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Rhetorical Pattern of the Indonesian EFL Undergraduate Students' Writings

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Abstract

The present research aimed to study the rhetorical patterns in students' writings, whether they follow a deductive pattern or an inductive pattern, and whether the pattern is similar when writing in English and the Indonesian language. The sample for this study was 20 undergraduate students from the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education majoring in English Education in several universities in Indonesia. Participants were requested to write two essays and two email-format letters, one of each was written in English, the other in the Indonesian language. The results showed that all students preferred the deductive pattern for their two types of essays. However, for the letter writing, students preferred the inductive pattern more than the deductive one, with 12 students using the inductive pattern in their letters in English and 16 students using the inductive pattern in their letters in Indonesian. It is suggested that the Indonesian culture and the teaching instructions received in the classrooms may influence students' choice of the patterns they use in different types of writings. The findings should give valuable information for the design of teaching writing courses in English Education majors in Indonesia.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Producing an academic paper in English is a formidable task for students with English as a foreign language (EFL), including EFL students in Indonesia. The difficulties with academic writing in English involve different linguistic and cognitive strategies that students are not familiar with (Rao, 2007). However, Ariyanti (2016) had claimed that the most challenging part of EFL writing was the influence of students' first language and cultural background, which caused them to 'sound' different from texts written by native English speakers. The claim was supported by Safnil (2000, p. 188) in his doctoral study, where he argued that Indonesian writers prefer "...an indirect writing style with various types of background information at the beginning of the introduction sections". According to Kaplan (1966), the founder of Contrastive Rhetoric, even advanced EFL students can write ineffective papers. He states, "the foreign student who has mastered the syntax of English may still write a bad paragraph or a bad paper unless he also masters the logic of English" (Kaplan, 1966, p. 15).

The features of typical writing in American English are reported by Rinnert and Kobayashi (2001) as having the rhetorical pattern moving from general to specific (deductive). In this pattern, the main idea or thesis statement is in the introduction of the work and shows the readers the position taken by the author. Transitions are found between paragraphs, and the main idea or thesis statement is represented in conclusion. However, a different rhetorical pattern has been identified in the writings of international students (Connor, 1987; Eggington, 1987).

A study by Connor (1987) investigated cross-cultural variations in German and Finnish students' argumentative texts. Compared to their English and North American peers, the German and Finnish students did not consistently follow the typical argumentative text structure of situation + problem + solution + evaluation. It would be expected that they follow the sequence of speech acts of asserting a claim, justifying a claim through observations, and inducing the original claim from observations (Connor, 1987). German and Finnish students started their text by asserting a claim, followed by justifying the claim and inducing the claim. These sequences should have completed the argument, but then the students continued their text by repeating the sequence. So, there were two cycles of the same sequence in one text. The findings of this study support Kaplan's (1966) hypothesis that German writers, and Finnish writers who shared similar cultural patterns to German, followed a digressive pattern rather than the linear pattern favoured by their English and North American peers.

Furthermore, Eggington (1987) studied Korean students and found that these participants faced difficulty recalling information presented in a linear (deductive) rhetorical pattern when there was a delay between presentation and recall. This research also supported Kaplan's (1966) hypothesis that Asian students did not follow English's linear rhetorical style. It is also implied that Korean students would be able to rewrite the information in a linear rhetorical style only shortly after receiving it, implying that they could recall the original pattern of the information but only for a short time.

Zheng (2013), on the other hand, studied the writings of Chinese and Korean EFL students and discovered that the students used a deductive or linear pattern in stating their position in an argumentative essay. Zheng admits that the writing content was influenced by the students' culture and social background. Hirose (2003) found similar results when comparing argumentative writings in Japanese and English by the same Japanese EFL students. This research revealed that most students with Japanese applied the deductive pattern as their first language and English as their foreign language. The findings of Zheng and Hirose contradict Kaplan's (1966) hypothesis that Asian students use a circular pattern in organizing their essays. However, this may be due to the participants in these two studies majoring in English, meaning that they have learned the English essay pattern in their writing subjects.

