent. Often recruited staff will remain at the institution until retirement. Seventh, there is little peer review of academic output or competitive grant applications. Finally, pedagogical practices tend to emphasize rote learning rather than independent inquiry. These circumstances of higher education institutions in Indonesia are not supporting the government's determination in increasing the number of qualified research article publications in international journals. In an attempt to improve the professionalism and welfare of tenured faculty, starting in 2008, the government has been conducting lecturer certification. For lecturers who passed the certification, the government provides a professional allowance in addition to the salary. This latter attempt of the Indonesian government in advancing the academics' welfare is potential to widen the chances of academics in providing more efforts and energy for writing research articles in English for international publication. Still more improvement needs to be done within Indonesian higher education system in order to support the academics to be able to conduct research professionally and write the results in research articles worth publishing in reputable international journals.

## **2. Academic Writing for Journal Publication in English**

One aspect of the complexity of Indonesian academics, in getting published in international journals is writing the manuscript in English. Implanted in the international publication practice is the hegemony of English which entails the use of Anglo rhetorical traditions in academic writing. Writing in English for international journal publication requires Indonesian academics to master Anglo academic writing conventions in order to get published. Non-compliance with English rhetorical structures means rejection. The pioneer of contrastive rhetoric, Robert Kaplan, in his *Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-Cultural Education* showed that non-Anglophone writers encountered resistance of cultural aspects of logic when they had to write in English, which made them write differently from the expectations of English rhetorical structure. Ivanič (1998) asserts that the reason why non-English users write in English as they do is because "they have to adopt a voice which they do not yet own" (p 86). Some studies in the area of contrastive rhetoric, investigating research articles written by Indonesian academics, provide evidence that the resistance occurs in the articles. A study conducted by Mirahayuni (2002) was based on a project on a comparative study of the textual structure of research articles written by native English speakers, Indonesian writers writing in English and Indonesian writers writing in Indonesian in the

field of Language and Language Teaching. The findings indicated that there are differences in the forms and functions of textual strategies between research articles written in English by native and non-native writers. Another study was carried out by Basthomi (2006), who looked into the rhetoric of introductions written in English by Indonesians. He discovered that there is an absence of gap identification in the research articles' introduction that is needed to clearly situate the study along with other studies. The information gained from this study is supported by the findings of another study conducted by Adnan (2009) who explores the potential problems for research articles written by Indonesian academics when submitted to international English language journals. Adnan's study reveals that the research articles were not written in accordance with the convention of English research articles thus resulting in rejection from international journals. The findings from these studies supports Widiati (2003) claim that:

In terms of writing academically in English, so far, despite the necessity to have an acceptable quality of writing academically and what have already been done in the teaching of writing, in the Indonesian context, the teaching of writing has not yet been able to respond to the need for different literacy abilities. (p 53)

In short, academic writing in English provides another challenge for Indonesian academics in their attempts in writing research article for international publications.

### 3. Regulatory Agenda

The regulatory agenda here refers to "policies influencing research and evaluation system at local, national, and supranational levels" (Lillis & Curry, 2010, p. 6). This section provides a brief overview of policies in Indonesia related to language for research article publication and to faculty members' tenure and promotion.

In terms of language for publication, Indonesia's national policy that regulates language of publication is Article 35 of the Law no.24/2009. The policy regulates that writing for research results and publication in Indonesia shall be written in Bahasa Indonesia. However, foreign languages or local languages used in publication in Indonesia are allowed for specific areas of study. So, the regulation on language is mainly promoting Bahasa Indonesia as the national language for the publication purposes.

Academic career promotion requirements in Indonesia are regulated in several policies as shown in Table 1. These laws show how much requirements on research article publication is requested in academic career promotion in Indonesia.

