

From Research Findings to Contribution: Novelty Types and Strategies in Discussion Sections of International Journal Articles

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Abstract

Journal readers always look at research novelty when reading a research article; this information is addressed in the discussion section of the article. If they cannot find the novelty, they may not be interested in using or citing the research findings for their own writing. However, it is very challenging for novice authors and students to construct the novelty of their research argumentatively in their articles; thus, understanding how expert authors commonly construct new knowledge in their research articles is essential. Accordingly, this research aimed at analyzing author's strategy of constructing novelty and justifying or legitimizing the novelty of the research in the discussion section of research articles published in International reputable journals. Following Drischo and Machi (2016), this research was designed as qualitative research with a content analysis approach. The corpus consists of the discussion sections of 50 research articles from five reputable international journals. The results revealed that three strategies of constructing novelty are found in the datasets, namely invention, development, and refutation.

The authors of research articles tend to present the novelty of the research by proposing the development of the previous study, in terms of theory, context, and method. Regarding the strategy to justify the novelty, most of the data showed that presenting the previous research to support the novelty is commonly found, followed by quoting the experts. It is implied that supporting the justification of the novelty by referring to previous research or quoting the experts in the discussion sections of research articles is essential to the authors' efforts to convince the readers and support the claim that their research results contribute new knowledge in a certain academic discourse community. Quoting and citing previous studies do not merely diminish the novelty construction; rather, they provide a point of reference against which authors can articulate how their findings extend, refine, contextualize, or challenge existing knowledge. It is supposed that this result will donate an insight to academic writing discourse especially on the strategy of presenting the novelty of the research.

Keywords: *discussion section, research novelty, research articles, international journals*

INTRODUCTION

The introduction of innovative concepts, approaches, or viewpoints that considerably enhance a particular topic is known as research novelty, and innovation can be attained through the development of novel approaches, the presentation of new theoretical frameworks, or the provision of novel and distinctive interpretations of already-existing facts (Okeke, 2025). In research articles, while the research gap is commonly found in the introduction section as the authors' arguments about the importance of proposed research, research novelty is particularly observed in the discussion section as the authors claim about their research findings. In this section, the authors have to elaborate the results and support their claim by critically evaluating previous research (Hardiah et al., 2026), which may lead to presenting the novelty of the research.

Thus, research novelty is the identifiable originality of a study that contributes new knowledge through an original concept, perspective, methodology, empirical relationship, context, or interpretation that was not adequately established in previous research (Blakeslee, 1994). In other words, every study must present new knowledge or information, and this is what readers are looking for and if a study is

without a novelty, it may be considered as a repetition of a previous research and will be useless for readers who already have such knowledge.

Presenting novelty of the research in the discussion section of a research article becomes one of the most decisive evaluative criteria in academic journal publication. It is the answer of research gap that is proposed in the introduction section as the authors endeavor to convince the readers that the topic of the research is precious to be studied (Arianto., et al., 2023; Hidayat, 2022). Accordingly, discussion sections are the portion where authors interpret findings, position their results in relation to previous studies, and construct original contributions of their research (Esmaili, 2024 & Abdollahzadeh, 2019). Thus, providing the novelty of the research in discussion sections through effective argumentation enhances epistemic clarity, strengthens authorial credibility, and increases the likelihood of acceptance in high-impact journals.

Proposing new knowledge or contribution of the research needs specific strategies of argumentation, one of which is evaluating previous studies (Cheng & Unsworth, 2016 and Sadeghie, 2020) in order to make our claims accepted. Some research has proved that applying these strategies seems to be challenging for new or novice authors. This is because, novelty is not only to find an unexplored topic; authors must show what and why previous research findings are, why the differences are important and how authors can add readers' available knowledge about the research topic. Research on novice writers has identified that they have difficulties in establishing critical relationships with previous research, explaining claims adequately, and meeting the rhetorical expectations of research-article Discussion sections (Jin, 2021; Lubis, 2020). Arsyad (2020) reported that Indonesian authors, especially in the humanities and social sciences, frequently fail to explicitly relate their findings to prior research, a crucial argumentative move in knowledge construction. Similar findings were reported by Amnuai & Wannaruk (2013) in Thai research articles, who found that Writers from Thailand often make

broad statements regarding their research in relation to academic discussion groups, whereas writers from other countries seem to assess the implications of their research. Adnan (2009) further demonstrated that scholars in the humanities encounter greater difficulty in constructing persuasive arguments than those in the natural sciences.

