

## LINGUISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESEARCH ARTICLE TITLES IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ELT JOURNALS

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| Article Info  | Abstract   |
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| <b>Article History</b><br>Received: October 2023<br>Revised: November 2023<br>Published: January 2024   | <i>Researchers have extensively studied the linguistic characteristics of research article (RA) titles. However, no research has investigated RA titles viewed from research design types published in national and international English Language Teaching (ELT) journals. Thus, the present study aims to fill this gap by investigating the average word length, syntactic structure, and syntactic structure type based on research design. This study used a comparative mixed method design to analyze 120 RA titles published in 2022-2023. The average length of titles was analyzed by counting the parts of speech of the tiles, the syntactic structures of titles were analyzed using the Framework of Cheng et al. (2012), and syntactic structure types based on research design were analyzed by reading the method section of the articles. Results indicate that the average length of the RA titles was 12 words in national journals and 13 words in international journals. Nominal structure was the most used RA title type in national journals, while compound structure was the most used in international journals. Furthermore, the nominal structure was often used for experimental design in international journals, while it was often used for descriptive study design in national journals. The compound and Verb-ing phrase structures were often used for case study design in both international and national journals. In conclusion, there are important differences and similarities in RA title characteristics between the two groups of ELT journal rankings. The findings contribute to the scholarship on the contrastive aspect of titling practices in English for Publishing Purposes.</i> |
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### INTRODUCTION

Over the past three decades, numerous scholars have dedicated their focus to the investigation of research articles within the academic genre, whether articulated in English or other languages, authored by individuals proficient in English as native or non-native speakers. This exploration encompasses various fields of disciplines. These studies have focused on some parts of the RA with various topics of the analysis, such as a rhetorical structure such as moves and steps (Julieta et al., 2023; Pratiwi & Kurniawan, 2021), linguistics realization such as tenses (Arsyad, 2014; Jasrial et al., 2021) and metadiscourse (Arsyad et al., 2021; Ebadi et al., 2015; Wang & Jiang, 2018), and lexical bundles (Al Fajri et al., 2020). This interest has triggered some academic writing experts to publish their books for publication, for example, Hyland (2018), Belcher (2016), Bailey (2015), Flowerdew (2013), and Bruce (2008). These monographs of academic writing or academic literacy scholars provide how to write an RA based on the structure and linguistic features in each section of the research article that is acceptable for nationally and internationally reputable journals.

Along with the interest in genre analysis studies, researchers also have shown great interest in analyzing the section of RA titles. This is because RA titles play a crucial role in determining the possibility of the manuscript being accepted in prestigious journals, as pointed out by Adnan (2022) Jasrial et al. (2019), and Renandya (2014). According to Bavdekar (2015), an RA title is a brief yet comprehensive presentation of the entire content of the article. It must be written with utmost precision, conciseness, and meticulousness (Badri, 2019; Tullu, 2019). In other words, RA titles serve as a powerful tool for authors to promote their articles to potential readers belonging to the same discipline community. Furthermore, RA titles possess certain linguistic characteristics such as the number of words, linguistic features (including syntactic structure, lexical features, and punctuations), rhetorical features (such as metaphors, alliterations, and consonance), and other linguistic attributes that contribute to the overall structure and meaning of language within a specific context or corpus. These features may enhance the readers' interest in reading the article and may increase the citation, as demonstrated in Jacques and Sebire's (2010) study. Therefore, adhering to the writing rules of RA titles can positively impact both authors and readers, making it an essential aspect of scientific writing.

However, constructing a compelling RA title poses a formidable challenge for novice writers utilizing English as a foreign language (EFL). Their struggles primarily stem from limitations in language proficiency, hindering their grasp of the intricate nuances required for effective academic titling (Ichiyama, 2021). Furthermore, these individuals face significant hurdles due to a lack of access to resources and opportunities that would familiarize them with the specific norms and conventions of English academic writing. Slougui's (2018) study illuminates these multifaceted challenges, emphasizing the intersection of language proficiency gaps and inadequate educational materials. Addressing these issues necessitates tailored support mechanisms and interventions to empower novice EFL writers in navigating the complexities of academic writing, particularly in formulating titles that align with established norms and effectively engage the scholarly community.

Consequently, several researchers have investigated RA titles in terms of the length of the titles, syntactic structure, prepositions, and rhetorical structure. In terms of the length of the titles, Anthony (2001), for example, found that the typical length of titles in the field of Computer Science journals ranges from 8.0 to 9.9 words on average. He further argues that the length of RA titles might differ when viewed from the subdiscipline of Computer Science. Likewise, Moattarian and Alibabae (2015) reported that RA titles in Applied Linguistics consisted of 12.88 words, Dentistry consisted of 10.38 words, and Civil Engineering consisted of 13.54 words. The shorter titles in Dentistry are caused by the content of the article having more compound words. It is quite different from social and hard sciences, providing detailed information is unnecessary for medical sciences on the study.

