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through sample essays from the two languages and provide conditions for students to observe the actualization of rhetorical features in the essays.

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paragraph while in less than one third of the Persian deductive essays the thesis statement is in the first paragraph.

The introduction of the Persian essays is much longer than that of the English essays. Also the sentences in the introductory section of the Persian essays are at a higher level of abstractness than those of the English essays. Thus the introduction of the Persian essays are much more complex than the introduction of the English essays.

Although Iranian students often do not have an explicit knowledge of their L1 rhetorical organization, they have gained an intuitive and subconscious knowledge of it during the years they studied in schools. Unfortunately this consolidated knowledge of L1 rhetorical organization is transferred in L2 writing settings. The impact of L1 rhetorical organization is too strong to be removed just by exposing the students to L2 writing samples.

Teaching L2 composition without delineating the L1 rhetorical patterns and explaining the differences and similarities to the students will not be very effective. At least, one of the objectives of teaching is to provide a kind of intervention in learning process which both facilitates and increases the process of learning. Contrastive rhetoric can provide such a means for facilitating the teaching and learning of the English composition. Contrastive rhetoric seems to be a good approach for raising the students' consciousness about the similarities and differences of the rhetorical patterns of L1 and L2 composition.

To make the students aware of the rhetorical organization of the English and Persian composition, the teacher can illustrate the differences

sentences in the introduction of the Persian essays are more abstract than those of the English essays.

Table 8. Group Statistics

The degree of generality and specificity of T-units before the thesis statements in deductive paragraphs in which thesis statements occurred in paragraphs 1 and 2

language	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Persian	35	2.8089	.86128
English	58	4.6305	1.54507

Nevertheless, a t-test was performed for verifications of the significance of the difference of the two sample means. The observed t-value with a degree of freedom of 91 at 0.01 level of significance was 6.39 while the critical t-value for a degree of freedom of 91 at 0.01 level of significance was 2.66. It was again confirmed that the difference between the two means is significant. Therefore, it was proved that the introduction of the Persian essays is much more abstract than that of the English essays.

Conclusion and implication for teaching

The answers to the research question showed that the absolute majority of the English essays are deductive--that is the thesis statement is placed in the introductory section of the essays--but one third of the Persian essays are inductive. There is a significant difference between the rhetorical pattern of the two languages even in deductive essays; in most English deductive essays the thesis statement is placed in the first

Table 7. Group statistics: Average number of T-unit before thesis statement

	Language	Number of deductive essays	Mean	Std. Deviation
Number of T-Units before thesis statements	Persian	59	7.2881	5.81926
	English	64	3.3281	2.96034

To see if the difference between the two means is significant we computed a t-test. We obtained t-value 4.81 at 0.01 level of significance with a degree of freedom of 121. By referring to the t-table, we realized that the critical t-value at 0.01 level of significance is 2.57, thus our obtained t-value is much higher than the critical t-value and we can safely reject the null hypothesis. Therefore it was proved that there is a significant difference between the lengths of the introduction of the English and Persian deductive essays.

To answer the last question of the research the degree of abstractness of the T-units in the introduction of the essays of the two languages were rated. All T-units before the thesis statement of the deductive essays were rated for the degree of generality and specificity. The T-units were rated based on an eight point scale in which the highest level of generality was put into degree one, and the lowest level of specificity was put into degree eight. After all T-units before the thesis statements of the deductive English essays were rated for the degree of generality and specificity, the average score for each of them was calculated. The average score for the degree of generality and specificity of the English essays was 4.63 and that of the Persian essays was 2.80. Thus the assessment showed that the

Since the Chi-square value at the 0.01 significance level in the Chi-square table is 13.27, our obtained Chi-square value proved to be much larger than the value in the table. Thus, it was confirmed that the difference between the placement of thesis statement in the paragraphs of the essays of the two languages is statistically significant; this verifies that there is a major difference between the rhetorical conventions of the two languages.