In the Indonesian context, limited studies can be found in investigating the rhetorical pattern of Indonesian EFL students' writings. Budiharso (2006) examined essays written in English and Indonesian by ten undergraduates. He found that students who produced an essay with a linear pattern in English did not always use the same pattern for their Indonesian essay. Sony and Munir (2015) studied argumentative essays written by 20 Indonesian undergraduate students and found that the students could write using the English pattern taught in the writing course. However, two years after their writing course, their essay became less linear. The students succeeded in producing essays using the English pattern after studying in an English writing program but failed to maintain this writing pattern after a couple of years. The researchers argued that the unstable pattern in writing resulted from the fact that Indonesian and English do not share similar cultural backgrounds, and these different backgrounds influence the way the students organize their writing.

Considering the writing syllabus in Indonesia, the participating EFL students in the current study were expected to be able to write essays and letters as taught in their writing classes. Alternatively, Indonesian culture, which prefers the inductive pattern in verbal and written communication, may influence the students' writings, leading them to diverge from these patterns. Kuntjara (2004, p. 19) argued that "Indonesian EFL students who are used to thinking inductively where things are often stated implicitly will find it difficult to write deductively as in the English writing". The current study investigated the possibilities of the influences of Indonesian culture and teaching instructions on students' writings. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to discover the types of rhetorical patterns used in Indonesian students' writing, particularly argumentative essays versus letter writings, as well as whether such students use the same pattern when writing in English versus Indonesian.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Teaching Writing in English and Indonesian in the Indonesian Context

An Indonesian student's experience in writing would most likely begin during a *Bahasa Indonesia* course, which they take in the early years of primary school. Indonesian is taught along with the other Indonesian language skills: listening, speaking, and reading. Based on the *Bahasa Indonesia* syllabus for primary school, learning to write begins by identifying parts of a piece of writing. Students also need to pay attention to the structure of the language. The writing process then continues by

imitating the writing model provided in their textbook. The students' writing would be writing a simple narrative paragraph based on a picture series, or an invitation, an announcement, a poem, or a letter. Other writing activities involve filling in the blank spaces of a paragraph with correct words provided in a reading text. Students may also be asked to rearrange paragraphs or other types of writing provided in their textbook and put them in the correct order. At the high school level, these kinds of writing may also be experienced, but the content and the length of the writing needed are adjusted to the students' academic levels. Kuntjara (2004, p. 16) argued that the teaching of Bahasa Indonesia in the classroom was "...treated more like a science whose knowledge is to be learned and memorized than to be used in actual practical communication".

Indonesian students, on the other hand, typically begin studying English in high school, from grade 7 to grade 12. However, because English is a foreign language in Indonesia, students typically only have the opportunity to practice the language in classrooms twice a week for 90 minutes (Lauder, 2008; Panggabean, 2015; Rini, 2014; Sulistiyo, 2016). When it comes to writing, more attention is given to technical and grammatical aspects than the content and the organization of the writing (Abas & Aziz, 2016). Therefore, it is not surprising that Indonesian students' ability in English is still considered low (Abrar et al., 2018).

Students, who continue their studies at the university level and wish to major in English Education, are required to study English writing for three semesters, starting from learning how to write a paragraph and essay to academic writing. The process of learning to write in the classroom is usually guided by the teacher (Abas & Aziz, 2018). Students learn to write mostly by imitating the modelled essays/compositions given by the teacher or provided in their textbooks (Kuntjara, 2004). They learn writing rhetorical patterns from these given essays, and the teaching of writing is dominated by a focus on technical and grammatical aspects (Abas & Aziz, 2016).

One type of academic writing is an argumentative essay. It is widely used at the university level because it forces students to think, find reasons and evidence to support an issue, and convince the readers that the argumentations are acceptable. In this type of essay, the student should indicate his/her position in the argument. The statement of the author's position in an argumentative essay is called the thesis statement or the main idea. Two methods are offered by Oshima and Hogue (2006) to organize an argumentative essay: using a Block Pattern or a Point-by-Point Pattern.

In the Block pattern, the main idea or the author's position is stated in the introductory paragraph. In the body of the text, the first block of paragraphs states the other side of the argument, followed by providing rebuttals to the argument. The second block of paragraphs provides arguments for the author's position. The last paragraph will summarize the author's view of the topic discussed. In the Point-by-Point pattern, the first paragraph constitutes not only the main idea but also a summary of the other side's argument. The body paragraphs will state the other side's arguments and each argument is followed by the rebuttal from the author's counterargument. The last paragraph covers the summary of the essay. The following is an example of an introductory paragraph for an argumentative essay using a Point-by-Point pattern.

