

## Conference Paper

# The Role of Language Editors in Improving the Quality of Academic Books Published By *University Presses*

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## Abstract

The purpose of this research is to improve the role of language editors in university press management, particularly in Indonesia, in publishing universities' intellectual assets. The method used was a descriptive qualitative design by focusing on group discussions, seminars, workshops, and training. The results showed that the university press was the most important pillar in the implementation of Tri Dharma University and had a vital role in publishing and distributing the intellectual assets of higher education to the public. Good management will ultimately create a professional university press. Aspects such as editorial management were considered, particularly in language editing, because of the essential role of connecting writers' ideas to the readers. There have been some experiences in Indonesia where the University Press proved that a well-managed publishing will produce a positive impact to the university. The academic sphere will apparently appear in every activity related to publication and will present a positive image toward universities.

**Keywords:** academic book, language editors, university press management

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## 1. Introduction

Lately, the splendor of the publishing world seems not to be being enjoyed by the publishers of campus or university presses in Indonesia. This situation is very ironic with the conditions in the 80s. Gama Press, for example, is known as a publisher not only recognized by the academic world in the country but also as a reference to the world of campuses in foreign countries. The book entitled *Dari Negara Indonesia Timur ke Republik Indonesia Serikat*, written by Anak Agung Gde Agung, managed to excite the scientific world and became part of the collection of college libraries abroad, and even Dutch newspapers used the book as a reference [1].

The problems faced by university presses, in general, include changes of leadership, management weaknesses, limited funds and equipment, manuscript issues, and other internal issues stemming from the lack of awareness of the institution itself concerning the importance of the university press [2, 3]. Another issue that makes university presses unable to compete with private publishers is the issue of sensitivity to market desires. In fact, other problems faced by the university press in Indonesia are more global and complex, especially in terms of the culture of writing itself. This was illustrated at the First Congress of the Indonesian Association of College Publishers at the Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, in September 2011.

In addition to the aforementioned various issues, the quality of human resources at university publishers has also become one of the important issues that have resulted in less well-developed publishers. This can be seen from the workings, quality, and appearance of the products produced. In terms of the design and layout of book covers, for example, college publications generally look stiff and unattractive. As a result, although a book may actually be a good one, no one wants to buy it because it looks unattractive [4].

In recent years, the policy adopted by the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia has been that every research activity undertaken at Indonesian universities should be voiced in at least one of four intellectual products in the form of scientific articles, applied technology, patents, and textbooks. This policy has deliberately been outlined more clearly since previously a funded research project was generally considered to be finished if the research report had been completed and neatly prepared for submission for administrative purposes [4].

Based on the aforementioned explanation, it is clear that the results of the study should have benefits for the public through publication. One of the real impacts caused by the lack of environmental demand for the publication of research results is the extreme scarcity of scholarly or college academic books based on the research experience of authors themselves [5, 6]. Similarly, the writing of scientific books based on the latest data and information unearthed from research activities in Indonesia is not so often done so a little bit too. Therefore, the tradition of writing scientific books at universities has not been entrenched and well established as an integral part of the intellectual activities of Indonesian university lecturers, who should be diligent in their research with a view to updating and improving the quality of their lectures [7].

In every scholarly publication, sometimes the role of the editor is forgotten, despite the fact that the role of the editor is important in bridging the interests of the author

with the reader [8]. Sometimes academic writers have rare and very important scientific knowledge but their delivery and writing of it in book form are not good enough. An editor can make scientific material enjoyed and read by the community at large. This article will discuss the important role of language editors at university presses in Indonesia who have not been widely known by the public.

## 2. Methods

The approach used in this research is qualitative with the subject of the research being institutions related to university presses in Indonesia and the actors involved in university presses such as university leaders, lecturers, leaders and university press staff, writers, editors, and students. Data sources included informants, events, and documents. The data collection techniques used include questionnaires, interviews, observation, and document analysis. The data analysis technique applied was descriptive analysis, namely an interactive model [9].

