The Use of Appeals in Research Article Introductions in Scopus Indexed Indonesian Journals

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Abstract

Claiming centrality as one of the steps in establishing territory is a recognizable step to promote the topic of research. The examination on the strategies used in claiming centrality is considerably important as guidance for authors who intend to publish articles in Scopus indexed journals. This study aims to identify appealing strategies in research article introduction written by Indonesian authors published in Scopus indexed Indonesian journals. Thirty research article introductions were selected from three reputable Indonesian journals indexed by Scopus with Quartile 1 and Quartile 2 value. The qualitative method with discourse analysis was employed in this research to identify claiming centrality step based Swales's (1990) and the appealing strategies based on Wang and Yang's (2015). The result shows that all four appealing strategies are used by authors in the three Scopus indexed Indonesian journals. The appeal of topicality was the dominant use for promotional research topics, followed by appeal of problematicity. The result of this research can give valuable information for other Indonesian researchers in linguistics and language subjects on how to write claiming centrality steps in research article introductions if they tend to publish the articles in the Scopus indexed Indonesian journal.

Keywords: research article introduction, claiming centrality, appeal

Introduction

Inviting the audience of research articles is related to providing reasonable background on the topic of research. The introduction section is one of the most important parts as this is the first section containing the knowledge pertaining to the arguments and importance of the study (Farnia, Bagheri, & Saeedi, 2018). It is to prepare readers' background information or knowledge on the research topics, to support the importance of the research topic by demonstrating that the problem raised in the study exists, and to implicitly show readers that the authors are already familiar with the research topic. By so doing, the authors tell readers that they follow the latest developments on the topic of their

research (Arsyad, 2017). Thus, Introduction of research articles is considered essential as a gateway for the readers to the research content.

The construction of an introduction section can significantly influence the readers' perception and willingness to continue reading whole article. A well-organized introduction not only provides an overview of the research but also engages the readers. A good introduction section should contain at least three points: information about the general topic of the article, the specific subject matter, or the issue to be focused on, and the description about the recommendations for solution (Armagan, 2013). Covering these three points ensure the readers stay on the right track to follow the running of the article. However, other specific aspects need to be examined more deeply, if we are to discuss the introduction section of research articles (Arianto, Haq, & Jufrizal, 2023).

Having a well-organized introduction section can be the beginning of being able to write and publish research article in various academic journals. The requirement of conducting research and publishing the research work in both national and international accredited journals, requires researchers to be able to write English research articles following certain rhetorical structure for each section, including introduction section. However, some previous study revealed that many Indonesian researchers still adopt the Indonesian rhetorical style academically and culturally, leading to unsuccessful publication (Arsyad & Adila, 2017).

Furthermore, Swales (1990) describes three "moves" that almost all research introductions make. The model provides an assistance to both reading research articles and writing them. The three moves of research introduction are: 1) move 1 establishing a territory which include one or more of the steps claiming centrality, making topic generalizations, and/or reviewing previous items of research, 2) move 2 establishing niche by taking one of four steps of counter-claiming, indicating a gap, question-raising, or continuing a tradition, and 3) move 3 occupying the niche with the initial obligatory step of outlining purpose or announcing present research (many research article stop after the step), announcing principal findings, and indicating the structure of the research article. In conducting the research of article introduction, many researchers follow this Swales model of CARS (Create a Research Space). Besides as the model of doing rhetorical analysis and

understanding the article, these moves and steps can also be used as a guideline to write research article introduction.

As the first step of the first move in the introduction section, claiming centrality can be decisive in attracting reader interest. Claiming centrality is used as promotional strategies since it consists of appeals that have a clear function to boost authors' academic promotion and make their introduction more impressive (Wang & Yang, 2015; Swales, 1990). Furthermore, there are four types of appeals which can be identified (Wang & Yang, 2015): appeals to salience, magnitude, topicality and problematicity. Appeals to salience, magnitude, and topicality rest on positive values, whereas appeals to problematicity make use of negative values. The appeal to salience is how authors alert readers to how valuable and important the topic is (Wang & Yang, 2015). This appeal serves to demonstrate the value of importance and significance as well as the benefits of addressing the research topic (Abdi & Sadeghi, 2018; Arsyad & Wardhana, 2023). The appeal to magnitude can be portrayed by looking at how authors present the growth of research topics and highlight them as prevalent and in need of discussion. Showing the multiplicity of studies or amount of research can be used as graduation or amplification to indicate the popularity of the research topics (Arsyad & Wardhana, 2023; Wang & Yang, 2015). The appeal to topicality is how readers see the currency and newness of the topics introduced by the authors (Wang & Yang, 2015). The novelty of the research can be strengthened by using this appeal, since it offers new knowledge from the research (Abdi & Sadeghi, 2018; Arsyad & Wardhana, 2023). The last is appeal to problematicity is the way in which authors expose the problems or conflicts of the subjects and convince readers that the issue of the issues is worth addressing. The expectation from promoting the provoking problems or challenges in relation to the research topics is that the authors can create further endeavours to solve the problems (Wang & Yang, 2015)