Moreover, several studies in the field of Applied Linguistics have explored the syntactic structure of RA titles. Cheng et al. (2012), Yang (2019), Apriani and Arsyad (2022) are among the researchers who have handled this topic. Cheng et al.'s (2012), examination revealed that RA titles in Applied Linguistics have five distinct syntactic structures. Compound titles were the most common, followed by nominal titles. Yang's (2019) study analyzed RA titles published in reputable international journals from 1990 to 2016 and found that titles grew longer over time and contained more keywords to increase visibility and citations. Apriani and Arsyad (2022) discovered three types of title structures in Applied Linguistics published in Indonesian accredited journals. The most frequent type was nominal structure.

However, a different finding regarding the syntactic structure of the RA titles was revealed by Doykova's (2016) investigation, when she investigated 500 RA titles in the field of Medicine and Dental Medicine written in English by Bulgarian authors. This study found that nominal titles were more dominant than compound, prepositional phrases, full sentences, questions, and v-ing type titles. Doykova emphasized that among these, nominally structured

titles, strategically organized to maximize reader engagement, continued to be the preferred and conventional choice for Bulgarian authors, even when composing in English.

In a comparative study across disciplines, Appiah et al. (2019) analyzed 574 RA titles in the fields of Gynaecology, Business, and Law. It was found that article titles in Business were longer in terms of word count compared to those in Gynaecology and Law. Moreover, it was observed that single-unit titles were more prevalent in Gynaecology and Law, whereas compound titles were more commonly used in Business. Interestingly, noun phrase titles were found to be the most popular in all three fields of study. Additionally, the study revealed that prepositional phrases were commonly used in postmodifying nominal structure titles, while the colon was used as the preferred punctuation in compound titles across all three disciplines. Overall, the findings highlight the importance of carefully selecting words while creating a title to create a positive impression and generate interest in the article. These findings are in line with previous studies conducted on the same topic. According to Milojevic (2017), disciplinary membership is the most important factor in determining the average length of titles and the occurrence of different types of titles. It shows that the authors are trying to adhere to established standards in their field. However, there are no fixed standards over decades because of the changes in titling practices.

Previous studies have provided valuable insights for novice and non-native authors on writing well-organized titles that meet the expectations of journal editors and reviewers. However, as far as the authors of the present paper are concerned, none of these studies has explored the relationship between the type of research designs and the syntactic structures of RA titles published in prestigious national and international journals in the field of English Language Teaching.

This present study aims to bridge this gap in knowledge, as articles published in internationally reputable journals (Scopus - Q1) are generally considered superior to those published in other journals. By identifying the differences between titles of RA articles published in nationally accredited and internationally reputable journals, authors in the field of English Language Teaching can learn about the optimal length, syntactic structure, and type of research design to use in their titles. This knowledge can help authors tailor their article titles to meet the expectations of internationally reputable journals. Moreover, this study is expected to meet readers' expectations by increasing the likelihood of their manuscript being accepted for publication in higher-ranking journals. The research questions for this study are designed to address this issue and provide valuable insights for authors in the field of English Language Teaching.

1. What is the average length of RA titles in English Language Teaching published in nationally accredited and internationally reputable journals?
2. What syntactic structures are often used in the RA titles in English Language Teaching published in nationally accredited and internationally reputable journals?
3. What research designs are often used based on the syntactic structures of the RA titles published in nationally accredited and internationally reputable journals?

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Research Design**

The study explored linguistic characteristics of RA titles in English Language Teaching comparing nationally and internationally accredited journals. This study used a comparative design because the study compared the linguistic characteristics of RA titles between internationally reputable and nationally accredited journals that focused on the differences. It is in line with Creswell (2012) who states that a comparative study is research that attempts to reach conclusions beyond a single case and explains differences and similarities between the object of the analysis.

In this design, this study used a mixed-method approach to acknowledge as an effective way to ensure the trustworthiness of the study in terms of validity and reliability, especially content analysis that analyzes the content of the text (Sándorová, 2019). This was because this approach combined quantitative techniques such as frequency count and percentage analysis to measure and compare the occurrence of different title lengths, syntactic structures, and syntactic structures based on research design types in a sample of RA titles. This method facilitated the identification of common patterns and percentages in a data set. Complementing this quantitative method, qualitative analyses such as content analysis and syntactic categorization delve deeper into the linguistic nuances and contextual underpinnings contained in these titles. This qualitative aspect provided examples of titles to be interpreted, explaining the reasons behind the observed differences in syntactic structure. By integrating quantitative and qualitative methods, this comprehensive approach enhanced research findings, providing descriptive statistical evidence intertwined with in-depth insights into the syntactic structure of RA titles in ELT journals. This mixed method ensured robust analysis and meaningful interpretation of data, thereby meeting the complexity of the study (Daniel, 2016).