Moreover, cultural norms that discourage direct critique (Arsyad & Adila, 2017) and prioritize the harmony of interaction tend to minimize overt engagement with opposing viewpoints (Irawati, 2022), resulting in cautious and weakly articulated argumentative positioning. From different points of view, Sadeghi and Alinasab (2020) and Julieta et al. (2023) have shown that non-native English writers tend to favor indirect, conflict-avoidant rhetorical styles, which often reduce argumentative clarity, particularly when published in lower-impact journals. Although this pattern may be partly related to sociocultural norms avoiding direct refutation, it should not be interpreted as direct evidence of cultural influence. It is highlighted that cultural expectations, disciplinary conventions, and authors' rhetorical choices may interact simultaneously in shaping the ways research novelty is constructed and communicated.

Unfortunately, previous research on research article discussions has primarily examined macro-rhetorical structures, particularly move-step patterns and genre organization (Morales, 2012; Mohammad & Moghadam, 2015), while documenting challenges related to rhetorical competence, cultural influence, and misalignment with international conventions. However, relatively few studies have investigated how authors strategically construct epistemic positioning and novelty at the micro-discursive level, especially through linguistic realizations of agreement, divergence, and justification. Studies on research novelty have generally conceptualized novelty as the degree to which a study introduces new knowledge, refines existing knowledge, or challenges established claims. Accordingly, Sukardi (2009) identified three types of novelty: 1) invention,

referring to entirely new findings; 2) development, referring to strengthening or refining previous findings; and 3) refutation, referring to the rejection of prior claims. Similarly, Tahir et al. (2023) proposed three categories, namely: 1) novel discoveries, 2) methodological or conceptual improvements, and 3) counter-claims to earlier research. Sandberg and Alvesson (2011) further classified novelty into four forms: 1) extension of existing theory, 2) revision of theoretical assumptions, 3) theoretical challenge, and 4) reframing of conceptual perspectives. In addition, Lingard (2015) emphasized that novelty may also emerge from practical problems, theoretical gaps, innovative methodologies, and new research contexts.

While these frameworks describe what constitutes novelty, they provide limited explanation of how novelty is constructed and negotiated in disciplinary discourse. It is assumed that fields of study, such as hard and soft sciences have different patterns in constructing novelty of the research which is aligned with the discipline's epistemological orientation toward cumulative knowledge building and collegiate interaction. However, research on how expert authors, especially in applied linguistics journals, construct and legitimize research novelty in the discussion section remains limited. This gap motivates the present study to investigate how experienced scholars articulate novelty and research contribution in their discussion sections.

The findings are expected to provide practical guidance for early-career researchers and postgraduate students in applied linguistics who seek to publish in internationally indexed journals. Accordingly, examining how applied linguistics authors strategically construct and justify novelty through linguistic argumentation would provide valuable insights for improving publication outcomes among early-career researchers and postgraduate students. In response to this fact, this study addresses the following research questions: *First*, how do authors construct research novelty in the discussion sections of applied linguistics research articles published in reputable international journals?. *Second*, how do authors justify and

legitimize research novelty through engagement with prior studies in the discussion sections of applied linguistics research articles?

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design employing content analysis, following the procedures outlined by Cheng & Unsworth (2016). The analysis begins with systematic reading of the corpus, followed by detailed textual analysis to examine how authors construct and justify arguments in the discussion sections of research articles. According to Malte & Tulud (2021), textual analysis encompasses a range of analytical approaches, including discourse analysis, narrative analysis, rhetorical analysis, register analysis, and genre analysis. In genre-oriented research, Zhou & Sloan (2009) conceptualize genre analysis as a critical examination of language and culture. Swales (2009) further argues that discourse organization can be systematically analyzed by identifying functional units of information, commonly referred to as Moves and Steps. A comprehensive understanding of genre therefore requires attention not only to textual organization but also to communicative purpose and social context, including writer–reader relationships, interactional histories, and cultural backgrounds.

