

PAPER PRESENTERS,

1ST ICIC CONFERENCE ON WRITTEN DISCOURSE AND CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC, JULY 31, 2004

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**PLENARY ABSTRACTS FOR THE 1st ICIC CONFERENCE ON WRITTEN DISCOURSE AND
CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC
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CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC: TOWARD A FIELD OF INQUIRY

Paul Matsuda
University of New Hampshire

Since it was first proposed in 1966, contrastive rhetoric has been one of the most contested notions in applied linguistics. Although there is a growing number of studies focusing on this topic, contrastive rhetoric researchers have never been able to develop a coherent research agenda independent of immediate pedagogical concerns. In this paper, I will argue that contrastive rhetoric needs to become a field of its own in order to develop a useful body of knowledge about discourse practices in various linguistic, cultural, and educational contexts, as well as about how those discourse practices interact with one another. Specifically, I will point out the problem of the individualistic approach to contrastive rhetoric research that is situated in disparate sites of practices and argue the need for collective and collaborative efforts that contribute to a shared goal. I will also discuss the need for a disciplinary infrastructure that will enable researchers to share and critique research findings while engaging in sustained conversations about various theoretical and methodological issues.

CULTURAL RACISM AND CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC

Dwight Atkinson
Temple University Japan

In this presentation I closely examine recent claims by critical scholars that contrastive rhetoric (CR) is a culturally racist practice. After first defining three major concepts – Orientalism, essentialism, and racism – I proceed to examine the main works in which CR has been claimed to be culturally racist, focusing specifically on the argumentation and evidence used to support this claim. On the basis of this examination, I conclude that the charge is questionable, giving detailed arguments and reasons for my conclusion. I end by calling for greater caution, circumspection, and, above all else, more careful scholarship in using powerful terms like "racism." I also call for revisions in the conceptualization and practice of CR.

CONTRASTIVE, COMPARATIVE, OR INTERCULTURAL RHETORIC? WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Ulla Connor
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

In this presentation, I will discuss the use of the terms *contrastive*, *comparative*, and *intercultural* in writing research. The connotations and implications will be explained in terms of published work. I will argue for replacing contrastive rhetoric with intercultural rhetoric to more accurately describe writing studies in L2 research. Intercultural rhetoric connotes dynamic interaction within and between cultures. Its methods allow for the analysis of spoken as well as written language in explaining the production and comprehension of texts.

**PAPER ABSTRACTS FOR THE 1st ICIC CONFERENCE ON WRITTEN DISCOURSE AND
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METADISOURSE ACROSS THREE ENGLISHES: AMERICAN, BRITISH, AND ADVANCED-LEARNER ENGLISH

Annelie Ädel
Göteborg University

This talk discusses results from a study (Ädel 2003) of three different corpora of argumentative texts by university students. We look at three varieties of one language – English – using two corpora of native-speaker writing, British and American, and one corpus of advanced-learner writing. The latter is the Swedish component of the *International Corpus of Learner English* (Granger 1996). The linguistic phenomenon studied is metadiscourse, which is the writer's explicit commentary on his or her own ongoing text (Mauranen 1993, Crismore 1989). Metadiscourse expressions guide the reader through the text (*I will argue that...; to conclude; in this essay*) and are used by writers to create a relationship with their imagined readers (*you will probably think that...; Correct me if I'm wrong, but...*). The results of the study show considerable overuse of metadiscourse by the learners, whose frequencies are double those of the American writers, which, in turn, are greater than those of the British writers. Along a scale of writer/reader-orientation, the learner texts are found at one extreme, the British texts at the other, and the American texts in the middle. Several factors are identified as potentially accounting for the differences found across the corpora, including cultural conventions, varying degrees of register awareness, and general learner strategies. Important questions raised by the study will be discussed, such as, what are the implications for our conception of 'the native-speaker norm', considering that American and British uses of language are quite different?