The middle school years (grades 7 and 8) are known to be the "tough years." These are the years when the uneven pace of girls' and boys' physical, emotional, and cognitive development is most noticeable. Girls are ahead of boys

on all counts, and both suffer. Educators debate whether separating boys and girls during these difficult years might improve students' academic performance. Separate classes are now prohibited in public schools that receive federal funds, but a change in the federal law that prohibits them is under consideration. Although some parents and educators oppose same-sex classes, there is some evidence that separating boys and girls in middle school yields positive results (Oshima & Hogue, 2006, p. 144).

The paragraph uses the deductive pattern where the thesis or main idea is located in the last sentence of the introductory paragraph, "Although some parents and educators oppose same-sex classes, there is some evidence that separating boys and girls in middle school yields positive results". The introductory paragraph is followed by several body paragraphs that constitute the statements of the other side's arguments and the rebuttals to the arguments given by the author. Following is an example of a statement of the other side's argument and a rebuttal from the author.

Opponents of single-sex education claim that test scores of students in all-girl or all-boy classes are no higher than those of students in mixed classes ("Study")¹. However, the research is inconclusive. Despite the fact that some research shows no improvement in test scores, other research shows exactly opposite results (Blum)²... (Oshima & Hogue, 2006, p. 144).

The body paragraph starts by stating the other side's argument, "Opponents of single-sex education claim that test scores of students in all-girl or all-boy classes are no higher than those of students in mixed classes". The author directly rebuts this statement by providing a counterargument, "However, the research is inconclusive. Despite the fact that some research shows no improvement in test scores, other research shows exactly opposite results". The author continues the paragraph by providing research results supporting his claim. The essay ends with a summary of the author's point of view.

2.2 Writing Letters Based on the English Syllabus in Indonesia

Other than learning to write different types of academic writing, Indonesian students also learn to write different types of letters. Based on the English syllabus, writing a letter was only taught twice; first, when the students were in grade 7 where they were asked to write a letter to a friend. The second time was in year 12, where they needed to write a job application letter. While in the *Bahasa Indonesia* course, writing a letter was only given one opportunity in year 12. At the university level, learning to write a letter has rarely been taught as part of the usual Writing course. Instead, it is usually taught as part of a Business-related course. For example, at Raden Fatah State Islamic University, as one of the target universities in this study, writing a letter is taught as part of the English for Business course. The allocated time was only 3x50 minutes (Putri, 2021). At Tanjungpura University, another university taking part in this study, writing a letter is included in the Business Correspondence, an elective course. The type of letter taught in the course was business-related and it was only offered in one semester. Students are expected to learn how to write letters in English over a few meetings/classes only.

Letter writing taught at school and at the university directed the students to use the deductive pattern where the main idea or the purpose of sending the letter is located in the introductory paragraph. An example of an application letter, as a type of letter writing, is provided in the English textbook for year XII ([Ministry of National Education and Culture, 2015](#)). Here, the students are directed to introduce the main idea in the first paragraph. This is followed by paragraph(s) which provide supporting information about the applicant such as work experience. The letter should close by expressing a willingness to be interviewed at any time.

Despite the writing lessons learned at schools and universities directed the students to write deductively, Indonesian students, as EFL students, were found to diverge from the pattern learned in the classrooms ([Budiharso, 2006](#); [Sony & Munir, 2015](#)) which indicate the influence of the culture in which the students were raised.

3. METHODS

3.1 Participants

The study included 20 undergraduate students (four males and 16 females) from four Indonesian universities, ranging from 18 to 22 years old. They were English Education majors from different semesters at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education. They were all native Indonesian speakers.

3.2 Instruments

In this study, participants were asked to write an essay and a letter in English on week one and an essay and a letter in the Indonesian language on week two. The topics for the essays were different and sourced from the [Cambridge IELTS book, 5th edition \(2006\)](#), and the [Cambridge IELTS book, 10th edition \(2015\)](#). The different topics were given to avoid translating ideas from one essay to another; a similar process was used by [Khodabandeh et al. \(2013\)](#), [Rusfandi \(2015\)](#), and [Hosseini \(2016\)](#) with their participants. However, for the letter writings, the topic was the same, provided by the researcher. The tests were administered to determine the elements of the 'location of the main idea', 'patterns', and 'summary statement' in the essays and letters of these Indonesian students.