Research Corpus

The corpus of this research comprises fifty research articles to examine how authors present and justify their research novelty in the discussion sections. The articles were selected from five reputable applied linguistics journals: (1) *Studies in English Language and Education* (SIELE; Indonesia), (2) *Mexican TESL Journal* (MexTesol; Mexico), (3) *Journal of Language Education* (JLE; Russia), (4) *Asia TEFL Journal* (ASIATEFL; South Korea), and (5) *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching* (SSLLT; Poland). The journals were selected from the SCImago Journal Ranking (www.scimagojr.com) and listed as Scopus-indexed journals, which are recognized as the world's leading and refereed journals (Ewijk, 2018; Sayfour,

2010), and have received significant attention from many international scholars (Chinchilla Rodríguez et al., 2015). Furthermore, authors of internationally reputable journals are considered expert and experienced authors as they have undergone rigorous reviewing, editing, and publishing processes (Boonyuen, 2017). All journals selected are open access, considering flexibility and accessibility.

Regarding the applied linguistics field of research, Lei and Liu (2019) found in a biometric study based on articles from 42 SSCI-indexed in Applied Linguistics journals between 2005 and 2016, applied linguistics as the breadth and changing research directions of the field. This field was chosen as the source of data since this interdisciplinary field investigates language-related problems and practices in real-world contexts, drawing on theories and methods from linguistics and other disciplines to understand, explain, and address those problems.

Data Analysis Procedures

To address the first research question, each article was examined holistically before focusing on the discussion section to identify rhetorical patterns and novelty types. The three-category model of constructing novelty in the discussion section proposed by Sukardi (2009) and Tahir et al. (2023), namely development, invention, and refutation, was applied. The invention category was identified when the authors claim that the research findings have not previously been reported in the literature. The development category was identified when the authors claim that their recent research results are extending, refining, contextualizing, or deepening existing knowledge rather than introducing entirely new phenomena. Then, the refutation category was identified when the authors claim that their research findings are different from or contradict the previous findings. These three novelty strategies can be considered a high-level taxonomy, although these may not be applicable to all disciplines and academic cultures.

To address the second research question, authorial statements were analyzed to determine how novelty was justified. The identified support strategies included:

(1) authorial self-justification, (2) citation of expert opinion, (3) citation of previous empirical findings, and (4) absence of explicit justification. A subset of the data was validated by an independent coder to legitimize the reliability of the data. The analytical results were tabulated and visualized to facilitate interpretation and reporting.

Reliability and Validation of Data Analysis

Data reliability and validation were conducted by involving an independent inter-coder who analyzed 20% of the data or 10 discussion sections of research articles. The result of the inter-coder analysis was calculated using Cohen's Kappa coefficient. In cases of discrepancy between the researcher and the independent coder, further discussion was conducted to reach consensus and improve coding consistency. The final calculation shows Kappa value of 0.83, which is categorized as excellent agreement. This means the data is reliable and valid.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The distribution of research novelty types in the discussion sections

Based on the analysis of 50 discussion sections drawn from five reputable international journals, all three types of research novelty proposed by Sukardi (2009) and Tahir et al. (2023), namely invention, development, and refutation, were identified in the data. Among these three categories, development emerged as the most dominant type, followed by refutation and invention. The overall distribution of novelty types is summarized in the following figure.