The third question of the research was related to comparison of the length of the introduction of the essays of the two languages. In the exact sense of the word, it was attempted to measure the number of T-units before the thesis statement in the deductive English and Persian essays. Thus, all T-units before the thesis statements in the deductive essays were counted and the mean for the number of T-units before the thesis statements were calculated; for the English essays the average number was 2.27 T-units and for the Persian essays the average number was 6.62 T-units. Therefore, it was proved that the introduction of the Persian deductive essays is much longer than that of the English deductive essays.

To measure the length of the motivators in the essays of the two languages, we counted all T-units before the thesis statements of the deductive essays and calculated the mean for the number of T-units before the thesis statements; for the Persian essays the average number was 7.28 T-units and for the English essays the average number was 3.32 T-units. That is the introductory parts of the Persian essays contained more than two times as many T-units as those of the English essays.

5 & more	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 6. Cross tabs-The placement of thesis statement in paragraph Language cross tabulation

The placement of thesis statement in paragraph			language		Total
			Persian	English	
Thesis statement in par2	None	Count	3	0	3
		% within language	3.0%	.0%	1.5%
	1	Count	23	79	102
		% within language	23.0%	79.0%	51.0%
	2	Count	20	13	33
		% within language	20.0%	13.0%	16.5%
	3	Count	11	4	15
		% within language	11.0%	4.0%	7.5%
	4	Count	11	2	13
		% within language	11.0%	2.0%	6.5%
	5 & more	Count	32	2	34
		% within language	32.0%	2.0%	17.0%
Total		Count	100	100	200
		% within language	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

However, to see if the difference is significant or not, the results of Table 4.8 were translated into Chi-square: the obtained Chi- square value was: chi-square=71.19, d f =5, prob. = 0.01

Table 3. Frequency table (Persian essays)

Paragraph number		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	None	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
	1	23	23.0	23.0	26.0
	2	20	20.0	20.0	46.0
	3	11	11.0	11.0	57.0
	4	11	11.0	11.0	68.0
	5 & more	32	32.0	32.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 4. Frequency table (English essays)
The placement of the thesis statement in paragraph

Paragraph number		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1.00	79	79.0	79.0	79.0
	2.00	13	13.0	13.0	92.0
	3.00	4	4.0	4.0	96.0
Valid	4.00	2	2.0	2.0	98.0
	5.00	1	1.0	1.0	99.0
	7.00	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 5. Frequency table (English essays)
The placement of the thesis statement in paragraph

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	79	79.0	79.0	79.0
	2	13	13.0	13.0	92.0
	3	4	4.0	4.0	96.0
	4	2	2.0	2.0	98.0

As for the answer to the second question of the research, the result of the analysis showed that about one third of the Persian essays, 28 percent, were inductive, but only 2 percent of English essays were inductive. On the other hand, while 72 percent of the Persian essays were deductive, 98 percent of the English essays were deductive. In other words, the absolute majority of the English essays are deductive.

Table 2.   The placement of the thesis statement in paragraph

Paragraph No.		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	23	23.0	23.7	23.7
	2.00	20	20.0	20.6	44.3
	3.00	11	11.0	11.3	55.7
	4.00	11	11.0	11.3	67.0
	5.00	5	5.0	5.2	72.2
	6.00	9	9.0	9.3	81.4
	7.00	3	3.0	3.1	84.5
	8.00	6	6.0	6.2	90.7
	9.00	3	3.0	3.1	93.8
	11.00	1	1.0	1.0	94.8
	12.00	1	1.0	1.0	95.9
	13.00	1	1.0	1.0	96.9
	16.00	3	3.0	3.1	100.0
	Total	97	97.0	100.0	
Missing	.00	3	3.0		
Total		100	100.0		

first paragraph contained the thesis statement. This evidence shows the high degree of linearity in the English rhetorical organization.

Moreover, distribution of thesis statement in the deductive essays of the two languages showed great difference. In 79 percent of the English essays thesis statement occurred in the first paragraph, but only in 20 percent of the Persian essays thesis statement occurred in the first paragraph. In 92 percent of the English essays thesis statement is placed in the first and second paragraphs while only in 40 percent of the Persian essays thesis statement is placed in the first and second paragraphs.