Participants were asked to write approximately 250 words for an essay, and the time was limited to 40 minutes, as for a test. The topic for the English essay was, "It is important for children to learn the difference between right and wrong at an early age. Punishment is necessary to help them learn this distinction. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion? What sort of punishment should parents and teachers be allowed to use to teach good behavior to children?" The topic for the Indonesian essay was, "Some people think that a sense of competition in children should be encouraged. Others believe that children who are taught to co-operate rather than compete become more useful adults" (note that this Indonesian topic was translated into the Indonesian language and in this form that the students were given the topic). The students were asked to provide supporting statements for their answers and provide examples and reasons based on their knowledge and experience.

For the English letter, the topic was, “Write a letter to a potential research supervisor in Australia and ask for his/her willingness to be your thesis supervisor”. The direction was, “Imagine that you will continue your study for a Master’s degree in a university in Australia. Before you can submit a university application form, you need to find a research supervisor who will supervise your thesis”. The topic for the Indonesian letter was the same except that it was given to the students translated into the Indonesian language. The only difference was that ‘supervisor in Australia’ was changed into ‘supervisor in Indonesia’ and ‘university in Australia’ was changed into ‘university in Indonesia.’ For the letter writing tasks, the participants were again given 40 minutes of writing time and asked to write approximately 150 words.

Prior to each writing task, the researcher briefed the students about the topic to ensure that the participants understood the topic. For the letter task, the researcher also gave the participants some ideas about the procedures to apply for a postgraduate study in Australia, especially about why they need to write such a letter to approach a potential supervisor before submitting an application form to a university in Australia.

3.3 Data Analysis Procedures

Assessments of the students’ writings were divided into three elements. The first element was the ‘locations of the main ideas’. Interpretation of the location of the main idea was based on the views of [Kubota \(1992\)](#). The first location is in the introduction (initial), where the author’s point of view is located in the introductory paragraph. An essay with the main idea found in the introductory paragraph, followed by paragraphs that constitute the reasons and evidence to support the main idea, has been referred to as a ‘deductive’ pattern. The last paragraph should summarize the main idea or the essential points in the essay. The main idea can also be found in the middle of an essay, where the essay begins with an introduction, and the main idea is stated in the middle. The next location is at the end of an essay (final). An essay with the main idea revealed at the end has an ‘inductive’ pattern since the reasons and evidence to support the main idea are stated in the preceding paragraphs. This pattern is the opposite of the deductive pattern. Another location, ‘collection’, means that the author repeated his position more than once in an essay. The last is an ‘obscure’ location where the author does not clearly mention his position in an argumentative essay.

The second element was the patterns in the students’ writing tasks, which were analyzed by using [Kirkpatrick’s \(1995\)](#) model of Rhetorical Patterns. [Kirkpatrick \(1995\)](#) divided the patterns into deductive and inductive patterns. In ‘the deductive pattern’, the main idea is presented in the introductory paragraph, followed by supporting statements. In ‘the inductive pattern’, the main idea is located at the essay’s final part, and the earlier statements create supporting reason(s) for it.

The last element was the presence or absence of a ‘summary statement’ ([Kubota, 1992](#)). A summary should come at the end of writing work. In this study, the summary statement is divided into three criteria; 1. Summary; a summary statement is added at the end of the essay; 2. Nothing; no opinion or summary found, and 3. Opinion; the writer’s opinion was offered at the end of the essay. The raters for the students’ essay and letter writings were the first author and one external marker who is a local English teacher in Indonesia.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Location of the Main Idea, the Pattern Used, and the Presence or Absence of a Summary Statement in Essays and Letters

The English and Indonesian argumentative essay and letter writings were analyzed in terms of the location of the main idea, the pattern used, and the presence or absence of a summary statement. Inter-rater reliability was computed using Pearson correlation coefficients to determine the level of consistency in scoring across the two raters. For the location of the main idea, patterns, and summary statement, these were .93, .89, and .87 for the English essays, and .82, .88, and .78 for the Indonesian essay. The results indicate a high positive relationship between raters' scores.