### The Corpora of the Study

This study analyzed a total of 120 RA titles published in internationally reputable journals and nationally accredited journals in English Language Teaching. These titles were selected using the purposive sampling method by following the theory of Creswell (2017). The considerations of choosing the corpora for this study were: 1) the selected journals were highly regarded in the academic community and were ranked accordingly. The internationally accredited journals were high-impact indexed in Scopus and had a Quartile 1 ranking, while the nationally accredited journals were indexed in SINTA 2 by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. Moreover, these journals were prestigious in ASIA and Indonesia for the academics for the publication and they followed the standards of the international journal in terms of template format, language, reviewer, structure, writing style, etc. 2) The RA titles included in this study were the articles that had research topics in English Language Teaching, not in linguistics, literature, or applied linguistics studies. 3) The journals were open-access. 4) The articles were published in 2022-2023. It aimed to keep the up-to-date issues published in the journals. The results of the consideration are presented in Table 1 below;

Table 1  
The Distribution of the Corpora of the Study

| NO | Internationally Reputable Journals<br>(n : 60)        |                        | Nationally Accredited Journals<br>(n : 60)              |                        |
|----|---|------------------------|---|------------------------|
|    | Name of Journals<br>(Q1)                              | Number of<br>RA Titles | Name of Journals<br>(SINTA 2)                           | Number of<br>RA Titles |
| 1  | Studies in English Language Education (SIELE)         | 15                     | English Review: Journal of English Education (ERJEE)    | 15                     |
| 2  | ASIA TEFL   | 15                     | Journal of English as a Foreign Language (JEFL)         | 15                     |
| 3  | Teaching English with Technology (TEwT)               | 15                     | Indonesian Journal of English Education (IJEE)          | 15                     |
| 4  | Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research (IJLTR) | 15                     | Journal of English Teaching and Learning Issues (JETLI) | 15                     |
|    | Average   | 60                     | Average   | 60                     |

As shown in Table 1, Each group of corpora consisted of 60 RA titles and each journal consisted of 15 titles. This was because this was a comparative study so the number of samples for each group of corpora must be the same. The number of the corpora included in this study had

fulfilled the theory of Corder and Foreman (2009), the minimum requirement of the corpus included for content analysis is 30 texts. Also, each corpus had four journals representing the national and international journals.

### The Procedures of Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, the researcher used a checklist in terms of a table. The checklist consisted of three; checklists for analyzing the length of RA titles (word count), syntactic structure, and syntactic structure based on research design.

To determine the average length of words in RA titles, a thorough analysis was conducted. While counting the words in the titles, certain rules were followed to ensure the validity of the analysis. The eight parts of speech, namely noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction, and interjection were taken into consideration while analyzing the word count of titles. It is important to note that definite and indefinite articles such as ‘the’ and ‘a/an’ were not considered words in this analysis as they are categorized as pronunciation rules to pronoun nouns (Al-Sulaimaan & Alsinjari, 2019). Additionally, combined/compound words (e.g. self-voicing), abbreviations, and acronyms (e.g. ELT) were counted as one word. Yule (1985) defined a compound word as a combination of two separate words to form a single word. Abbreviations are formed by taking the first letters of some words to create a new word, whereas acronyms are formed by taking the first letter of each word of a sentence or phrase (Pujiyanti & Ardini, 2019).

Moreover, the second analysis focused on the syntactic classifications of the RA titles. It was carried out by following Cheng et al. (2012). The syntactic classifications used in this study are nominal, compound, full sentence, V-ing phrase, and prepositional phrase. The types, descriptions, and examples of these five different syntactic features are presented in the table below.

Table 2  
Syntactic Feature Types of the RA Titles

| Syntactic Structure Types | Description  | Examples  |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| Nominal                   | It comprises one or more nouns, referred to as heads, which can be accompanied by pre-modifiers or followed by post-modifiers. | <i>The effects of gamification on vocabulary learning and retention of ESL learners.</i>  |
| Compound                  | It comprises two segments delimited by a colon, dash, question mark, or period.  | <i>Teachers' perception of MALL in teaching writing: A Mixed Method Study at ...</i>  |
| Full sentences            | It encompasses a full sentence or clause, encompassing both declarative structures.  | <i>When Grammar Instruction Undermines Cohesion in L2 Spanish Classroom Discourse, and interrogative structures, e.g., Is there an Academic Vocabulary?</i> |
| V-ing phrases             | It represents the gerund form, derived from one or more verbs, followed by objects or modifiers of the verb(s).                | <i>Implementing Grammatical Principles in Adult Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Classrooms</i>                                      |
| Prepositional phrases     | It commences with a preposition, followed by the object of that preposition.   | <i>Toward a Socioliterate Approach to Second Language Teacher Education</i>   |

(Adapted from Cheng et al., 2012)

The analysis focused on the syntactic structures of complete titles. All of the titles in the corpus were analyzed and categorized into the five categories as in the above examples. The last analysis was the research design employed by authors viewed from the types of syntactic structure of the RA titles. It was executed by examining the sub-section on research design within the abstracts and method section of the research article.