## 3. Results

The university press as an endorser of the implementation of Tri Dharma University should have that responsibility. The university press is expected to fly the flag of the college that shade it [1]. Its published books are expected to make scientific contributions in the international world. However, have Indonesia's university press publications made any international scientific contributions? No information has been obtained about this. However, according to Rifai, the contribution of Indonesian scientific books internationally is smaller than that of Indonesian scientific journals. The international contribution of Indonesian scientific journals annually is less than 0.012%. This figure is very small when compared with the population of Indonesia. Compare this with a small country like Singapore, whose contribution in terms of scientific journals is 0.179%, while that of the United States and Japan is above 20%. So, it is easy to see why the published books of the university presses in Indonesia have a very little impact globally [10]. This is exacerbated by the fact that the results of books published in Indonesia are still very little [11]. Indonesia, which has a population of about 220 million, only publishes 10,000 titles each year. The same number of 10,000 titles are published by Vietnam, but the population is only 26 million. And Malaysia, with its population of 80 million, manages to publish 15,000 titles a year. Of the 10,000 titles

only 8% are college textbooks and these are mostly reprints and translations of foreign textbooks [12].

A study closely related to the role of editors and university presses is the that of 'Peran Penyunting Buku Menuju Manajemen Redaksional Modern' [1]. In this study, the role played by editors in publishing management at university presses is discussed. Both the good and bad books that are published are the primary responsibility of the editor. Editing work is not only related to the contents of the book to be published; it is more complex than that, as illustrated by the results of this study. The work of the editor at a university press begins from the moment a manuscript is submitted to the publisher with the initial judgment of the manuscript. At the beginning of this work process, the editor has to coordinate with the precast, print, and even post-print. So, it is clear that an editor plays a very important role in publishing a book [13, 14].

The main aim of an editor is to have the book published free from mistakes. Therefore, editors serve three parties, that is, authors, publishers, and readers. An editor's tasks are related to: (1) readability and clarity, which are closely related to the process of designing/laying out the content page, commonly known as the layout and also the cover design; (2) compliance/consistency in using words/terms and punctuation; (3) correct grammar. This is generally understood as the main task of editors, that is, to apply good and correct Indonesian language rules in publications; (4) clarity of language style (spatial); (5) data and factual accuracy; (6) legality and decency; and (7) accuracy of production details [15]. Basically, the main task of the language editor at a university press is related to mechanical editing, identified by Einsohn [16] as the heart of editing that necessitates a script following the publishing style (editorial style or house style). One of the recipes that there is nothing mechanical in spite of doing mechanical editing first, what is needed is the sharpness of the eye. Second, a complete understanding of conventions is needed with regard to citations and bibliographies, such as the American Psychological Association (APA), the Chicago Manual of Style (CMS), the Modern Language Association (MLA), Vancouver, Harvard style, ABNT (Associação Brasileira de Normas Técnicas), CBE (Council of Biology Editors), Turabian style, the Language Agency, and others. Third, the decision is good because the editor is not a writer so do not be a companion writer to apply mechanical editing.

The aforementioned explanation illustrates that the role of the editor in a publication, especially at a university press, is very important. This is related to the publications produced by university presses that are academic products. Therefore, an editor must equip himself for the targets presented by Eneste [17], which include: mastering spelling; mastering grammar; having a language sensitivity; often reading

dictionaries; having broad insight; having precision, patience, and discipline; having sensitivity toward racism and pornography; having flexibility and communicative competence; having the ability to write; mastering certain fields; foreign language skills; and understanding the code of ethics of script editors.

## 4. Conclusion

The existence of university presses in Indonesia is still not visible in the national arena, let alone internationally. Nevertheless, university presses have made some improvements, both internally and externally. Actually, there have been efforts to further develop the role of university presses in Indonesia through the APPTI, but these are not yet maximal because this association has only been recently formed. One person that has an important role in publishing in colleges is the editor. Currently, the role of the editor is still underestimated because despite working behind the scenes, the editor has a major role in the publication of books at a university press. Therefore, the attention given to editors needs to be increased in order to support the quality of books published at university presses.

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