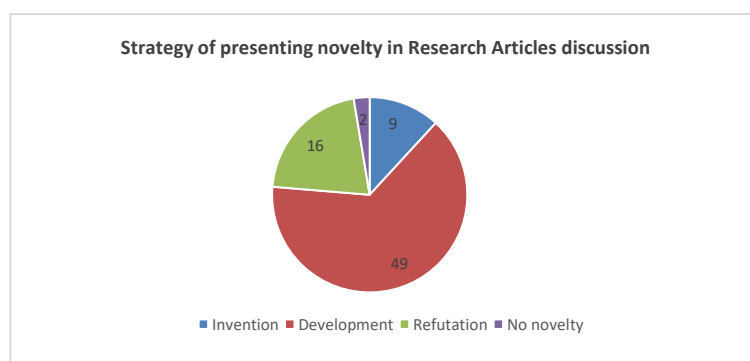


Figure 1. *Types of Research Novelty in the Discussion Sections*

As shown in Figure 1, the most common strategy to show the novelty of the research is development, followed by refutation and invention. Across fifty discussion sections analyzed, a total of 74 instances of novelty were identified, indicating that a single discussion section may contain more than one type of novelty, depending on the research question that needs to be answered. In addition, a small number of articles did not explicitly display any form of research novelty in their discussion sections. The following subsections illustrate how each type of novelty is realized in the data.

Invention

According to Sukardi (2009) and Tahir et al. (2023), Invention refers to research findings that have not previously been reported in the literature. Invention strategy is found to be the second most applied strategy by the authors to present the novelty of their research result. Examples of this type are presented in the following extract.

Extract 01

*These established, validated measures of explicit and implicit L2 knowledge **have not been used** in the MALL literature. The present study sought to address this gap by using a full range of established measures of L2 knowledge. (SSSLT_01)*

This excerpt was taken from an article published in the journal *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching journal*. The authors explicitly identify a research gap by stating that the instruments employed had not previously been used in MALL studies. This explicit gap-claiming strategy positions the finding as a genuinely new contribution and therefore exemplifies the invention type of novelty. The extract constructs novelty through a methodological gap-filling strategy. Novelty is realized by explicitly stating that *established and validated measures of explicit and implicit L2 knowledge have not previously been employed in the MALL literature*. This absence positions prior MALL studies as methodologically limited in scope. The novelty is

further strengthened by the authors' self-positioning, as the present study is framed as directly *addressing this gap* through the use of *a full range of established L2 knowledge measures*. Thus, novelty is constructed through methodological extension and increased comprehensiveness, which indicate an incremental yet substantive contribution to MALL research, without presenting a contradiction to earlier findings.

Extract 02

*Our findings represent **a first contribution** to connect a complex metalinguistic ability (i.e., definitional skills) to listening comprehension. (JLE_02)*

The phrase *a first contribution* " shows a direct and strong claim of invention. The statement places the recent research as a pioneer in proposing knowledge about the relationship between metalinguistic ability and listening comprehension, which has not been previously documented. Thus, the novelty presented is categorized as a strong novelty. Moreover, it is presented as establishing an empirical connection between two concepts that have not been examined together rather than introducing a new construct. The novelty presented is not a methodological innovation or gap-filling but a conceptual highlight and relational progression.

Development

In constructing the novelty, development is defined as the authors' strategy in proposing their recent research result as extending, refining, contextualizing, or deepening existing knowledge rather than introducing entirely new phenomena. From the dataset, it is observed that in a single discussion section, authors may employ multiple developmental strategies depending on the research questions and gaps identified in the introduction. The following are examples of development strategies for presenting research novelty from the dataset.

Extract 03

*The present study **contributes to the expanding** field of computer-assisted pronunciation training (CAPT). (JLE_10)*

The statement above clearly shows that the research contributes to the ongoing development of the CAPT field rather than proposing fundamentally new knowledge. The authors provide novelty in terms of strengthening and extending existing academic understanding. The novelty in this extract is constructed in an implicit and low-intensity manner, where the authors position their work as a contribution to an already established and growing research area rather than as a response to a clearly defined research gap.

Accordingly, the use of the evaluative verb *contributes* signals a cumulative and non-competitive stance, while the phrase *expanding field* frames CAPT as an active domain that welcomes further studies without implying limitations or shortcomings in prior research. Moreover, the absence of contrastive markers, gap indicators, or references to methodological or theoretical insufficiency indicates that novelty is not constructed through comparison with previous studies. As a result, the statement functions primarily as a positioning move that emphasizes relevance and participation in the field, reflecting a weak and nonspecific form of novelty presentation.