Table 1. Deductive/Inductive: Language cross tabulation

			language		Total
			Persian	English	
Deductive/ Inductive	Deductive	Count	69	98	167
		% within language	69.0%	98.0%	83.5%
	Inductive	Count	31	2	33
		% within language	31.0%	2.0%	16.5%
Total		Count	100	100	200
		% within language	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The results of the data in Table 1 were translated into Chi-square. The statistically significant result (Chi-square = 30.25, d f =1, prob. = .01) confirmed that there was difference between the English and Persian essays regarding deductivity and inductivity.

At the initial stage of the sample collection 1000 English essays and 1000 Persian essays were selected from the above-mentioned journals. Then out of these essays, 200 essays were randomly collected, 100 English essays and 100 Persian essays.

Results and discussions

As a descriptive research of the rhetorical organization of the American English and Persian essays, this study was designed to analyze and contrast the rhetorical organization of the essays of the two languages from samples of expository essays about social and educational issues in representative journals of the two languages.

After tabulation had been completed, the raw data were converted into statistical data. It was necessary to manipulate the raw data into several different statistical figures using percentage and means to compare different characteristics of the English and Persian essays.

There was a significant difference between the English and Persian essays in the placement of thesis statement. As to the answer to the first question of this research, it was found that in 28 percent of the Persian essays the thesis statement was placed in the conclusion section, while only in 2 percent of the English essays the thesis statement was put in the conclusion section.

There was difference even between the deductive essays of the two languages. In 33 percent of the English deductive essays, the first sentence of the first paragraph contained the thesis statement whereas only in 6 percent of the Persian deductive essays the first sentence of the

statement contains two main components. The first component refers to the subject of the essay. The second component refers to the way the writer of the essay has limited the essay. Thus a thesis statement is a made up of a subject plus a limiting statement about it. The thesis statement is general enough to contain the ideas of topic sentences of the supporting paragraphs of the essay.

Sample

The sample for this study consisted of the contemporary expository essays. They were taken from the American and Persian journals. Both the English and Persian essays were randomly selected from published essays in a five-year period, between April,1998 and April,2003. The English sample essays were taken from the following journals: *Us Today, Saturday Evening Post, Newbytes News Networks Black issues in Higher Education, Humanities, Christian Century, Horizons, American Enterprise, Home Magazine, and Blackwood Home Magazine*. The Persian sample essays were selected from the following journals: *Hamshahri, Jam-e-Jam, Iran, Aeeneh zendegi, Sooreh, Mardom Salari, Goona Goon, khanevadeh, Abadi and Zaer*

However, as far as the similarity of content and length of the English and Persian sample articles is concerned, out of the above-mentioned journals, *US Today* was the most appropriate source for choice of the English sample articles and *Hamshahri* for the Persian sample essays. That is why a relatively higher number of the sample essays were taken from these two journals.

2. Is there any statistically significant difference between the American English and Persian essays in terms of deductivity and inductivity?
3. Is there any statistically significant difference in the length of introductions of the essays of the two languages?
4. Is there any statistically significant difference between the introduction of the essays of the two languages in terms of generality and specificity of sentence?

Methodology

In this research, Kaplan's (1972) discourse block and Kellogg Hunt's (1966) T-unit (minimal terminal unit) were adopted for quantitative measurement. The discourse block gave us a criterion to divide each essay into paragraphs and compare the placement of thesis statements in the essays of the two languages. In this study a paragraph, which is distinguished through indentation, is assumed as a discourse block.

The T-unit is one main clause plus whatever subordinate clauses happen to be attached or embedded with in it (Hunt 1966). It is the shortest grammatically allowable unit which a sentence can be reduced to. Hence, the T-unit is more exact than the sentence for quantitative measurement.

Finding thesis statement

The thesis statement is the main idea of the whole essay. It is the most general idea which the entire essay will support. Actually thesis

So far a number of contrastive studies have been conducted between English and different Eastern languages such as Japanese (Hinds 1983, 1987; 1990), Chinese (Mohan and Lo 1985; Matalene 1985) Thai (Indrasatra 1988), Korean (Eggington 1987), Hindi (katchru 1983; 1988), Arabic (Hatim 1991) and Vietnamese (Sotor 1988).