PLAGIARISM IN A CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC CONTEXT: HOW IS IT EVOLVING

Joel Bloch
The Ohio State University

The controversy over contrastive rhetoric (CR) has continued for almost 40 years (Casanave, 2004; Connor, 2004; Leki, 1997). Nevertheless, its importance in the teaching and research of L2 composition has remained high. No issue has been more controversial than plagiarism. Plagiarism has long been examined in a contrastive rhetoric context as a product of cultural differences. In response to the criticism made by Leki (1997) that CR research ignores social, political, and historical factors, it can be argued that plagiarism, in fact, cannot be studied outside these contexts. This paper examines plagiarism in a CR framework. It examines the historical development of our idea of plagiarism and its relationship to the parallel development of our attitudes towards intellectual property, which, while not the same, share a common ancestry. In doing so, we can refute the argument that plagiarism is a result of a universal morality and see how not only it developed in response to changes in political and economic conditions, but also how it has continued to evolve as these factors change. Second, it examines how current attitudes towards plagiarism and intellectual property in general are evolving in response to changes in how composition is taught and what are the implications of this for understanding plagiarism in a cross-cultural context (e.g. Howard, 1999). In the conclusion, I discuss the implications of the study of plagiarism for the more general study of CR and the resulting implications of such research for teaching students in L2 composition classes about the issues regarding plagiarism.

INTEGRATION OF GOOD MANNER EDUCATION AND ENGLISH EDUCATION: AN EFL CONTEXT

Grace Chin-Wen Chien
Chung-Hu Elementary School

Developing good character traits among children is vital in today's society. Good character education should be infused into the climate and daily routine of schools. Character education has some positive influence. Misbehavior occurred less frequently and the classroom was a calmer place. In addition, students began to hold one another and themselves to higher standards (Singh, 2001). This paper describes the development of English and Good Manner Education Scheme for students in a rural elementary school in Taiwan. The success of promoting English and a Good Manner Education Scheme involves all members of the school faculty. Five suggestions are provided to make the implementation of the English and Good Manner Education Scheme more effective.

CONTRASTING VISUAL RHETORIC: EXAMINING VISUAL *TOPOI* IN GREEK AND AMERICAN TEXTS

M. Todd Harper
Kennesaw State University

Since its inception, Contrastive Rhetoric has sought to broaden its understanding of texts through a wider range of rhetorical analysis (Martin, 1992; Connor, 1996; Purves, 1988). For the most part, this has meant broadening the rhetorical analysis of texts from argumentative to persuasive analysis, from an analysis that solely considers logical development to one that takes *pathos* and *ethos* into account as well (Connor and Lauer, 1988). In this proposal, I seek to expand the breadth of Contrastive Rhetoric through an examination of visual rhetoric. Specifically, I will contrast visual texts from Greece and America, noting similarities and differences in how each makes logical, pathetic, and ethical appeals. I will pay particular attention to how each relies on different visual *topoi* that are unique and specific to that culture. In order for most visual texts to be successful, the audience must understand the visual *topoi*. For example, Mel Gibson could successfully produce a movie depicting Christ's final hours with Aramaic and Latin dialogue and English subtitles because most of his audience (largely fundamentalist and evangelical Christians) already knew the "story of the Passion." Similarly, the more visual the text, the more likely it relies upon an already understood set of cultural *topoi*.

DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDINGS OF COHERENCE IN ENGLISH PARAGRAPH WRITING

Hui-Chen (Jane) Hsu
Taipei Municipal Teachers College

Coherence is one issue that has been identified as a central element to effective English paragraph writing, however, this concept still remains puzzling to some EFL learners. Thus, the aim of this study is to take a close look at Chinese college students' concepts of "coherence" in English paragraph writing. Sixty-eight non-English major students, studying at Taipei Municipal Teachers College, Taiwan, were asked to state their opinions on a coherence judgment task. The results showed that 32 percent of the participants selected the unconventional English paragraph as being the more coherent one. After analyzing their concepts about coherence, it was found that they had placed greater emphasis on concise and modified language; to them this is what created the sense of flow. On the other hand, the characteristics typically credited with maintaining coherence, such as "transitional words" or the "repetition of key words," were seldom mentioned, or their importance was downplayed. Furthermore, in the interviews, we also explored whether these results were associated with traditional Chinese rhetoric norms. Finally, as a result of this study, we suggest that in EFL classroom practices coherence judgment tasks could be used as an initial step to improving the understanding of the student's underlying concepts toward coherence. This, in turn, would help the instructor give necessary help to students in English writing classes.