The finding of previous research has provided meaningful insight on the construction of the introduction section of the research article. Muangsamai (2018) investigated the moves, rhetorical patterns based on Swales' genre analysis, and common linguistic features in health and medical science reports in the New Scientist journal. Msuya, (2020) investigated how authors in EFL context adhere to or contravene Swales' (1990) moves structure in their writing of introductions in academic writing. While Rochma

et al. (2020) revealed the rhetorical styles and drew the rhetoric pattern used by the undergraduate students of English Language Education (ELE). Some others examined the differences of move and steps used by native and non-native speakers of English in research article introductions (Devaci, 2020, Gao & Pramoolsook, 2023). Wijaya & Bram (2022) investigated the moves and steps used by non-native speakers of English. While Arianto, et al. (2023) highlighted specific move and step in introduction section to investigate centrality claims and how the appeals are realized involving 20 research article introductions written by native authors in English, 20 research article introductions written by Indonesian authors in English, and 20 research article introductions written by Indonesian authors in Indonesian Language, in the field of applied linguistics.

Even though, there has been quite a lot of research on the introduction sections, there is still a need to carry out research regarding this matter, especially for articles written by Indonesian writer in international journal publish in Indonesia. Thus, it is of empirical interest to carry out this present research on appeal in the introduction section to fill the gap. This research is mainly focused to investigate the use of appeal in research article introduction written by Indonesian writers in three Scopus indexed Indonesian Journals. It is expected that the research will shed light to Indonesian authors on how to commence writing research article introductions by realizing claiming to centrality in the move of establishing territory.

The research intended to answer the following questions.

1. How frequently claiming centrality is used by Indonesian authors in establishing territory of their research?

2. What appealing strategies are used by Indonesian authors in claiming centrality of their research?

Research Methodology

This research intends to identify what appealing strategies the author use in research article introduction and how they use the strategies in claiming centrality of their studies. Thus, a qualitative method with discourse analysis was employed in this research. Qualitative research is used to study research problems requiring an exploration to and acquiring a detailed understanding of the problem (Creswell, 2005). Meanwhile, discourse

analysis is an activity to understand discourse in a comprehensive and representative manner (Ratnaningsih, 2019).

The corpus of this study comprised of 30 latest issues articles from the three different Indonesian journals (i.e. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *International Journal of Language Education*, and *TEFLIN Journal*. These journals were taken as corpus of this study because these journals are high-quality or reputable Indonesian journals indexed by Scopus with Quartile value of Quartile 1 and Quartile 2, in linguistics and language field. Besides, the articles published in the journals can be accessed and downloaded for free. The distribution of the research articles in the corpus of this study is presented in Table 1

Table 1.

The corpus of the study

No	Journal	Code	Years	Number of Articles
1	Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics	IJAL	2023	10
2	International Journal of Language Education	IJoLE	2023	10
3	TEFLIN Journal	TEFLIN	2023	10
	Total			30

In collecting the data, the researcher used a checklist instrument. The gathered data were from documentation review of research article introductions. First, the researcher downloaded the latest issues articles from the Scopus indexed Indonesian journals. The researchers took the article in the year of 2023. Next, the researcher sorted out the article introductions. And the last, the researcher examined the article introductions using a checklist adopted from Wang and Yang's (2015) framework.

In analysing the data, the researcher used two steps. First, the Swales' (1990) framework is used as a starting point to identify how frequently the step of claiming centrality is used by the authors of the three groups. Second, the occurrence of claiming centrality which belongs to the move of establishing territory, was identified based on Wang and Yang's (2015) frameworks. The frequency of appealing strategies was counted to find descriptive analysis.

