**INDONESIAN DOCTORAL STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC LITERACIES AND EAP WRITING EXPERIENCE: IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDYING OVERSEAS**

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**INTRODUCTION**

The internationalization of higher education (IHE) to achieve world-class university has prompted Indonesian Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education to implement a new accreditation instrument including ensuring the human resource department with international standards (Hadianti & Arisandi, 2020). This has pushed the Ministry to provide up to USD 1.38 Billions for Presidential Scholarship Program for overseas education to put Indonesian universities in World University Rankings (Purwanto, 2016). However, the obstacle to achieve a ‘world-class education’ in 2025 for Indonesia is in improving quality of its Indonesian lecturers and teachers (Rosser, 2018). In the context of IHE, the lack of human resources qualification was the first issue the university experienced when it conducted internationalization, including the reluctant lecturers to participate in overseas education or training due to incompetent language proficiency (Hadianti & Arisandi, 2020).

Previous studies have documented the academic and social issues of international students enrolled in English medium universities. In the UK and New Zealand, Wette & Furneaux (2018) reported that international students writing in a new context has faced challenges including critical and evaluative writing. Novera (2004) investigated Indonesian postgraduate students studying in Australia and found that the main problems faced by these students are related to the use of academic English and Australia academic requirement. Ariani (2019) reported cultural values, socio-political situations, and previous educational in Indonesia have contributed to Indonesian students’ difficulties in presenting their argument when they study in English medium universities. These studies have shown that international students including Indonesian students experienced more challenging situation when they have to write in a new context using English.

Braine (2002) emphasized that it is crucial for graduate students to develop effective research strategies and good academic writing skills to build good relationships with lectures and supervisors. Ramburuth (2001) also mentioned that strong writing skills correlated with high academic results for NNES and NES. However, the transitional time can be challenging if international students have limited knowledge or experience with the English academic writing. These challenges will eventually lead to academic problems and stifle academic pursuits (Weng, Cheong, & Cheong, 2010).

Responding to this situation, extensive support from universities in Australia, New Zealand, and UK through EAP/ESL programs have been carried out to support international students’ language proficiency (Melles, Millar, Norton, Fegan, 2005; Wette & Furneaux, 2018; Wingate & Tribble, 2012). From these supports, research has shown that providing EAP/ESL courses have played positive role for the international students’ academic performance including academic writing. Important studies looking at the impact of pre-departure and EAP program to undergraduate and postgraduate students’ writing such as (Bai & Wang, 2020; Leki & Carson, 2012 Storch & Tapper, 2009) have also provided pedagogical insight to the success of EAP program for international students studying in English medium universities.

However, it is worth noting that while some universities in English speaking countries have these academic services to assist international students with their studies, these services applied mostly to undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students instead of prospective doctoral student (Andrade, 2009). In addition, some previous studies have also focused on the EAP training in the host country/institution where they carry out their doctoral program. Thus, research regarding pre- departure EAP program in the students’ home country and students’ academic literacies practices in respect to its role on doctoral students’ academic writing is not extensive and still remain an under- discussed area. This study is an attempt to address this gap by investigating to what extent the pre- departure EAP program and Indonesian doctoral students’ academic literacies practices provide support to their English academic writing in English medium universities.

**LITERATUREREVIEW**

**Pre-departure English training as an EAP program in Indonesia**

Research has shown that the role of pre-departure English training as an EAP program increase academic support and writing skill for international students studying in English medium universities Leki & Carson (2012); (Bai & Wang, 2020). This is ideally the ultimate goal of pre-departure orientation where the importance is to improve students’ international learning experiences by creating appropriate expectations and introducing them to important concepts for understanding their experiences (Barber, 2014). This is emphasized by Hoff & Kappler (2005) where their research show that the most effective and relevant overseas experience can be made by providing participants a well- designed orientation prior to the academic study.

However, most of the in-home country training have focused on the English proficiency test such as TOEFL and IELTS. These tests do not always reflect actual proficiency needed to matriculate to succeed in graduate-level subject coursework (Schmidt & Gannaway, 2007). Thus, it only focuses on the development of linguistic knowledge and communicative skills leaving the students to independently adapt themselves to a new educational context. In addition, the emphasis of orientation is often on administrative matters (e.g. paperwork, program cost, academic credits), basic “how to” skills and preparations for international travel, and occasionally a brief cultural- historical introduction to the host country (Homann, 1999). Piscioneri, Amelia, & Fauzanna (2017) have examined the academic resources and language materials a group of mainly Indonesian master students they have received prior to the commencement of their degrees in Australia and found that these have failed to adequately equip the students to cope in a new academic culture including academic writing in Australia

In Indonesian context, pre-departure English program held by Indonesian Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education is called a Pre overseas training -*Peningkatan Kemampuan Bahasa Inggris (PKBI)* or Pre-Departure English Course (PDEC) program and this program aims to preparing lecturers for overseas study. Lecturers as prospective overseas doctoral students are encouraged to apply since its fully funded by the government. There are three universities In Indonesia (Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, and Universitas Negeri Malang) chosen by the Indonesian Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education to carry out this program. Every university provides a pre-departure English training for 50 lecturers across Indonesia which last for three month long (12 weeks). Since its establishment, this program has trained hundreds of lecturers by giving the centrality of its role as intensive training program to fulfil the English requirement for overseas study. The training aims to introduce the trainees to one form of English competency measuring / testing instruments, namely IELTS, which is used in various English-speaking countries, such as Australia, New Zealand, England, South Africa, and North America. At the end of the training program the trainees are expected to have better English language skills by showing an increase in IELTS scores.