ARGUMENTATIVE STRUCTURES OF LETTERS WRITTEN BY NATIVE SPEAKERS OF CHINESE AND AMERICAN ADOLESCENT STUDENTS: A STUDY IN CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC

Jack Jinghui Liu
Purdue University

The present study investigated the argumentative structures of students' English writing written by Chinese EFL learners and American native speakers, focusing on contrastive rhetoric. The study examined the argumentative structures of letters composed in response to the same question by middle school students of English as Foreign Language (EFL) in China and high school students in the United States. Twenty high school students in Beijing and Shanghai in China were paired with 46 middle school students in Indiana in the United States. A prompt concerning a dating question from among adolescent students was chosen by the researcher and emailed to the two groups at the same time, who were then asked to write a response letter. A comparative study method was used to analyze the argumentative structures manifested in the responses of the students to the dating issue. The findings indicated that the different degrees in the argumentative structures related to four argumentative structures: 1) General-to-Specific (GS), 2) General-in-Middle (GM), 3) Specific-to-Specific (SS), 4) Specific-to-General (SG) of the letters written by native speakers of Chinese and American adolescent students. The findings are further discussed in terms of implication for contrastive rhetoric.

DIFFERENT CULTURES – DIFFERENT DISCOURSES? HOW DOES THE USE OF SPECIFIC CONVENTIONAL FEATURES OF SALES LETTERS REFLECT DIFFERENT CULTURAL AND RHETORICAL PATTERNS FOR BUSINESS LETTERS WRITTEN BY NATIVE ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN SPEAKERS?

Maria Loukianenko
Iowa State University

The current theoretical research and practice of intercultural communication necessitate efforts of professional communication and contrastive rhetoric studies to find ways to help students move beyond the recipes for “successful communication” and become active “producers” of meaning, who can critically reflect on intercultural communication and decide by themselves what rhetorical patterns they would choose for communicating with foreign partners. To be able to define these different rhetorical patterns across cultures, researchers need to draw from an analysis of real-life data, e.g. business correspondence. The present study builds upon the thesis research that I completed with the data of business sales letters written by native English and Russian speakers. In my research, I use cultural dimensions offered by G. Hofstede (1984, 1991, 1996, 2001), such as power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and individualism vs. collectivism, to develop a framework for contrastive analysis of the letters written by American and Russian businesspeople in their native languages (English and Russian respectively). The study tries to understand the ways both American and Russian writers and readers “draw on their own backgrounds, values, and communities” while they create a written text (a sales letter) and also the ways they may “respond to verbal, visual, and cultural cues in the text before them” (Thrush, 1997, 174). In my research I will: 1) review Hofstede’s theory of cultural dimensions as it has been adapted for the linguistic and rhetorical analysis of business letters, 2) offer a framework to compare and contrast different rhetorical features of business letters that emerge due to different cultural backgrounds of their authors, and 3) test the framework with limited data to illustrate the approach that could be taken while teaching the aspect of cross-cultural rhetoric in Business Communication courses.

APPROACHING CULTURE: NOVICES LEARNING THE ACADEMY

Karen P. Macbeth
The Ohio State University

In the literature on undergraduate college level writing, there are few descriptions of novice writers as they encounter their curriculum as a set of cultural conventions. This paper discusses a study that examines an undergraduate class of 19 international students and their efforts to learn American conventions of academic writing. Their endeavor is not restricted to non-native speakers of English but extends to any cultural outsider seeking to understand the cultural practices necessary for membership in a distant group or community. The purpose of this study is to show how academic writing conventions are cultural objects by examining the pedagogy, practices, and competences that students and teachers must negotiate in order to recognize, assess, and use them. Contrary to prevailing views that academic conventions are straightforward procedures, techniques or skill sets, or that struggling students simply need more guidelines and more explicit instruction, this study shows that the conventions stand on behalf of more pervasive cultural practices that are unspecified by textbooks and syllabi. Informed by readings in naturalistic inquiry in sociology, anthropology, and education, the study collected a corpus of materials, including videotapes of classes and tutorials, from an intermediate level class from one academic quarter. Findings suggest that beneath every skill and object of instruction lies an unspoken field of cultural practice and familiarity from which, given the inevitable incompleteness of any set of instructions, students must nonetheless learn what their instructors *mean*. The first task of pedagogy, then, is to develop in students the eyes to see the objects to which their instruction is pointing. And students generally do develop such eyes. The interest of this project is not whether, but how they do this.