In data validation, the co-rater was included in the process of analysis. The co-rater was a postgraduate in the English department. Firstly, the co-rater was told how to identify the step of claiming centrality in move establishing territory of research article

introductions and identifying strategies of claiming centrality. Then, the co-rater was given a week to perform the processes analyses for 30 research article introductions. Discussion and consolidation were involved when disagreement and difference of coding occurred in the process of analysis.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

Based on the analysis, it was found that claiming centrality was used by Indonesian authors in establishing territory of their research. It was also found that all four appealing strategies are used by authors in the three Scopus indexed Indonesian journals. As seen in table 2, the appeal of topicality was the dominant use for promotional research topics. The strategy was used to show the currency of the topics used by authors in their research. The second most used strategy was the appeal of problematicity. This strategy was used to expose the problems or conflicts related to subjects and convince readers that the topic of research is worth addressing. The appeal of salience was the second lowest strategy used, which shows how valuable and important the topic of research is. And the lowest strategy was appeal of magnitude, which shows the growth of research topics and highlights them as prevalent and in need of discussion.

Table 2.

Frequency of Occurrence and Distribution of Appeal Strategies

No	Appealing Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
1	Appeal of Salience	5	16,7%
2	Appeal of Magnitude	2	6,7
3	Appeal of Topicality	12	40,0%
4	Appeal of Problematicity	11	36,7%

Some differences were also found in the distribution of appealing strategies within the journals. Appeal of topically is the dominant strategy used in IJAL and IJoLE articles. While the dominant appealing strategy used in TEFLIN article is appeal of problematicity. It can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3.

Frequency of Occurrence of Appeal Strategies in Three Journals

No	Appealing Strategies	Frequency of Occurrence		
		IJAL	IJoLE	TEFLIN
1	Appeal of Salience	-	3	2
2	Appeal of Magnitude	1	1	-
3	Appeal of Topicality	7	2	3
4	Appeal of Problematicity	2	4	5

Appeal of Salience was used when the authors alert readers to how valuable and important the topic is (Wang & Yang, 2015). In this research, the authors from three groups used this strategy when they promoted the importance of their research. Excerpts can be seen below:

Excerpt 1

Corrective feedback, which can be provided by the teacher or peers, is believed to be **advantageous** *in drafts revision (Carless & Boud, 2018; Hyland & Hyland, 2006), thus helping students enhance their writing performance (Farid & Samad, 2012; Nassaji & Tian, 2010). Some types of teacher feedback are claimed to be more* **effective** *to help students in writing their drafts than other types.*

Excerpt 2

Presentation and communication skills are **key** *to successful academic and professional careers (Gedamu & Gezahegn, 2023).*

Excerpt 3

Critical thinking is an **essential** *skill required of students to become successful global citizens. In the rapidly changing world, critical thinking is of* **higher importance** *(Ananiadou & Claro, 2009). Critical thinkers can seek the most suitable methods and draw reasoned judgment to solve problems in their daily lives, thus receiving more desirable outcomes (Dwyer et al., 2014; Halpern 1998; Higgins, 2014; Ku, 2009; Tiwari et al., 2006)*

Excerpts indicate that the appeal of salience is supported by some citations. In excerpt 1 and 3, the next sentences also indicated the importance of the research topic. The use of citations is to claim that previous researchers have also conducted the research on the same topic. Citation used by Indonesian authors mostly aims to support the importance of their research topic and prefer presenting positive justification rather than critiquing or negatively evaluating other authors' work in order to identify a research gap (Arsyad & Adila, 2017). Among the three journals, the appeal of salience was used three times in

IJoLE articles and twice in TEFLIN articles. However, the strategy was not found in IJAL articles.

Appeal of magnitude was used by the authors to show the popularity of a research topic or phenomenon by showing the number of studies that have been conducted on it or researchers' growing interest in it (Arsyad & Wardhana, 2023). Among the three journals, the appeal of magnitude was used once in IJAL articles and IJolE articles. However, the strategy was not found in TEFLIN articles. Excerpts can be seen below:

Excerpt 1

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a **well-established and widely respected approach** *to understanding language (Martin et al., 2020a: ii). SFL concerns the dialectical relationship inherent in processes of language learning and has become an important tool for describing and supporting language development across phases of life as well as across education levels (Christie, 2012; Macken Horarik et al. 2017; Schleppegrell, 2013; Schleppegrell & Mo, 2007).In Indonesian education, interest in SFL* **has grown over the last two decades**, *especially since the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture released the 2004 English curriculum for junior and senior high schools*