Extract 04

*The current study's findings **have added to our understanding** of test anxiety in the context of the English proficiency test. (MexTesol_02)*

The statement that *the current study have added to our understanding* shows the author's strategy in realizing the novelty through contextual expansion or general additive contribution rather than an explicit gap-bridging claim. Moreover, the authors present their work as extending existing knowledge without specifying how prior understanding was limited or incomplete. It seems that the authors try to emphasize knowledge accumulation while avoiding competitive positioning against previous studies. Moreover, the statement does not contrast with earlier research contexts, which consequently serves more as a relevance-justifying

statement than a strong, clearly articulated originality claim. Thus, the novelty of the research is not presented explicitly.

Refutation

The third strategy of presenting novelty is refutation, where the authors position their findings as contradictory to, or inconsistent with previous studies. Commonly, this strategy shows an explicit authorial stance by providing a strong justification about the novelty of the research. Examples of this strategy could be seen below;

Extract 05

***This finding contradicts several studies** that suggest the Ideal L2 Self positively influences online L2 learning experiences. (ASIATEFL_01)*

The statement above explicitly situates the recent result against the established research and directly signals a counter-positioning stance, indicating that the present findings challenge earlier claims. This statement constructs novelty through a contrastive and adversative positioning strategy, thereby signaling empirical inconsistency within the literature. The use of the verb *contradicts* functions as a strong engagement resource that foregrounds divergence rather than accumulation, positioning the study as challenging a dominant or widely accepted claim in the relevant research discourse. In this way, novelty is achieved by exposing a discrepancy between prior findings and the present result, framing the contribution as a corrective or re-evaluative insight rather than a merely additive extension of existing knowledge.

Extract 06

*Nevertheless, **this was inconsistent with** the findings of Chung and Mathew (2020). (JLE_07)*

The word *inconsistent* similarly signals contradiction from previous findings and therefore functions as a linguistic indicator of refutation-based novelty. This statement constructs novelty through an inconsistency-based contrast with prior research. The contrast marker *nevertheless* signals a transformation from predicted arrangement to difference, preparing the reader for a non-confirmatory result. By stating that the finding was *inconsistent with the findings of Chung and Mathew*, the authors pointed their result in confrontation with established previous research, thereby highlighting empirical variation within the field. However, because the nature of the inconsistency is not specified, the novelty is framed implicitly rather than analytically. As a result, the sentence functions as a moderate-strength novelty claim that signals divergence from previous findings but relies on close discourse to explicate the precise evidence of the inconsistency.

The above findings indicate that development is the dominant type of novelty in applied linguistics discussion sections, followed by refutation and invention. The dominant occurrences of the development strategy might be related to the distinction between soft and hard science, which each has its own characteristics. Accordingly, Becher & Trowler (2001) and Biglan (1973) claimed that knowledge development in applied linguistics typically proceeds through theoretical improvement, contextual dissemination, and methodological diversification, reflecting the epistemological characteristics of “soft” disciplinary fields.

Hard sciences are commonly characterized through paradigm-replacing revolutions (Kuhn, 1962). It is implied that authors in the applied linguistics field tend to show novelty in a weak mode by using expressions such as contribute, expand, and add, which show less coercive expressions of showing novelty of the research. This result might be because of the colloquial characteristics of social or soft science, where maintaining the relationship is the priority. Applied linguistics, as a soft-science field, tends to deploy greater engagement resources and

interactive metadiscourse to construct relationships with readers, which supports dialogic tension and critical debate (Hyland, 2019; Hyland, 2004).

The invention type of showing novelty is categorized as a strong mode since the authors show their authority directly by claiming that their recent research presents the first contribution in a particular academic discourse or by stating that the results of recent research have not been found in the previous study. This type of novelty is commonly found in hard science, especially in fields related to application such as engineering or agriculture.

Within such fields, knowledge production operates under stronger epistemic consensus, where research progresses cumulatively through puzzle-solving and technical elaboration (Kuhn, 2012; Ziman, 2000). As a result, claims of endeavor are frequently articulated as “first demonstrations,” “novel methods,” or empirically superior results to clearly outlined technical limitations. This contrasts with fields defined by greater epistemological plurality, where novelty is more often built through theoretical extension, contextualization, or interpretive improvement (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Hyland, 2004). It can be acknowledged that different fields of research use different strategies to present the contribution or novelty of the research. Moreover, a single article may contain multiple types of novelty due to the presence of multiple research questions and analytical focus. Nevertheless, some articles were found to lack explicit novelty claims, particularly in studies that emphasize descriptive reporting or procedural documentation rather than theoretical contribution.