**Table 1. Academic Career Promotion Regulations in Indonesia**

No	Regulation	On the subject of
1.	Keputusan Menteri Negara Koordinator Bidang Pengawasan Pembangunan dan Pendayagunaan Aparatur Negara Nomor 38/KEP/MK.WASPAN/8/1999 (Decree of Coordinating Minister of State for Development Supervision and Administrative Reform No. 38 /KEP/MK.WASPAN/81999)	Jabatan Fungsional Dosen dan Angka Kreditnya (Lecturers' Functional Positions and Their Credit Scores)

2. Keputusan Bersama Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan dan Kepala Badan Kepegawaian Negara Nomor 61409/MPK/KP/99 - Nomor 181 Tahun 1999 (Joint Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture and Head of the Civil Service Agency No. 61409/MPK/KP/99 - No. 181 Year 1999)	Petunjuk Pelaksanaan Jabatan Fungsional Dosen dan Angka Kreditnya (Guidelines of the Implementation of Lecturers' Functional Positions and Their Credit Scores)
3. Keputusan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional Nomor 36/D/O/2001 (Decree of the Minister of National Education No. 36/D/O/2001)	Petunjuk Teknis Pelaksanaan Penilaian Angka Kredit Jabatan Dosen (Technical Guidelines for Rating Credit Score of Lecturer Position)
4. Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia (UU) Nomor 14 Tahun 2005 (Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 14 Year 2005)	Guru dan Dosen (Teachers and Lecturers)
5. Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia Nomor 37 Tahun 2009 (Indonesian Government's Regulation No. 37 Year 2009)	Dosen (Lecturers)
6. Pedoman Operasional Penilaian Angka Kredit (Operational Guidelines for Assessing Credit Score of Lecturer)	Kenaikan Jabatan Fungsional Dosen ke Lektor Kepala dan Guru Besar tahun 2009 (Promotion to the Rank of Associate Professor and Professor Year 2009)
7. Peraturan Menteri Pendayagunaan Aparatur Negara dan Reformasi Birokrasi Nomor 17 Tahun 2013 (Regulation of the Minister of Administrative Reform and Bureaucratic Reform No. 17 of 2013)	Jabatan Fungsional Dosen dan Angka Kreditnya (Lecturers' Functional Positions and Their Credit Scores)
8. Peraturan Menteri Pendayagunaan Aparatur Negara dan Reformasi Birokrasi Nomor 46 Tahun 2013 Tentang Perubahan atas Peraturan Menteri Pendayagunaan Aparatur Negara dan Reformasi Birokrasi Nomor 17 Tahun 2013 (Regulation of the Minister of Administrative Reform and Bureaucratic Reform 2013 about Amendment Number 46 of the Regulation of the Minister of Administrative Reform and Bureaucratic Reform Number 17 Year 2013)	Jabatan Fungsional Dosen dan Angka Kreditnya (Functional Levels of Lecturers and their credit figures)

With reference to the abovementioned policies, academic rank in Indonesia is categorized into four: Expert Assistant, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor. These academic ranks are only applicable to tenured academics. To advance through this hierarchy of the academic rank, an academic has to collect certain amount of credit score which is gained through teaching, researching, and community service. The amount of score to be collected depends on the level of the academic position. The higher the level is, the more score needed to achieve.

In the past, the law placed minimum requirements on research article publication in national or international journals. The more recent regulations put more pressure on Indonesia academia to publish research articles especially in English medium international journals.