Very few researches have been conducted on the contrastive rhetoric of the English and Persian composition. Using Becker's (1965) tagmemic model for the analysis of the paragraphs, Dehghanpisheh (1971) made a contrastive analysis of the rhetoric of the English and Persian paragraphs for pedagogical purposes. Also, Maftoon (1972) made a contrastive study of the rhetorical organization of the American English and Persian expository paragraphs. He exploited Christensen (1965) and Becker's rhetorical models for analysis of the English and Persian paragraphs. However, these researchers did not extend their studies beyond the paragraph.

The purpose of this study is to conduct a quantitative research of the contrastive rhetoric of the introductory part of the American English and Persian expository essays. It also attempts to study the placement of thesis statement in the essays of the two languages since it is the most important issue in the comparison of the essays; it gives us a clear picture of the development of ideas in the written discourse of the two languages.

Research questions

1. Is there any statistically significant difference between the American English and Persian essays in placement of thesis statement?

Contrastive rhetoric: a brief overview

Contrastive rhetoric hypothesis was put forward first by Kaplan in 1966.He suggested that people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds organize discourse differently, as a reflection of their native language and culture. To account for ESL students' errors in composition, he claimed that a sentence-based analysis is not sufficient and argued for a complete text-based analysis. He examined more than 600 international students' compositions, on the basis of which he assumed that the students' mother tongues interfere with their second language writing.

Later, Kaplan (1972, 1987) revised his deterministic hypothesis about the effect of culture on language use and offered a weaker version. The revision suggests that all the different rhetorical ways of thinking may be possible in any written language, but that one cultural thought pattern is dominant due to social, cultural, and linguistic constraints.

From the beginning of the 1970s until the mid-1980s--during the period of dominance of the process approach in teaching composition--the rate of contrastive rhetoric researches declined. However, since the mid-1980s, due to the development of text linguistics, discourse analysis, and sociolinguistics, contrastive rhetoric received renewed attention. Another factor, which contributed to the new attention to contrastive rhetoric, was that cultural diversity programs gained prestigious status in the United States (Connor 1996). These changes resulted in a paradigm shift in which the scope of the study of contrastive rhetoric was broadened to cognitive and sociocultural variables across cultures (*Ibid*).

Keywords: Contrastive, Rhetoric, Thesis Statement, Expository, deductive, Inductive, Specificity.

Introduction

One of the most serious problems of Iranian English major students is writing. Although these students pass several courses in English composition, they often fail to master this skill as they are expected to. Majority of the students do not show enough interest in writing; they seem to have developed a kind of phobia towards writing.

Most Iranian English composition teachers expose students to English composition samples and give explanations about the rhetorical characteristics of English, but they remain indifferent to the ideas, schemata, and cultural values which the students acquired through their L1 educational experience. The rhetorical organization of first language will be subconsciously transferred while writing a composition in English.

Rhetorical pattern of every language has an established culturally embedded form although many native speakers of that language may not be consciously aware of it. Discovering this intuitive knowledge of the rhetorical pattern of a language and making it explicit is by itself an authentic scientific investigation, which can bring about a lot of pedagogical implications for teaching writing to both first and second/foreign language learners. That is why interference of L1 writing conventions in L2 writing has been one of the foci in contrastive rhetoric researches.

Contrastive Rhetoric: A study of Introduction and Thesis Statement in the American English and Persian Expository Essays

Mohammad Taghi Hassani[*]

Abstract

Iranian students often face serious problems in learning to write English composition. Out of the different factors affecting the students' concepts, schemata and strategies in writing English composition, the influence of L1 rhetorical organization in L2 composition is an important issue which has been neglected in researches and teaching methodologies for Iranian English language learners. This article made a contrastive study of the rhetorical organization of the introductory part of the American English and Persian expository essays. Using T-unit and discourse bloc as the method for quantitative analysis, the research studied sample essays from the journals of the two languages. The result of the analysis showed that there is a major difference between the introduction of the essays of the two languages in length of the introductions, placement of the thesis statement and generality and specificity of sentences. As for the pedagogical implication, the study suggests that comparing the rhetorical organization of the compositions of the two languages and raising Iranian English language learner's awareness of these differences can be effective in improving Iranian English language learners' composition.

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