Overall, these results imply that in teaching strategies to construct novelty, it should not be treated as a product of rhetorical manipulation but as a contribution grounded in evidence and positioned in relation to existing knowledge. Therefore, instruction in novelty construction should encourage accurate representation of previous research and discourage exaggerated or unsupported claims of originality. A credible academic contribution should be grounded in evidence,

accurately positioned in relation to previous research, and communicated with appropriate rhetorical caution.

The Ways Authors Justify the Claim of Research Novelty

The second results reveal the authors' strategy in justifying research novelty. Based on the analysis on fifty research articles, it showed four argumentative strategies used by authors to justify and legitimize claims of novelty, namely 1) supporting novelty through expert opinion, 2) supporting novelty through previous research findings, 3) supporting novelty through the authors' own interpretation, and 4) presenting novelty without explicit support. The occurrences of authors' strategies in justifying research novelty in the data is shown in the following table.

Table 1. *The occurrences of authors' strategies in justifying research novelty*

Justifying Research Novelty Strategy	Frequency n=50	Percentage (%)
Supporting Novelty through Expert Opinion or Idea	15	39,5%
Supporting Novelty Through Previous Research Findings	9	23,7%
Supporting Novelty Through the authors' own interpretation	9	23,7%
The Absence of Explicit Support	5	13,65%

Table 1 above shows that among four strategies, the most frequent strategy found in the data is supporting novelty through expert opinion, which occurred in almost 40 % of the data. The second most frequent strategy is supporting novelty by referring to previous research and presenting the authors' interpretation, which occurred in 23,7 % of the data. The less frequent strategy is supporting without explicit support, which only occurred in 13,65 %. It is also noted that there are data that did not present the novelty of the research at all. The realization of each strategy is presented as follows.

Supporting Novelty through Expert Opinion or Idea

This strategy involves citing authoritative scholars to strengthen the credibility and theoretical relevance of the novelty claim. The example from the data that shows this strategy is presented below.

Extract 07

*While previous studies have examined the effects of rhythmic activities—such as songs, gestures, and hand clapping—on pronunciation improvement (Baills et al., 2021; Gluhareva & Prieto, 2017; Zhang et al., 2023), **relatively few have investigated the specific impact of isolated rhythm. The present findings thus contribute** to the literature by demonstrating that rhythm alone—without melody or lyrics—can facilitate pronunciation improvement over a short period of practice. As for vowel length contrast, Japanese learners of English tend to categorize /ɪ/ and /i/ primarily based on duration rather than phonetic quality, which often results in an exaggerated contrast (Tsukada, 2009).*

The extract above demonstrates that the authors present the novelty of the research by filling the gap in previous research; thus, the recent research contributes to the literature on a certain topic. Furthermore, the authors cited a reference (Tsukada, 2009) who investigated rhythm in Japanese learners of English to strengthen their claims. By presenting the expert opinion or idea, the authors try to reinforce their claims about the contribution or novelty of the research. Thus, this strategy is categorized as supporting novelty through expert opinion or idea.

Supporting Novelty through Previous Research Findings

In this strategy, authors position their novelty claims in relation to earlier empirical studies related to their study. The example of this strategy can be observed from the following extract.

Extract 08

*While some studies suggest the Ought-to L2 Self can facilitate motivation for younger or college students (e.g., J. Kim, 2022; K. J. Kim, 2020; Lee & Lee, 2021), **this study finds that increased mental pressure** can lead to greater demotivation among adult online learners. **This finding aligns with some previous studies reporting that negative emotions, such as boredom and anxiety,***

significantly affect L2 demotivation (e.g., N. Kim, 2019; Solhi, 024).(ASIAFL_01)

In extract 08 above, the authors refer to the findings of previous studies to support their research findings as marked in the extract. There are two strategies found in the extract. First, the authors applied the counter-argument “while” which emphasized that the previous research findings are different from the recent research findings. Showing the different findings leads to proposing research contribution or novelty. The second strategy is presenting the similarities of previous findings with the recent research by applying the expression “ *This finding aligns with*”. By claiming the similarities, the authors try to enhance the idea that their recent research is acceptable in a certain discourse community. It is noted that the findings of previous related studies can be different from or similar to the findings of the present study. However, each way functions differently in supporting research contribution or novelty.