### Inter-Rater Reliability Analysis

The validity and reliability of the analysis were established through a rigorous process. An independent co-rater with a master's degree in English Language Education and experience in the study area was contacted to assist in the determination of the reliability and validity of the analysis. To determine the reliability, a Cohen kappa analysis was conducted, which is a statistical measure of agreement between two raters. The criteria of scores, as suggested by Kanoksilapathan (2005) were used to evaluate the agreement between the two raters: 0.40 (poor), 0.40-0.59 (fair), 0.60-0.74 (good), and 0.75 or above (excellent). Cohen's Kappa value obtained was 0.90, which indicates an excellent level of agreement between the two raters and thus confirms the reliability of the analysis.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Findings

#### *The Average Length of English Language Teaching RA Titles*

As mentioned earlier, the length of RA titles was measured by the number of words. Therefore, some rules were applied to count the average length of titles and these were carried out manually to achieve valid results. Table 3 presents the average number of words in the articles;

Table 3  
The Average Length of RA Titles

| NO | Internationally Reputable Journals |                | Nationally Accredited Journals |                |
|----|------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|----------------|
|    | Name of Journals                   | Average Length | Name of Journals               | Average Length |
| 1  | SIELE                              | 12.87          | ERJE                           | 10.80          |
| 2  | ASIA TEFL                          | 13.45          | JEFL                           | 12.87          |
| 3  | TEwT                               | 13.93          | IJEE                           | 10.60          |
| 4  | IJLTR                              | 11.93          | JETLI                          | 12.87          |
|    | Average                            | 13 words       | Average                        | 12 words       |

As shown in Table 3, the RA titles published in internationally reputable journals in the English Language Teaching field consisted of 13 words in terms of average length. Moreover, the journals only accepted a word length between 11 and 13 words. In contrast, the average length of nationally accredited journals in English Language Teaching often was 12 words. The journals only accepted RA titles between 10 and 12 words. The following are the examples of the RA titles.

#### Excerpt 1

*"Measuring Malaysian lower secondary learners' reading ability on a CEFR-aligned text" (SIELE 1 -11 words).*

As shown in Excerpt 1, this title was in the range of 1-11 words. The word "CEFR-aligned) was categorized as one because it was a compound word. The article "a" was not counted as a word because it was categorized as pronunciation rules to pronoun nouns. Thus, this title consisted of 10 words. This number of words covered the content of the article in terms of the variables (reading ability and CEFR-aligned text) and subjects of the research (Malaysian lower secondary learners)

#### Excerpt 2

*"Teaching Collaborative Ground Rules through Peer Modelling: Changes in Pair Participatory Patterns" (IJLTR 12-14 words)*

As shown in Excerpt 2, this title was in the range of 1-12 words. All words in this title were categorized as a single word, so this title consisted of 12 words. This title covered variables (Collaborative ground rules through peer modeling and pair participatory patterns).

#### Excerpt 3

*“EFL Students’ Reflections on Their Language Learning Shifts: Before, During, and After COVID-19”*  
(ASIA TEFL 13 – 15 words)

As shown in Excerpt 3, this title was in the range of 13-15 words. The words “EFL and COVID-19” were categorized as single words because they were abbreviations. Thus, this title consisted of 13 words. This title covered the content of the articles that included subjects (EFL students) and variables (reflections and language learning shifts), and limitations (before, during, and after COVID-19) of the study.

### The Syntactic Structures of English Language Teaching RA Titles

The second analysis of this research was about the types of syntactic structure of RA titles. The type of RA titles was categorized based on the framework of Cheng et al. The results are presented in Table 4 below;

Table 4  
The Syntactic Structure of the RA Titles

| No | Syntactic Structure Types | Internationally Reputable Journals |            | Nationally Accredited Journals |            |
|----|---------------------------|------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|------------|
|    |                           | Frequency                          | Percentage | Frequency                      | Percentage |
| 1  | Compound                  | 24                                 | 40%        | 21                             | 35%        |
| 2  | Nominal                   | 21                                 | 35%        | 25                             | 37%        |
| 3  | Verb-Ing                  | 15                                 | 25%        | 14                             | 23%        |
| 4  | Prepositional Phrases     | 0                                  | 0%         | 0                              | 0%         |
| 5  | Full Sentences            | 0                                  | 0%         | 0                              | 0%         |
|    | Total                     | 60                                 | 100%       | 60                             | 100%       |