Excerpt 2

In the last 30 years, there has been an **increasing trend towards implementing English** *as a medium of Instruction (EMI) in public schools in many Southeast Asian countries.* **Several studies** *in different EMI contexts have examined students' perceptions and attitudes toward learning content subjects through the medium of a second or foreign language.*

Appeal of Topicality refers to the novelty or newness of the study topic or phenomenon, implying that the research will offer new knowledge to this little explored/ unique area (Arsyad & Wardhana, 2023). Excerpts can be seen below:

Excerpt 1

This curricular problem of language teaching **triggered the birth** *of an alternative approach against the policy of using only the target language in an English as a foreign*

language (EFL) class. This approach is called translanguaging as a multilingual approach to teaching English as a foreign language TEFL.

Excerpt 2

Technology is **advancing rapidly and affecting various aspects** *of human lives, including education and language classrooms. The most relatively* **current** *technology being applied in education is artificial intelligence (AI).*

Excerpt 3

The field of education has **undergone significant transformations** *with the advancement of technology, and English language teaching (ELT) is no exception (Xu et al., 2019)*

Excerpt 4

For the last two years, the practice of remote teaching and learning in Indonesia has become a **new phenomenon** *that has created challenges and opportunities.*

In excerpt 1, the author claims that the topic is new by saying "This curricular problem of language teaching triggered the birth of an alternative approach…". That is why this topic is classified as an appeal to topicality. The author in excerpt 2 also claims that the research topic is new by saying that it is the result of rapid advancement of technology which affects current technology used in education. It also happens in excerpt 3 and excerpt 4 that the author claims the research topic is as the result of advancement of technology. Among the three journals, the appeal of topicality was used once in IJAL articles, seven times in IJoLE articles, and three times in TEFLIN articles. Excerpts can be seen below:

Appeal of problematicity is the way in which authors foreground conflict, problems, difficulties, or confronting a topic. Excerpts can be seen below:

Excerpt 1

The significance of language proficiency, particularly speaking skill competence, has been acknowledged in the field of education for many years. **However,** *despite numerous efforts to improve it, the achievement of student speaking skill competence is still* **far from the expected target**.

Excerpt 2

The international reading literacy assessment results show that 15-year-old Indonesian students perform in the **low category**. *The average reading score of Indonesian students in the last assessment of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2018 was only 371 (OECD, 2019c).*

The excerpts show that the authors attract the readers by presenting problems or conflicts that the authors can create further endeavours to solve the problems. Among the three journals, the appeal of problematicity was used twice in IJAL articles, four times in IJoLE articles, and five times in TEFLIN articles.

Discussion

The result of this research reveals that claiming centrality was used by Indonesian authors with four appealing strategies in three Scopus indexed Indonesian journals. Abdi & Sadeghi (2018) state that one of the ways to promote academic discourse is research article introduction centrality. The other result shows that the most frequent appealing strategy used is appeal of topicality or appeal of currency and newness of the topics. The authors claim that their research offers new knowledge and insight in linguistics and language. The second most used is the appeal of problematicity in which authors foreground problems.

This finding is different from Arianto, Haq, & Jufrizal who discovered the appeal of salience is the most frequent strategy used by authors in 60 introductions of applied linguistic research articles taken randomly from reputable peer-reviewed journals published from 2019-2022. And this finding is also different from Arsyad & Wardhana (2023) who discovered that the most frequent appeal used by the authors in Applied Linguistics published in accredited journals in Indonesia is an appeal to salience or appeal to the importance of the research topic or title followed by an appeal to magnitude.

Conclusion and Suggestion

This research reveals that Indonesian authors use all four appealing strategies to promote their research in Scopus indexed Indonesian journals. Although appeal of topically and appeal of problematicity were more preferably used, other two appeal strategies are also used. The result of this research can give valuable information for other Indonesian researchers in linguistics and language subjects on how to write claiming centrality steps

in research article introductions if they tend to publish the articles in Scopus indexed Indonesian journal.

However, this research has its limitation as it involves only 30 articles in linguistics and language subject area. A closer investigation is needed into the realization of move and linguistic features in the field of linguistics and language. Future research could also investigate the rhetorical pattern and linguistics realization of introduction section in other subject areas. Hence, further studies on the topic need to be conducted.

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