Supporting Novelty through the Authors’ Own Interpretation

In this strategy, authors provide internally generated explanations or logical reasoning to justify their novelty claims. The following extract shows how the author justifies their claim by presenting their own interpretation.

Extract 09

***This finding contradicts several studies** that suggest the Ideal L2 Self positively influences online L2 learning experiences (e.g., Lee & Lee, 2021; Lee & Lu, 2023; Sun & Mu, 2023). As previously discussed, adult online learners often possess a high level of the Ideal L2 Self, vaguely envisioning themselves as fluent English speakers. (ASIAFL_01)*

From the above extract, it is noticed that the authors first present the novelty of the research by refuting the previous study. The phrase *This finding contradicts several studies* explicitly shows the novelty of the previous research as well as the authors' position as challenging the previous study. Accordingly, the author tries to present the explanation and illustration that support the proposed claims. The expression “

as previously discussed” shows the authors' attempt to generate an explanation for why such claims or novelty is considerably accepted. Moreover, this strategy shows the authors' authority and comprehension about the topic being discussed without referring to or citing any sources.

The Absence of Explicit Support

The less frequent strategy in justifying research novelty is presenting novelty without explicit support or not presenting any supporting argument. The occurrences of this strategy can be seen in the following extract.

Extract 10

The results of this study have created a clearer idea of the perspective of the students, teachers, and experts regarding the factors that most influence the motivation of University students for EFL Learning. Hence, it is expected that this study may help all the stakeholders involved to make decisions that contribute to a more effective and motivating EFL teaching and learning Process (MexTesol _05)

Extract 10 above shows that the author first claims that their recent result has created a clearer idea, which is classified as contribution or novelty in certain discourse. However, this claim is not followed by any supporting argument. The author directly states the consequence of the research finding which is signed by the transition word ‘hence’. Instead of supporting the claims or presenting the arguments, the authors present the implication of the research findings. Thus, the authors did not support the claims regarding the contribution of the research or research novelty with any argumentative statement. In addition, it is also noted that there are some data that did not present the contribution or research novelty at all in their discussion section; accordingly, there are no arguments found to support the research novelty.

The results reveal that the authors of research articles in applied linguistics predominantly assert novelty through consistent explanation, reference to expert opinion, and alignment with previous research. This pattern underscores the importance of rhetorical positioning and evidential grounding in legitimizing

novelty claims and achieving disciplinary acceptance within applied linguistics scholarly discourse. By conferring authority and legitimization on the new findings, the authors try to provide a solution to controversial issues in a particular research community. Presenting logical explanations that support the new knowledge construction exhibits the authors' comprehensive understanding and confidence in a certain topic of the academic community. Moreover, it is also listed as the fifth rhetorical structure of discussion sections proposed by Peacock et al. (2002), which implies the importance of presenting logical explanations to support the proposed claim. It is implied that presenting the novelty of the research in the discussion section of research articles should be supported by providing further explanation.

Furthermore, supporting the claims by referring to expert opinion or aligning with previous research will then strengthen the authors' argument to propose a contribution and construct new knowledge from the recent research. This strategy not only demonstrates a deep engagement with prior research but also establishes the authors' scholarly authority within the discourse community. This rhetorical strategy allows them to highlight gaps or inconsistencies in the existing literature, thereby justifying the novelty and significance of their own findings. As Lim (2012) and Arsyad et al. (2023) argued, explicitly stating contradictions or inconsistencies helps frame the new study as a meaningful contribution rather than a repetition. Moreover, Mei (2007) found that the students who wrote a high-rated essay used certain strategies in showing contradiction in presenting evidence. It is implied that presenting the novelty of the research in the discussion section of research articles by showing the contradictory result will affect the quality of the research articles, which in turn increases the opportunity to be accepted in reputable journals.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine how research novelty is reconstructed in the discussion sections of applied linguistics articles published in reputable