ORALITY-LITERACY CONNECTIONS: WOLOF, MEDIA GENRES, AND CORTICOIDS

Aymérou Mbaye
Université Cheikh Anta Diop

The debate of the last two decades on the virtues and consequences of orality and literacy seems to be on a path that suggests agreement that the two entities serve different functions and institutional needs in society (Biakolo, 1999; Olson, 2001; Triebel, 2001). In terms of communication for instance, it has been argued that in oral traditions the message is directed principally at the individual or the primary group, whereas in the literate culture a heterogeneous group or mass audience is emphasized. Such claims seem to ignore the novel situations of intense oral-literate cohabitation that have emerged outside the Western world in the post-colonial era. In Dakar, Senegal, the mass-media scene has been characterized in the latter part of the 90s by an explosion of radio stations locked in fierce competition for radio ratings. In

their scramble for listeners outside the traditional stock of French language program audience, the FM band stations deliver in Wolof what in the past was only presented in French. In this paper I consider the new mass-media functions Wolof, as an essentially oral language, and the language of wider communication in Senegal, is made to serve. I specifically examine the use of Wolof to translate such media genres as the news and the press review, along with occasional attempts at conveying newsworthy pieces of information that are not yet acclimated by Wolof.

SIFTING THROUGH WORDS AND OTHER PRETTY PICTURES ON WEB PAGES

Kara McBride
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Peculiar juxtapositions define life in modern developing countries. For many, one of these ironies is a scarcity of up-to-date written materials, coupled with easy access to the Internet. However, accessibility of the Internet does not guarantee accessibility of the information contained within it. The user must possess both English skills and computer skills. The study reported in this presentation aimed to investigate which skills are most important in non-native English speakers' use of the Internet, and how it is that some skills might compensate for others. The researcher was a participant-observer in university-sponsored Internet use workshops in Chile. Surveys of these students were conducted, and extensive interviews, focused on web searches and guided by a think-aloud protocol, were done with a variety of students, faculty, staff, and people from the public sector. The ability to read longer texts written in a foreign language, but about one's field of specialty, was not found to be lacking in the studied population. This is a skill developed throughout an academic's career. Where a wide range of success to failure was found, was in the ability to efficiently manipulate the keywords that are required for successful searches. Minute shifts in the ordering of this "controlled vocabulary," as it is called in the library sciences, result in radical shifts of meaning, requiring the non-fluent English reader to seek keywords out strategically, instead of treating the words, as many do, as simply additional icons on the page.

INTRODUCING A GRADUATE ACADEMIC SKILLS COURSE AT UWI, MONA: CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES

Ingrid Ann Marie McLaren
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Educators contend that the purpose of a university education is to have students learn to think. Such thinking, it is argued, should go beyond mere memorization and acquisition of skills (surface learning) to deep learning in which students seek to take responsibility for their learning by "apprehending and discerning phenomena related to the subject" (Ramsden, 1992, p. 4). The latter approach to learning becomes even more critical at the graduate level where students are expected to actively engage in learning activities, be independent learners and problem solvers, and to possess the requisite higher order cognitive skills which would enable them to think strategically, innovatively, and creatively. Unfortunately, graduate students are often ill prepared for such challenges, and this is largely due to the fact that undergraduate teaching does not as a rule encourage a conceptual understanding of the discipline nor a critical approach to the information and ideas encountered (Wild, 1995). In fact, it has been shown that a deeper approach to learning declines as students move through their course (Gow and Kember, 1990). In light of this, a course aimed at enhancing and developing the skills necessary for successful engagement in graduate work was developed and introduced at the University of the West Indies (UWI). This paper seeks to outline the challenging, and at times rewarding activity of developing, implementing, and delivering the graduate course Advanced Academic English Language Skills (LG600) at the UWI.

NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS IN SPANISH FROM THE U.S., SPAIN, AND MEXICO: A COMPARATIVE APPLIED GENRE ANALYSIS

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Research in Contrastive Rhetoric has provided scholars, teachers, and students with useful insights to understanding the forms, contents, and contexts that shape different types of texts across a variety of cultures. In the case of Spanish-speaking cultures, a large amount of research, which was principally driven by pedagogical interests in ESL contexts, has focused on the genre of student compositions comparing discourse patterns between Spanish-speaking and English-speaking groups. However, there is relatively little non-anecdotal information on how different groups of Spanish-speaking cultures organize their texts. The present study examines a number of rhetorical and stylistic features in the genre of newspaper editorials from various Spanish-speaking regions. In particular, it compares major discourse patterns found

in the Spanish language newspapers from the U.S. with those from Mexico and Spain. Thirty recent newspaper editorials from *El Diario / La Prensa* (New York) and another thirty from *La Opinión* (Los Angeles) were analyzed and the findings compared with previous Contrastive Rhetoric studies on the genre from *The New York Times*, *El País* (Madrid), and *El Universal* (Mexico City). The study highlights unique discourse features found in bilingual communities as reflected in the Spanish of Los Angeles and of New York. The results of this study can be used, not only to improve critical reading of these texts, but also to recognize the pluricentricity of cultures sharing the same language, in this case, Spain, Mexico and the United States.

BEATING ABOUT THE BUSH. IS THAT AN ENGLISH THING?

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Contrastive rhetoric (CR) is based on the hypothesis that speakers of two different languages will organize the same reality in different ways (Kaplan, 1997). Although much of CR has so far been concerned with written texts (Connor, 2000), as an emerging field, CR may encompass broader questions of whether we resort to representing the same reality in culturally distinct ways when we typically create spoken or written texts in our discourse communities. This paper explores the ways in which four Putonghua speaking graduate students from the PRC discuss spoken academic discourse conventions typical of three common scenarios, namely supervisory exchanges, responses in a conference, and social chit chat between faculty; scenarios in which the subjects need to participate using English. Data were gathered from meetings which aimed at providing opportunities to discuss English language issues in the lives of the PRC graduate students facing an English language academic environment for the first time and follow-up interviews. We analyzed the transcribed data to find out whether common cultural factors shape the views expressed by the four subjects regarding typical language use conventions in the three scenarios and how politeness was conceived by the subjects. The paper argues that exposure to English and tolerance for alternative realities play a key role in the way each graduate student is ready to “follow” the logic of English in spite of finding some of the conventions “crazy” and somewhat illogical.

LANGUAGE MANIPULATION IN TURKISH NEWSPAPERS: A CRITICAL STUDY OF AKIT AND CUMHURIYET

Harun Serpil
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Critical linguists agree that newspapers are not just a means of reporting events or delivering information. They manipulate their news content and language to lead their readers to believe certain things in parallel with their own ideologies. As Fairclough (1996) points out, power in modern society is achieved through the politics of language. It is very important to see that the language in newspapers is not neutral, it is exploited to gain power over society. This power play makes it difficult for the readers to reach independent appraisals about the events. But exactly how is this power game played in Turkish media? To find out, over a three week period, the discourse of the progressive newspaper *Cumhuriyet* and the extreme Islamist *Akit* is compared on a daily basis. This Turkish culture-based study aimed to find out a) whether there are biased patterns in the content selection of these two newspapers; and b) to what degree their specific standpoints shape their specific language use. The findings show that their ideologically biased attitudes towards the same events affect their presentation of information at all levels of discourse, from the selection of content to the more specific syntactic and lexical items. The analysis revealed consistent culture-specific language preferences, like the use of old vs. modern Turkish. These two papers also differed to a great extent in their degree of formality and verifiability. Implications for a higher cross-cultural awareness are also discussed.