As shown in Table 4, there were three syntactic structure categories found in the internationally reputable journals in English Language Teaching, namely compound (40%), nominal (35%), verb-ing (25%) structures, while prepositional phrases and full sentence structure categories were not found in those journals. Among those structures, the compound structure was the most frequent. In addition, there were three syntactic structure categories found in the nationally accredited journals in English Language Teaching, namely nominal (37%), compound (35%), and verb-ing (23%) structures. The most frequent type of RA title was the nominal structure. The following are some examples;

#### Excerpt 4 – Nominal Structure

1. *Teachers’ Beliefs and Practice on Providing EFL Written Corrective Feedback (JETLI – 3)*
2. *An Exploration of Teacher Roles in Blended EFL Contexts in Vietnam (ASIA TEFL – 4)*

In the examples in Excerpt 4, both titles were nominal structure types. The titles in Excerpt 2 number 1 started with “Teachers’ Beliefs and Practice” and number 2 started with “An Exploration” which were categorized as noun phrases. Therefore, these titles indicated a nominal structure.

#### Excerpt 5: Compound Structure

1. *WhatsApp Use on Reading Comprehension: Exploring the Impact Among EFL Learners (ERJE – 3)*
2. *How Massive Open Online Courses Constitute Digital Learning Spaces for EFL Teachers: An Ethnographic Case Study (TEWT -10)*

In the examples in Excerpt 3, both titles were compound structure types. The titles in Excerpt 3 numbers 1 and 2 were indicated with colons. Therefore, these titles indicated a compound structure.

Excerpt 6: Verb – ing

1. Enhancing Students' Learning Outcomes: Bits and Pieces Game (IJEE – 9)
2. Leveraging Gamification into EFL Grammar Class to Boost Student Engagement (TEWT – 15)

In the examples in Excerpt 6 numbers 1 and 2, the RA titles started with Verb-Ing at the beginning of the titles. After Verb-Ing, it was followed by nouns. Therefore, these titles indicated Verb-ing phrases.

### The Syntactic Structure Types of English Language Teaching RA Titles Based on Research Design

The third analysis focused on the research design often used in the RA titles based on the syntactic structure. After analyzing data, the results of the research are presented in the following table;

Table 5  
Nominal Structure of Titles Based on Research Design

| No    | Research Design               | Internationally Reputable Journals |            | Nationally Accredited Journals |            |
|-------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|------------|
|       |                               | Frequency                          | Percentage | Frequency                      | Percentage |
| 1     | Narrative Inquiry             | 0                                  | 0%         | 2                              | 9.52%      |
| 2     | Ethnography                   | 0                                  | 0%         | 1                              | 4.76%      |
| 4     | Descriptive                   | 2                                  | 9.52%      | 7                              | 33.33%     |
| 5     | Case Study                    | 4                                  | 19.04%     | 6                              | 28.57%     |
| 6     | Research and Development      | 0                                  | 0%         | 1                              | 4.76%      |
| 7     | Correlational                 | 1                                  | 4.76%      | 1                              | 4.76%      |
| 8     | Experiment                    | 5                                  | 23.81%     | 2                              | 9.52%      |
| 9     | Sequential Explanatory        | 0                                  | 0%         | 1                              | 4.76%      |
| 10    | Explorative Study             | 2                                  | 9.52%      | 0                              | 0%         |
| 11    | Participatory Action Research | 1                                  | 4.76%      | 0                              | 0%         |
| 12    | Autobiographical Narrative    | 1                                  | 4.76%      | 0                              | 0%         |
| 13    | Survey                        | 1                                  | 4.76%      | 0                              | 0%         |
| 14    | Innovative Mixed Method       | 1                                  | 4.76%      | 0                              | 0%         |
| 15    | Comparative                   | 1                                  | 4.76%      | 0                              | 0%         |
| 16    | Triangulation                 | 1                                  | 4.76%      | 0                              | 0%         |
| Total |                               | 21                                 | 100%       | 21                             | 100%       |

As presented in Table 5, the most often type of research design used in the nominal structure of titles in internationally reputable journals was an experimental study followed by a case study. In contrast, nationally accredited journals often used a descriptive study in the nominal structure of titles followed by a case study. The number of the research design was eight designs. Thus, there were three research designs often used in the nominal structure titles, namely a case study, an experimental study, and a descriptive study. The examples are as follows;



## Excerpt 7

*“The Impact of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) Strategy on Reading Skills Among Secondary School Students” (ERJEE – 9)*

As indicated in Excerpt 7, this title was categorized as a nominal structure. This title was used for an experimental research design. It was indicated by using a noun as the head of the title, that was “impact”. This word was one of the linguistic characteristics of the title for an experimental research design.