international journals. The findings reveal that authors commonly construct novelty through developmental moves—by extending, refining, or contextualizing existing scholarship—while refutation and invention appear less conspicuously. This trend reflects the epistemological orientation of applied linguistics as a soft-science discipline, where knowledge typically progresses through cumulative theoretical improvement rather than paradigm-shifting claims (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Biglan, 1973). As a result, novelty is often expressed through measured contribution statements, positioning new findings as part of an ongoing disciplinary interaction rather than as disruptive discovery (Hyland, 2004 & 2019). However, the predominance of development instead of invention and refutation may not fully capture the diverse epistemological and methodological practices across applied linguistics sub-fields, since the three-category model provides a useful basis for classifying novelty claims.

The current research findings alone cannot generalize that developmental novelty establishes a particular disciplinary norm. Further comparison research comparing novelty construction across different fields of research and employing different methods is therefore needed to determine the extent to which this outline echoes disciplinary practice rather than a result of categorization.

Importantly, the study also shows that novelty claims are rarely presented in isolation. Authors consistently strengthen them through logical explanation, citation of established scholars, and alignment with prior research. These rhetorical strategies indicate that gaining disciplinary acceptance depends not only on stating a contribution but on carefully embedding it within a recognized knowledge-supporting structure. Overall, the findings highlight that novelty in applied linguistics is discussed rhetorically and shaped by the broader epistemic culture of the field. Since this study only discussed the applied linguistics research article, it is suggested for future research to analyze the construction of novelty from different fields of study such as engineering, agriculture, medicine, and other hard sciences.

Moreover, future research could also analyze the novelty construction strategy from the authors' background point of view, comparing native and non-native authors or expert and novice authors. The large number of corpus from various discipline will also improve the research on constructing the research novelty.

This study is not without limitations. First, the journal articles included in this study are only fifty articles taken from five different international journals indexed in Scopus, while there are many Scopus-indexed journals in Applied Linguistics available and can be easily accessed. This shows that the sample articles in the corpus if this study are not yet representative; therefore, future research on this topic should include more articles taken from more Scopus-indexed journals in the same field to make it more representative, and the findings will be more trustworthy. Second, this study only investigated novelty types addressed in the discussion section of the articles, while novelty types are related to the research gap types used by the authors in the introduction section of the articles. This study focused exclusively on novelty types constructed in the Discussion sections, which may not comprehensively capture the coherent process of novelty construction in a research article as a whole. It is noted that novelty construction is closely related to the identification of research gaps in the Introduction sections. Eventually, the logic of novelty construction depends not on the exclusion of rhetorical separation but on the strategic position of the two sections. The Introduction sets the expectations against which the contribution will be evaluated, while the Discussion offers the interpretive evidence through which those expectations are fulfilled, modified, or challenged. This arrangement enables readers to identify the article's contribution as a logical outcome of the research process rather than as an isolated or retrospectively emphasized claim. Therefore, further studies on the coherences of novelty construction in particular articles by analysing how the research gap in the introduction section and novelty in the discussion section are presented are expected to provide new insight into novelty construction in research articles.

Finally, this study does not investigate the linguistic characteristics used by the authors to address their research novelty. Linguistic features, such as word choice, sentence structure, grammar, and mechanics, play a vital role in effective communication by shaping the quality of text, setting apart different writing styles, and supporting reader understanding. These elements enable the evaluation of writing ability, emotional nuance, and language register, such as formal or casual tone, making them important for applications in education, artificial intelligence, and the study of language in social contexts. Therefore, a further study should also identify how authors linguistically address their research novelty in their article discussions.

AI Declaration

We declare that Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, such as Grammar, ChatGPT, and QuillBot, were used only as assistive instruments during the preparation of this manuscript. These tools did not generate, fabricate, or manipulate research data, analysis, interpretations, or references. All AI-generated outputs were carefully reviewed, verified, and edited by the authors, who take full responsibility for the content of the manuscript. This use of AI complies with the Publication Ethics and Malpractice Statement of the *Journal of Pragmatics Research*.

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