Although the program seems promising to attract Indonesian lecturers with the belief that their English is going to improve and provide the ticket for doctoral education overseas, the implementation of the program has been established with IELTS-driven nature, focusing on the passing of IELTS test and disregard the academic skills needed to successfully engage in English academic writing. Moore & Morton (2005) mentioned that the IELTS writing characteristics are not compatible with most university writing. Thus, while some lecturers managed to pass the IELTS requirement test for their university entrance, there has been little evidence how this program is successful to prepare them for English doctoral writing and how they experience a demand of the new academic writing contexts in English medium universities.

One source of information informing decisions about English for academic purposes (EAP) writing course is from students’ experiences in those courses and beyond (Leki & Carson, 2012). Their overseas education involves academic writing which demands them to switch genres from essays, to exam papers and doctoral theses/dissertation. Thus, academic competence especially English for Academic Purposes are crucial in the heart of internationalization of higher education and international publication.

Studies which have investigated the EAP proficiency lecturers in Indonesia have been limited to their international publication and proficiency level. The study by Kustati et al (2020) aimed to identify the need and level of EAP lecturers in Indonesia and managed to highlight the pivotal demand for writing skill which hampers academicians to continue overseas education. The study by Arsyad et al (2019) found that lack of self-confidence, the quality of research and article, and challenge in composing article in English are some factors experienced by Indonesian lecturers in publishing articles in reputable international journals. These previous studies have solely focused on the lecturers’ English proficiency and how it impedes their overseas education and publication, but it has not explored the relevance and alignment of pre-departure English training program and their academic literacies practices in English academic writing when they study in English-medium universities.

The study aims to find out the Indonesian doctoral students’ academic literacies practices and EAP writing experience from sociocultural perspectives to understands individuals with the larger social context in which the individual operates. This study will also highlight their pre-departure English training experience and reflect upon that in the course of their doctoral studying program overseas. As Barton, Hamilton, and Ivanic (2000, as cited in Currie & Cray, 2004) state “Literacies are situated. All uses of written language can be seen as located in particular times and places (p.111)”. Thus, the context for English academic writing in English speaking countries (which is the situation faced by Indonesian students studying in an Australian universities) is different from the context of multilingual students of writing in their home country. For this study, the complexity of Indonesian students’ writing situation will be approached by applying an academic literacies framework (Lea & Street, 1998) which is derived from this third model New Literacy Studies, critical discourse studies, and the sociology of knowledge. It frames a model of student writing in higher education in terms of academic literacies (henceforth AL) which understand the nature of student writing within institutional practices, power relations, and identities.

To guide the study, some research questions were formulated as follow:

**Research questions**

1. What academic literacies practices with respect to pre-departure English training program do the Indonesian doctoral students engage with prior to their overseas study?
2. Have the Indonesian doctoral students found the pre-departure English training program useful in terms of supporting their English academic writing overseas? In what ways these skills have been useful?
3. What are the expected uses of academic literacies practices during the course of their doctoral study overseas?
4. How do Indonesian doctoral students negotiate to the dominant writing practice when it comes to English academic writing?

This study will benefit English language teaching in Indonesia especially in the context of pre- departure EAP program and provide an understanding of the Indonesian doctoral students’ academic literacies practices. Moreover, this will serve as the data needed in order to make informed decisions concerning the more effective ways to improve Indonesian doctoral students’ English academic writing to fulfill the new demand of their higher education assessment. The need to design pre-departure EAP program specifically for Indonesian doctoral students who are mostly work as lecturers in Indonesia are crucial instead of only providing them 3-month-IELTS intensive training program just before their departure for overseas education. Central to this is the importance is to ensure that the EAP program is bringing them the academic experience needed to fulfil the demand related to overseas education and develop more relevant academic literacies practices to write academic English as it is crucial for the completion of their doctoral study and professional development as lecturers.

**Methodology**

The current research employs qualitative design as the research questions required a complex and detailed understanding of the issue which can only be done by talking directly with people in their contexts or settings without burdening them with our expectation or with information we get from the literature (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Thus, the data will be collected through various methods such as individual interview and questionnaire.

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Institutional Description

The Indonesian Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education collaborated with three universities in Indonesia to carry out *Peningkatan Kemampuan Bahasa Inggris (PKBI)* or Pre-Departure English Course (PDEC) program. This program aims to preparing lecturers for overseas study. Lecturers as prospective overseas doctoral students are encouraged to apply since its fully funded by the government. However, the training aims to introduce the trainees to one form of English competency measuring / testing instruments, namely IELTS, which is used in various English-speaking countries, such as Australia, New Zealand, England, South Africa, and North America. At the end of the training program the trainees are expected to have better English language skills by showing an increase in IELTS scores.

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Key Theorists

* This study views literacy from a socio-cultural perspective. Thus, it understands individuals with the larger social context in which the individual operates. As Barton, Hamilton, and Ivanic (2000, as cited in Currie & Cray, 2004) state “Literacies are situated. All uses of written language can be seen as located in particular times and places (p.111)”.
* Academic literacies framework (Lea & Street, 1998) which is derived from this third model New Literacy Studies, critical discourse studies, and the sociology of knowledge. It frames a model of student writing in higher education in terms of academic literacies (henceforth AL) which understand the nature of student writing within institutional practices, power relations, and identities.
* Canagarajah (2002) Ivanic (1998), Hyland (2002, 2012). These writers take regard of multilingual writers’ identities and negotiations.

Glossary

1. *Peningkatan Kemampuan Bahasa Inggris (PKBI)* or Pre-Departure English Course (PDEC): This program aims to preparing lecturers for overseas study. Lecturers as prospective overseas doctoral students are encouraged to apply since its fully funded by the government.
2. Presidential Scholarship Program: This is a scholarship for overseas education to put Indonesian universities in World University Rankings (Purwanto, 2016)