## Excerpt 8

*“Factors Affecting English Performance Between Students Residing in Tourist and Non-Tourist Areas” (SIELE 6)*

As indicated in Excerpt 8, this title was categorized as a nominal structure. This title was used for a comparative study design. It was indicated by using the word “between” as a linguistic characteristic to show a comparison of two variables.

## Excerpt 8

*“The Relationship between Students’ Reading Motivation and the Success to Comprehend the English Texts” (JETLI – 14).*

The title in Excerpt 8 was a nominal structure. This title was used for a correlational study. The linguistic characteristic of this title was “relationship”. It was commonly used for a correlation study.

Table 6  
Compound Structure of Titles Based on Research Design

| No    | Research Design           | Internationally Reputable Journals |            | Nationally Accredited Journals |            |
|-------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|------------|
|       |                           | Frequency                          | Percentage | Frequency                      | Percentage |
| 1     | Narrative Inquiry         | 1                                  | 4.17%      | 3                              | 12%        |
| 2     | Ethnography               | 3                                  | 12.5%      | 0                              | 0%         |
| 3     | Descriptive               | 1                                  | 4.17%      | 4                              | 16%        |
| 4     | Case Study                | 6                                  | 25%        | 7                              | 28%        |
| 5     | Research and Development  | 1                                  | 4.17%      | 0                              | 0%         |
| 6     | Correlational             | 1                                  | 4.17%      | 0                              | 0%         |
| 7     | Experiment                | 4                                  | 16.67%     | 3                              | 12%        |
| 8     | Sequential Explanatory    | 1                                  | 4.17%      | 3                              | 12%        |
| 9     | Sequential Explorative    | 1                                  | 4.17%      | 0                              | 0%         |
| 10    | Explorative Study         | 1                                  | 4.17%      | 0                              | 0%         |
| 11    | Survey                    | 1                                  | 4.17%      | 3                              | 12%        |
| 12    | Phenomenology             | 0                                  | 0%         | 1                              | 4%         |
| 13    | Grounded Theory           | 1                                  | 4.17%      | 0                              | 0%         |
| 14    | Classroom Action Research | 0                                  | 0%         | 1                              | 4%         |
| 15    | Primally Qualitative      | 1                                  | 4.17%      | 0                              | 0%         |
| 16    | Convergent                | 1                                  | 4.17%      | 0                              | 0%         |
| Total |                           | 24                                 | 100%       | 25                             | 100%       |

As described in Table 6, the compound structure of titles often used a case study design followed by experimental and ethnography studies in internationally reputable journals.

Similarly, nationally accredited journals frequently employed a case study design in the compound structure of titles, along with descriptive, narrative inquiry, experimental, sequential explanatory, and survey methodologies. Thus, the nominal structure of RA titles was often used for a case study design. The examples are as follows;

#### Excerpt 9

*“Designing Project-Based Learning in Research Proposal Writing: Its Effect, Problems, and Scaffolding Utilized” (SIELE – 13)*

As shown in Excerpt 9, this title was used for a Research and Development design. It was indicated by the verb-ing "designing". This word tended to for this research design and as a linguistic characteristic for the compound structure.

#### Excerpt 10

*“Art Students’ and Instructors’ Perceptions of Content and Language Integrated Learning at a Korean Art College” (ASIA TEFL – 12).*

As indicated in Excerpt 10, this title was used for a survey design. It was indicated by the word “perception” or subject of the study + perception. This word was usually used for a survey design.

Table 7  
Verb-Ing Phrases Structure of Titles Based on Research Design

| No    | Research Design           | Internationally Accredited Journals |            | Nationally Accredited |            |
|-------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------|------------|
|       |                           | Frequency                           | Percentage | Frequency             | Percentage |
| 1     | Case Study                | 7                                   | 46.67%     | 6                     | 42.86%     |
| 2     | Content Analysis          | 0                                   | 0%         | 1                     | 7.14%      |
| 3     | Experiment                | 2                                   | 13.33%     | 1                     | 7.14%      |
| 4     | Sequential Explanatory    | 0                                   | 0%         | 2                     | 14.29%     |
| 5     | Sequential Explorative    | 1                                   | 6.67%      | 0                     | 0%         |
| 6     | Triangulation             | 0                                   | 0%         | 1                     | 7.14%      |
| 7     | Classroom Action Research | 0                                   | 0%         | 3                     | 21.43%     |
| 8     | Descriptive Study         | 4                                   | 26.67%     | 0                     | 0%         |
| 9     | Primally Qualitative      | 1                                   | 6.67%      | 0                     | 0%         |
| Total |                           | 15                                  | 100%       | 14                    | 100%       |

As shown in Table 7, the Verb-ing phrase structure of titles was often used by authors in internationally reputable journals for a case study design and followed by the descriptive design. Likewise, the Verb-ing phrase structure in nationally accredited journals was often for a case study and followed by Classroom Action research. Thus, this title type was often for a case study, a descriptive study, Classroom Action research, an experimental study, and sequential explanatory research. The examples are as follows;

#### Excerpt 11

*“Improving English Students’ Speaking Skills through an Action Learning Strategy (ERJE – 10)*

This title in Excerpt 11 used a verb-ing phrase. It was used for Classroom Action Research design. It was indicated using verb-ing “improving” and it should be followed by the dependent variable (speaking skills). This word was a linguistic characteristic of the title for this study design.