THE ROLE OF EVALUATION AT THE MACRO-STRUCTURAL LEVEL: A CORPUS OF ENGLISH AND SPANISH BOOK REVIEWS SUBMITTED TO A CONTRASTIVE STUDY

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University of León

Despite the increasing interest evaluation has had over the years, there is not much agreement as to the way this aspect of the meaning of texts has to be approached. Most scholars have studied evaluation from the viewpoint of the lexical-grammatical level (cf. Channell, 2000). Others, like Hoey (2000), focus on a higher level like the clause, and a few scholars such as Bolívar (2001) adopt a text-oriented view. The present study is to be framed into the latter type of studies. It looks at evaluation at the macro-textual level by linking rhetorical text organization and the role of evaluation in the structuring

of texts. Drawing on the idea that evaluation usually occurs at strategic points in the discourse (cf. Thompson & Hunston's [2000] Sinclair [1987]), the present study analyses a number of book reviews from four different disciplines in English and Spanish in terms of moves (cf. Motta-Roth, 1995), looking at the location of evaluation in text with respect to the different moves. The analysis also focuses on the intervention of the cohesive relations *addition*, *cause*, *adversativeness*, and *concession* in the realisation of evaluation strategies throughout the different moves and throughout the whole text. The study tries to cover the lack of studies on evaluation at the macro-textual level in a genre that up until now has remained neglected (cf. Hyland, 2000; Motta-Roth 1995; Belcher, 1995). It also attempts to elucidate whether the expression of evaluation in text is culture-bound, thus contributing to the field of Contrastive Rhetoric.

TRANSLATORS VS. SCIENTISTS AS TEXT NATIVIZERS IN LATIN AMERICA: A MULTICULTURAL RHETORIC CASE STUDY

Ana Traversa
Universidad CAECE

This project aims to explore the role of professional translators in the relative nativization of genres as opposed to that of scientists when they produce local versions of "imported" texts for their own needs and purposes. The context studied is a department of Pediatric Oncology in a public hospital in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and a program in Literary, Technical and Scientific Translation, one of whose practicums has recently set up a partnership with it consisting in producing Spanish translations of texts for use by in-service physicians. Framed as a microethnography, the project includes the analysis of research and treatment protocols as well as interviews of the multiple actors these texts mediate (among them researchers, physicians, translators, translation tutors, and patients). Preliminary findings indicate that the degree of awareness of the many overlapping users and uses of text is key to an appropriate localization of the rendering. Thus, a dissociation of text and its small culture entails the production of nativized versions that run the risk of being dysfunctional. Of particular interest are the practices surrounding the Informed Consent as a genre that meets the needs of a variety of readers, with clear differences in the uses made of it across cultures. The "translatability" of one such consent from its original English version produced in Sweden and its resulting Spanish version produced in Argentina is analyzed.

WRITING IN TURKISH AND IN ENGLISH: TURKISH ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS, TRANSFER, AND L2 PROFICIENCY IN THE CONTEXT OF TURKISH SCHOOLING

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The University of Iowa

A few studies (Indrasuta 1988; Kubota 1998; Hirose 2003) investigated the transfer of culturally specific rhetorical patterns from L1 to L2 writing by examining the L1 and L2 texts of the same individuals. Their findings suggest that the L1 and L2 essays of the subjects are very similar, thus providing evidence for transfer; however, the direction of the transfer and the role of L2 proficiency are not clear in these studies due to poor control of L2 proficiency level and L2 writing experience among subjects. In addition, these studies were mainly text-based not including any process-oriented methodologies such as stimulated recall interviews. The present study explores the possible existence of Turkish organizational patterns in argumentative writing, the transfer of these patterns from L1 to L2 and from L2 to L1, and the role of L2 proficiency in this transfer. The three Turkish subjects are categorized according to their L2 proficiency level and their history of L2 writing instruction. First, subjects are interviewed regarding the nature of English and their writing instruction in both L1 and L2 in the Turkish school system. Then, their texts are analyzed, and they are given stimulated recall interviews to discover their reasons for the organizational patterns they used and to understand their process of making use of L1 or L2 writing knowledge in writing. The analysis of L1 essays shows some common organizational features that can be associated with Turkish schooling and culture such as a single sentence paragraph including a general opinion followed by an example paragraph. The analysis of L1 and L2 essays within subjects demonstrates evidence of transfer from L1 to L2 and from L2 to L1. A low level of proficiency does not hinder the transfer of general organizational knowledge such as introduction, development, and conclusion from L1 to L2; however, the specific Turkish pattern cannot be observed in the L2 essay of a low L2 proficiency subject. Previous L1 and L2 writing instruction and experience seem to play a significant role in the results.