The locations of the main idea in students' essays were mostly in the 'initial' part of the essay: 50% of students chose the 'initial' location for their English essay, and 60% of them chose this location for their Indonesian essay. Most of the other students preferred to repeat the main idea (collection), and the rest did not clearly mention the main idea in their essay (obscure). For e-letters, the locations of the main idea were much more varied, but the largest number of students presented the main idea in the middle of the Indonesian letter (50%) compared to at the end of the English letter (35%). The results for the locations of the main idea for Indonesian and English essays and letters are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Locations of the main idea in English and Indonesian essays and letters.

Location of main idea	Essay		Letter	
	English (%)	Indonesian (%)	English (%)	Indonesian (%)
Initial	50	60	15	15
Middle	0	0	30	50
Final	0	0	35	25
Collection	40	30	10	0
Obscure	10	10	10	10

In terms of the patterns used, an essay was said to have been developed deductively if the main idea appeared in the first paragraph. On the other hand, if the main idea appeared towards the end of the essay, it was considered to have an inductive pattern. The same rule applied to the letters. The results presented in Table 3 show that all students used the deductive pattern for their essays. However, 60% of the students preferred an inductive pattern in organizing their English letters, and 80% used the inductive pattern for their Indonesian letters.

Table 2. Patterns in Indonesian and English essays and letters.

	Essay		Letter	
	English (%)	Indonesian (%)	English (%)	Indonesian (%)
Deductive	100	100	40	20
Inductive	0	0	60	80

In terms of summary statements, half of the students ended their essays and letters with a summary statement (summary). In contrast, some 30% of students gave neither a summary nor an opinion (nothing) to show the readers that their English or Indonesian essay had ended. For the letters, 30% of the students preferred to add their

opinion before closing their English letters. Another 35% chose no summary or opinion (nothing) to end their Indonesian letter.

Table 3. Summary statements in Indonesian and English essays and letters.

	Essay		Letter	
	English (%)	Indonesian (%)	English (%)	Indonesian (%)
Summary	55	50	55	55
Opinion	15	20	30	10
Nothing	30	30	15	35

The data revealed that all students' essays written in English and Indonesian follow the deductive pattern and no significant differences in organizing the essays in both languages. While for letters, the inductive pattern was preferred more than the deductive pattern.

4.2 Rhetorical Patterns of Essay Writings

Research in the rhetorical pattern has emerged since Kaplan (1966) hypothesized that international students from different parts of the globe produce academic writings using a different pattern to students from North America. However, Kaplan (1966, pp. 4-5) also admits the fact that “the English paragraph may use just the reverse procedure; it may state a whole series of examples and then relate those examples into a single statement at the end of the paragraph, which is the inductive method of reasoning.” It is more consistent with the pattern that Asian students are asked to follow, i.e., the inductive pattern (Kirkpatrick, 1995). Although Asian, including Indonesian, students may also use the circular pattern where the main idea or position taken by the writer in an argumentative essay is not directly mentioned (Kaplan, 1966). This may be because many Indonesians, as noted by Geertz (1960, as cited in Kuntjara, 2004), prefer to say things implicitly but can still be understood by those who share or at least understand the culture. An example of an argumentative essay below written by Student No.7 shows that she organized her essay using the deductive pattern where the main idea (MI) is revealed in the introduction paragraph (underlined sentences). However, in the next three paragraphs, she provides supporting statements (SS) only for her side of the argumentation without stating the other side's statement and providing rebuttal.

Punishment for Children

As a parent, we should educate our children at an early age. The earlier, the better result we want to be. To educate our children, parents should know what techniques that they can implement to build our children good behaviour. Therefore, it is important for parents to teach their children between right and wrong at an early age. Punishment is one of the important technique to help them learn between right and wrong. (MI)

Many parents will give their children a punishment if they do a mistake. (SS-1) It is not for a reason. Punishment can make children understand if they had done something wrong. If parents do not give them they will never learn anything. They might assume what they have done is right and they might do it again and again. So, punishment is important to be applied by parents.

However, parents do not give punishment without any warning. (SS-2) Before they punish their children, they should tell their children what cause and effect if they do something wrong and what kind of punishment will be given. For example, if the children told to their parents they go to school but they go to somewhere else, the parents can tell the children if they do that,

parents will take back the motorcycle and do not give pocket money for one week. Thus, if we do this, tell them first they might think before act.

Beside, parents do not give punishment too hard. (SS-3) For example, by using violence because I think violence does not effective and does not give any effect for them. Some parents in my village will use violence if they did a naughtiness. But, in fact, it does not give them a lesson, and some of them become naughtier. They might assume violence as usual thing and they will like to fight with their friends. Thus, it is better to avoid violence in giving punishment.