## Excerpt 12

*“Exploring Indonesian EFL teacher-student interaction in online learning” (SIELE – 4)*

This title in Excerpt 12 was used for a qualitative descriptive study. The linguistic characteristic of this title was “exploring + noun”. The noun after the word “exploring” was a subject of the study.

## Discussion

In this dedicated section, a comprehensive examination is undertaken to expound upon the outcomes related to the three research questions previously delineated. The primary objective is to actively integrate with the extant body of literature, systematically evaluating instances of convergence and divergence. The overarching aim is to gain a nuanced comprehension of the prevailing trends in titling practices within the realm of nationally and internationally accredited journals in the field of English Language Teaching. Through a rigorous analysis of these results, a more profound insight into the intricate dynamics and patterns characterizing the titles of scholarly articles in the specified context is sought, thereby contributing to the broader scholarly discourse on language education.

### *The Average Length of English Language Teaching RA Titles*

Based on the analysis, it appears that the titles of nationally accredited journals are on average slightly shorter than those of internationally reputable journals. However, the difference in length is minimal, with only one word separating them. This suggests that the titles of journals in English Language Teaching, whether nationally or internationally accredited, are generally well-crafted. This finding is consistent with the research of Jiang and Hyland (2022) recommends that a journal article title should ideally be between 10 to 15 words, as excessively long titles may confuse or overwhelm readers. Furthermore, research by Bavdekar (2015) and Hudson (2016) suggests that overly long titles may cause readers to lose sight of the main message. Therefore, it is possible that nationally accredited journals have taken cues from internationally reputable journals, particularly those ranked Q1 in Scopus when crafting their article titles.

The result of the research is in line with the previous studies (Apriani & Arsyad, 2022; Moattarian & Alibabae, 2015). It has been found that the average length of titles in Applied Linguistics, written by both international and national authors, in higher-ranking national and international journals, falls within the range of 11 and 12.88 words. Therefore, the average length of titles discovered in this study, whether in national or international journals, is consistent and not different from the results of previous research.

Furthermore, the average length of articles published in nationally accredited journals and internationally reputable journals does not exhibit quite a difference. This suggests that both groups of journals have similar rules when it comes to the number of words in an article. This similarity could be attributed to the fact that these journals belong to the same discipline and follow similar guidelines. Therefore, it can be concluded that the difference in the average length between the two groups of journals is not substantial.

### *The Syntactic Structures of English Language Teaching RA Titles*

In this study, RA titles were categorized into three types; compound, nominal, and verb-ing. However, there is a difference in RA titles between nationally accredited and internationally reputable journals in the field of English Language Teaching. It was found that nationally accredited journals often use a compound structure while internationally reputable journals tend to use a nominal structure. These findings confirm the results of previous studies such as Yang (2019) who discovered that international prestigious journals tend to use a compound structure, and Apriani and Arsyad (2022) who reported that national journals usually use a nominal structure. This is possibly because internationally reputable journals prefer to accept articles that have more variables and complicated study topics. Additionally, the

compound RA titles provide information about the research topic for the first part, while the second part provides more specific information about the scope (subjects, sample, setting, location, and area of the study) or research methods (Morales et al., 2020). In other words, the compound structure is more informative than other types of titles.

In the realm of research articles (RAs), it is noteworthy that a prevalent trend among authors contributing to nationally accredited journals involves the preference for nominal structure titles in presenting their studies. This particular genre of titles proves to be advantageous, especially when delving into intricate subjects with a thorough and comprehensive approach, whether through surveys or analytical methods. The utilization of head nouns in these titles serves as a strategic means for authors to articulate the overarching objectives of their research to the readers effectively. Moreover, nominal structure titles necessitate a heightened degree of specificity, accomplished through the adept construction of noun phrases. This methodological choice contributes to the creation of a more condensed and organized format, particularly beneficial when grappling with intricate subject matter (Apriani & Arsyad, 2022). The overall impact of adopting nominal structure titles is the provision of an effective tool for researchers who seek to communicate the purpose and scope of their work in a manner that is both clear and concise. In essence, this structural choice aligns with the exigencies of scholarly communication, enabling authors to enhance the accessibility and interpretability of their research within the academic discourse.