An example of older regulation on the minimum requirements for research article publication can be seen in UU14/2005 on Teachers and Lecturers, the guidelines for assessing the credit score is described in detail in the Operational Guidelines for Assessing Credit Score of Lecturer for Promotion to the Rank of Associate Professor and Professor Year 2009. The tenure and promotion of faculty members is regulated in articles 45–49 of UU No 14 Tahun 2005. Article 45 and 46 regulate the qualifications of a lecturer. Article 45 regulates that lecturers must have academic qualifications, competence, teaching certificate, physical and spiritual health, and meet the other qualifications required by the unit in charge of higher education places. Article 46 explains the requirements of a lecturer position. It says that lecturers must have a minimum academic qualification of a graduate program in order to be eligible to teach in master's or undergraduate degree programs, and lecturers must have a minimum academic qualification of a doctoral degree in order to be eligible to teach graduate programs. Article 47 mainly explains about teaching certification. It says that in order for a lecturer to be certified, he/she must fulfil the requirements of: having experience in working as an educator at the college for at least two years, having an academic position at least as an Assistant Professor, and passing certification by the higher education units who are appointed by the Government to organize educational personnel procurement programs. Articles 48 and 49, among others, regulate qualifications for promotion to professorship. Clause 3 in Article 48 explains that the requirement for an academic position as a professor is a doctoral degree and Clause 2 in Article 49 explains that a professor has a special obligation to write books and scientific papers and disseminate ideas to enlighten the public. All in all, UU14/2005 which legislates for Teachers and Lecturers only states an obligation to publish research articles for academics at professorial level.

Operational Guidelines for Assessing Credit Score of Lecturer for Promotion to the Rank of Associate Professor and Professor Year 2009 contains special requirements for promotion to the rank of an associate professor and full-professor. It is explained that there are two alternatives promotion path based on the length of time: regular and skip-hike. The latter refers to promotion to a higher level by skipping one level in between. For promotion to the rank of an associate professor in the regular way, promotion within period of one up to three years requires only one research article publication in accredited national journal, or in a reputable international journal as the first author. Promotion within period of more than three years requires one publication in national or international journal. The least acceptable publication is the one in an unaccredited national journal in which the academic is the first author. The skip-hike promotion, beyond the other administrative requirements, the publication requirement stated that one must have at least four research articles publications in national accredited journals or two articles publications in reputable international journals in which the academic is the first author. The regulation is the same for promotion to the rank of a full-professor.

In an attempt to improve research quality and to increase the number of journal articles published, especially in the English-medium international journals, the Indonesian government has lately been instituting at least four new policies that encourage publication in English medium international journals which are related to academic career promotion and university students' graduation.

First is the Directorate General of Higher Education (DGHE) decree No 2050/E/T/2011. This policy is meant to prevent and control plagiarism in tertiary education and to increase the quality of faculty members. The law says that research articles published in journals that are included in the documents for promotion would not be considered as acceptable if they cannot be traced online. It is also stated in this law that this regulation was to be implemented to assess academic promotion proposals beginning from 2012.

Second is the Directorate General of Higher Education decree No 152/E/T/2012. This regulation obliges university students to have research article publications as one of the requirements for graduation. Undergraduate students should publish a research article; students taking master's programs have to publish in national journals, preferably the accredited ones; and doctoral candidates must have at least a Letter of Acceptance to publish an article in an English-medium international journal.

Third is the Circular Letter of the DGHE dated December 26, 2012. This regulation states that, starting in 2013, the government added three requirements for a faculty certification portfolio. The additional terms include: (1) document /certificate of English proficiency, (2) document / certificate of tests of academic potential, and (3) publication of scholarly papers either in national journals or in English-medium international journals.

Fourth is a policy which regulates the requirements to apply for an equivalency process of educational certificates for the degrees achieved abroad, which is posted on <http://ijazahln.dikti.go.id/pp1.php>. This policy states that academics who completed their study abroad, with special reference to doctoral degree graduates, must have at least one research article publication in an English medium international journal. These later policies, which is manifested in the reward structures for individual academics, put more pressure for Indonesian academics to publish their research articles in English-medium international journals

These more recent regulations put more pressure on the academics to publish research articles in English-medium international journals. This is in line with the statement of Li and Flowerdew (2009) which highlights that there has been a development of policies around the world which requires academics to have research article publications in English-medium international journals as the prerequisite for academics' evaluation system. Although the appraisal scheme varies in different institutional contexts, it unavoidably impacts the scholarly survival of the academics regarding tenure, promotion, teaching, supervision, research grant income, and academic prestige (Altbach, 2004; Canagarajah, 2002b; Lillis & Curry, 2010).