A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF LETTERS TO THE EDITOR IN CHINESE AND ENGLISH

Wei Wang
The University of Sydney

This paper examines similarities and differences between English and Chinese letters to the editor from the perspectives of contrastive rhetoric and genre theory. It has been argued that the study of text styles such as linearity and circularity in contrastive rhetoric may not be sufficient for understanding the overall differences between English and Chinese writing. Therefore, an approach based on genre study and contrastive rhetoric was employed to analyze the sample texts at the discursual and inter-sentential levels. Generic structures, rhetorical structures, and logico-semantic relations of 20 letters to the editor were examined in detail. Ten in English were collected in Australia, and ten in Chinese were collected in Mainland China. Findings of this study include: 1) there was often an editor's preview (i.e. a brief introduction to the letters written by editors) in the Chinese letters to the editor in this study; 2) appeals to values and needs were used to support their claims in the Chinese letters to the editor, whereas English writers employed evidence to do this. The study suggests that 'evidence' and 'appeals to values and need' are deeply rooted in the two cultures and societies, and hence find their place in the writers' texts; 3) consequential and additive logico-semantic relations were often used in both the Chinese and the English letters, however, consequential relations were more frequently used in the Chinese letters to the editor than in the English ones. All the findings are discussed in relation to the different writing styles and the socio-cultural values of each culture.

THE APPLICATION OF PEER REVIEW GROUPS IN COLLEGE EFL STUDENTS' WRITING IN TAIWAN

Su-Yueh Wu

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The use of peer review groups is widespread in improving students' writing in America. ESL/EFL teachers embrace the idea of having students provide feedback on each other's paper and help each other improve their writing. However, writing researchers discovered that Chinese ESL students might be particularly reticent to criticize peers' drafts due to their social orientation because they would generally work toward maintaining group harmony and mutual face saving to maintain a state of cohesion. The implementation of a philosophy without understanding how to utilize it in certain cultural settings can often cause disappointing results. Since Taiwanese are likely to be collectivistic, written response might be better than oral response because students don't give peers feedback face to face. Additionally, students in small groups can have more opportunities to discuss with one another. Furthermore, the group comments are more objective than personal comments. Therefore, the purpose of my study was to apply group written response to improve college EFL students' writing. Fifty students were divided into ten groups of five based on friendship. Each group of students collaboratively discussed and gave written feedback to the other nine peer groups' drafts. Then every group revised their own group draft based on the other nine groups' written feedback. A questionnaire was utilized to know how students felt about group reviews. The results showed that peer review groups improved students' writing. Students positively felt that peer review groups were effective in improving writing. This indicates that group written response is useful in an EFL setting.

CONFLATION OF RHETORICAL TRADITIONS: THE FORMATION OF MODERN CHINESE WRITING INSTRUCTION

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Ever since Robert Kaplan published his seminal essay, "Cultural Thought Patterns in Intercultural Education" (1966), it has been a time-honored argument that traditional Chinese text structures continue to influence the written English of Chinese students. Recently this argument was challenged by Kirkpatrick (1997; 2001), who studied both traditional Chinese text structures as well as advice offered in some contemporary Chinese composition textbooks on text structures. He observes that although traditional expository and persuasive writing in China shows preference for inductive argument through chain reasoning, and reasoning by analogy and historical examples, Mainland Chinese students are taught to write Chinese compositions in contemporary "Anglo-American" rhetorical style. Are Chinese students truly taught to write in "Anglo-American" style? This presentation examines how Chinese and Western rhetorical traditions were conflated in the early years of the 20th century as manifested in Chinese writing instruction. Such a historical perspective will show that traditional Chinese rhetoric does not lack the "Western rhetorical styles" or values that Kirkpatrick pinpoints in his studies. This presentation will advance an argument that the introduction of Western rhetoric into China enriched Chinese modern rhetoric through Western scientific rhetoric; but more importantly, together with other historical forces, it helped to revitalize and retrieve the extremely rich Chinese rhetorical tradition in modern Chinese writing instruction. Therefore, the presenter will suggest that when considering modern Chinese rhetoric and Mainland Chinese students' written English, historical conflation of Chinese and Western rhetorical traditions in connection to modern Chinese writing instruction should always be importantly factored in.