The present study makes a noteworthy observation regarding the absence of two distinct types of syntactic structures in research article (RA) titles, namely full-sentence titles and prepositional phrases. These specific categories of titles, as highlighted in the literature (Shahidipour & Alibabae, 2017), are commonly characterized as less informative and potentially perplexing to readers. In particular, full-sentence titles are comprised of complete sentences featuring specific verb usage, either in informative or interrogative forms (Morales et al., 2020). The exclusion of these syntactic structures in RA titles may have implications for authors, as it imposes constraints on their ability to formulate ideas and effectively promote their articles. This observation underscores the nuanced considerations surrounding syntactic choices in titling practices within the academic discourse, emphasizing the potential impact on both reader comprehension and authorial expression.

#### *The Syntactic Structure of English Language Teaching RA Titles Based on Research Design*

The study results indicate that nominal structure is commonly used in experimental studies published in internationally reputable journals, and in descriptive studies published in nationally accredited journals, but only under the quantitative approach. The RA title type is typically used for an experimental study, beginning with a noun phrase like "the effect of" or "the impact of," while a descriptive study uses a specific noun phrase such as "students' experiences" or "EFL students' perception." Another research design is a descriptive study, which requires more explanation of the variable being discussed in the study.

In contrast, the compound structure of RA titles in both nationally accredited and internationally reputable journals often used a case study. The topics of the research for compound structure seemed complicated and had more variables so the authors used a case study. Using two parts of the title will allow the author to express the detailed content and scope of their research in two parts (Afful & Ankomah, 2020). The complicated issue discussed for this RA title is shown in other research designs such as sequential explanatory and sequential explorative mixed method, descriptive, narrative inquiry, and experimental study designs. The studies need both quantitative and qualitative data to answer the research questions and explain the results.

The verb-ing phrase structure was often used for a case study, an experimental study, Classroom Action Research, and a descriptive study. This finding implies that this title type is often used for research that aims to help improve some cases that happened in classroom

practices. This finding is in line with Apriani and Arsyad (2022), that verb-ing phrase structure is highly used for experimental and action research. Moreover, the title containing the Verb-Ing phrase serves a predictive role, indicating a sense of ongoing continuity and expressing an activity that is still in progress (Morales, 2020). The case study design used in verb-ing phrase structure seems to show the exploration of the case or problem as well as the settlement of the problems.

In essence, this study serves as an illuminating exploration of a pivotal dimension within the landscape of research article (RA) titles, specifically within the domain of English Language Teaching. The focus extends to the profound significance of syntactic structures employed in crafting RA titles, spanning the spectrum of journals accredited on a national scale to those esteemed internationally. The choice of syntax, whether adopting a nominal, compound, or verb-ing structure, transcends mere brevity; rather, it serves as a deliberate reflection of the depth and specificity inherent in the research focus. Furthermore, the study underscores that these syntactic choices are not arbitrary; instead, they align with discernible journal preferences and accommodate diverse research designs. Unraveling the intricacies of how these syntactic nuances operate in conveying the complexity, scope, and methodology of scholarly work is not only conducive to fostering effective communication within the academic community but also highlights the strategic role played by titles as gateways to the profound depth and breadth of research insights. In this way, the study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the nuanced interplay between syntax and scholarly communication, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of RA titles and their pivotal role in shaping the reception and interpretation of research within the academic discourse.

## CONCLUSION

This comprehensive study delved into the linguistic characteristics and syntactic structures of research article (RA) titles in English Language Teaching (ELT) journals, comparing nationally accredited and internationally reputable publications. Findings revealed marginal differences in average title length between the two groups, affirming the similarity in titling practices. Nominal structures were prevalent in internationally reputable journals, while nationally accredited ones favored compound structures. Notably, nominal structures often accompanied experimental studies in internationally reputable journals, contrasting with descriptive studies in nationally accredited ones. The verb-ing phrase structure was notably used in various research designs, especially for cases and experimental studies. Overall, this research sheds light on the nuanced differences in titling practices across ELT journals, emphasizing the impact of syntactic structures aligned with distinct research designs in capturing readers' attention and promoting scholarly work.

The research findings suggest that for authors who are new or novices in the field of English Language Teaching and aim to publish their work in nationally accredited and reputable journals, it is essential to learn and utilize the common syntactic structure and research design based on the types of syntactic structure of RA titles. The title of the manuscript is the first impression that readers, including journal editors and reviewers, have of the article. Therefore, it is crucial to write a title that is attractive, informative, and concise. Doing so can significantly increase the chances of manuscript acceptance for publication in the desired journal. Despite the above findings and the contributions that the findings make to the existing literature on titling practices and professional practice of writing titles in academic or scientific writing, a few weaknesses were acknowledged. These weaknesses are the sample size and the fact the study focused on one discipline, that is English Language Teaching. Therefore, further studies are suggested by way of expanding the sample size and also embracing more fields of study research is suggested to conduct a study to fill the gap of the present study in terms of the sample size, disciplines, and scope of the analysis.

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