## **Conclusion**

If I return to the discussions on the circumstances in the previous sections, the findings of these studies seem to highlight that the historical and socio-political situation

of the Indonesia generates challenges for Indonesian academics in writing research articles in English for publication in reputable international journals. On one side the academic atmosphere in higher education institutions in Indonesia is generally not yet conducive for the academics to focus on producing qualified research and publications and there are also some problems with the writing of academic English. On the other side, many pressure for writing research articles to be published in the international journals keeps progressing. This calls for the rearrangement of higher education system by the Indonesian government and the higher education institutions in terms of providing more chances, supports and facilities for the academics in order that they can perform better in writing research articles in English worth for publications in reputable international journals.

## References

- Adnan, Z. (2009). Some potential problems for research articles written by Indonesian academics when submitted to international English language journals. *The Asian EFL Journal Quarterly*, 11(1), 107-125.
- Altbach, P. G. (2004). Globalisation and the university: Myths and realities in an unequal world. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 10(1), 3-25. doi: 10.1080/13583883.2004.9967114
- Basthomi, Y. (2006). The rhetoric of research article introductions written in English by Indonesians. (Unpublished Dissertation), State University of Malang, Malang, Indonesia.
- Buchori, M., & Malik, A. (2004). The evolution of higher education in Indonesia. In P. G. Altbach & T. Umakoshi (Eds.), *Asian universities: Historical perspectives and contemporary challenges*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Canagarajah, A. S. (1996). "Nondiscursive" requirements in academic publishing, material resources of periphery scholars, and the politics of knowledge production. *Written Communication*, 13(4), 435-472. doi: 10.1177/0741088396013004001
- Canagarajah, A. S. (2002a). Multilingual writers and the academic community: Towards a critical relationship. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 1(1), 29-44. doi: 10.1016/S1475-1585(02)00007-3
- Canagarajah, A. S. (2002b). *A geopolitics of academic writing*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Curry, M. J., & Lillis, T. (2004). Multilingual scholars and the imperative to publish in English: Negotiating interests, demands, and rewards. *Tesol Quarterly*, 38(4), 663-688. doi: 10.2307/3588284
- Flowerdew, J. (2000). Discourse community, legitimate peripheral participation, and the nonnative-English-speaking scholar. *Tesol Quarterly*, 34(1), 127-150. doi: 10.2307/3588099

- Englander, K., & Uzuner-Smith, S. (2013). The role of policy in constructing the peripheral scientist in the era of globalization. *Language Policy*, 12(3), 231-250. doi: 10.1007/s10993-012-9268-1
- Hill, H., & Wie, T. K. (2012). Indonesian universities in transition: catching up and opening up. *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, 48(2), 229-251. doi: 10.1080/00074918.2012.694156
- Ivanič, R. (1998). *Writing and identity: The discorsal construction of identity in academic writing*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins Publishing Co.
- Li, Y., & Flowerdew, J. (2009). International engagement versus local commitment: Hong Kong academics in the humanities and social sciences writing for publication. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 8(4), 279-293. doi: 10.1016/j.jeap.2009.05.002
- Lillis, T., & Curry, M. J. (2010). *Academic writing in a global context: The politics and practices of publishing in English*. New York: Routledge.
- Mirahayuni, N. K. (2002). *Investigating textual structure in native and non-native English research articles: strategy differences between English and Indonesian writers*. Doctoral Dissertation. University of New South Wales. Sydney, NSW.
- Postiglione, G. A. (2005). Questioning centre–periphery platforms. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 25(2), 209-225. doi: 10.1080/02188790500338138
- Salager-Meyer, F. (2008). Scientific publishing in developing countries: Challenges for the future. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 7(2), 121-132. doi: 10.1016/j.jeap.2008.03.009
- Uzuner, S. (2008). Multilingual scholars' participation in core/global academic communities: A literature review. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 7(4), 250-263. doi: 10.1016/j.jeap.2008.10.007