In conclusion, punishment is an important technique that needs to be applied by parents. They can learn a lesson through punishment. However, parents should teach them first and give them a warning and punishment, not also by using violence. If parents teach them well, they might grow up well. (Summary)

The findings of the rhetorical patterns of essay writing in English and Indonesian show that students applied the deductive pattern in writing, as taught in writing courses in their university. However, it may be that the Indonesian culture is influencing their way of organizing their argumentative essay, which means that they fail to follow the Block Pattern or Point-by-Point Pattern as taught in their writing textbook (Oshima & Hogue, 2006). In the excerpt above, the student only provided arguments for her side but failed to mention the other side's argument and provide a counterargument.

This finding is consistent with previous research by Hirose (2003) on Japanese undergraduate students and a study by Rashidi and Dastkheyr (2009) on Iranian undergraduate students. These studies found that students preferred the deductive pattern in organizing their essays, either in English or their national language. The results also agree with the study by Zheng (2013) on Chinese and Korean EFL students, where the students also preferred the deductive pattern despite their cultural and social background influencing the writing contents. Therefore, it can be concluded that for essay writing, students were learning to use the deductive pattern as the pattern taught in writing subjects.

4.3 Rhetorical Patterns of Letter Writings

In contrast to the essay writings findings, there were mixed results for the participants' letters' patterns. The main idea, or the purpose of sending the letter, was found to be located in different parts of the students' letters, and the inductive pattern was favoured more by the students than the deductive pattern. An example of a letter using the inductive pattern was written by Student No.1.

Dear Sir,

This is to introduce myself. Student A. I am one of the best graduates of the English Dept at University A. (SS-1)

I would like to continue my study in EFYL at Canberra University this December 2018, I enclosed my proposal and curriculum vitae. (SS-2)

I have already read your research (SS-3) and hoping that you are willing to supervise my work (MI) because I found a new innovation for my work after I read yours. (SS-3) And if you see no interest in my proposal I will change into your interest.

I am waiting for your advice and will be very glad if you are willing to be my supervisor. (Summary)

Best Regards,
Student A

The selected excerpt uses the inductive pattern where the main idea (MI) is located in the third paragraph, and the preceding paragraphs constitute supporting reasons (SS) for the main idea. The student was found to use the circular pattern in paragraph three, where the student wrote, "I have already read your research...because I found an innovation for my work after I read yours." The sentence provides another reason for the main idea, followed by the main idea itself, then continues discussing the reason. The excerpt provides evidence for Kaplan's (1966) hypothesis that Asian students follow the circular pattern in organizing and developing their ideas in their writing.

The inductive pattern used by the majority of the students in composing their English and Indonesian letters suggests that these university students were still influenced by Indonesian culture in organizing their letters despite majoring in English. Safnil (2000, p. 188) argued that Indonesian writers prefer to use "an indirect writing style with various types of background information at the beginning of the introduction sections". Such information is used to attract and prepare the reader for the writing, which comes at the end. Furthermore, the results identified in terms of the patterns used for letters agreed with the findings of Budiharso (2006) that students who produced an essay with a linear pattern in English did not always use the same pattern when writing in Indonesian.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study revealed that Indonesian undergraduate students could use the deductive pattern in composing their essays. This was likely because the students were majoring in English Education, where they learned how to write essays by following the patterns learned from their textbook. However, a different result was found for letters where most of the students used an inductive pattern. It was likely to happen because of the limited time allocated to learn to write a letter compared to the study time for learning to write essays. Therefore, it is recommended that English teachers and practitioners give more time and attention to letter writing as it is an important skill for the students to communicate internationally, such as in an electronic letter.

This study finds no significant differences in using the pattern when organizing essays and letters, either in English or in Indonesian. The influence of Indonesian culture (consistent with many Asian cultures) can be found in the essays where the students only mentioned their side of the argument and avoided rebuttal of another side of the argument. The students in this study favour a circular writing pattern. This can also be found in the students' writing, where they repeated the main idea and supporting details both in essays and in e-letters. Since this study only included a small number of participants, the findings cannot be generalized to undergraduate students in Indonesia. However, additional research with a larger number of participants from different parts of Indonesia should help confirm the current study's findings.

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