6-9-2010

Arabic and English Persuasive Writing of Arabs from a Contrastive Rhetoric Perspective

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ARABIC AND ENGLISH PERSUASIVE WRITING OF ARABS

FROM A CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC PERSPECTIVE

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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May 2010

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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Title: Arabic and English Persuasive Writing of Arabs from a Contrastive Rhetoric

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     The purpose of the study was to investigate whether negative first language transfer could be implicated as the etiology of the ESL writing problems of Arab advanced writers and thus to contribute to the existing body of knowledge about the validity of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis in light of issues in the ontological, epistemological, and axiological underpinnings of contrastive rhetoric.

     To do so, the study analyzed and compared the ESL and Arabic L1 writing of 30 native Arabic speakers and the English L1 writing of 30 native English speakers on the same persuasive writing task. Rhetorical performance of each participant was quantified by use of established, valid, and reliable measures of select rhetorical dimensions of persuasive writing developed by Connor (1999) and Connor and Lauer (1985; 1988). The rhetorical dimensions investigated were argument superstructure, Toulmin's informal reasoning, rational, credibility and affective appeals, and persuasive adaptiveness. The study also administered a language history questionnaire that collected some information about the participants' demographics and educational background.

     Crosstabulations of data tallied from the language history questionnaire indicated that the two participant groups were of adequate *tertium comparationis.* Multiple regression analysis of the participants' scores on the analytic measures of rhetorical

performance against their holistic scores confirmed the validity of the analytic measures. Multiple discriminant analysis and ANOVA of the data confirmed the assumption of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis that NASs exhibited similar rhetorical problems in their ESL and AL1 persuasive writing. However, the analysis could not predict the participants' language/cultural background based on their rhetorical performance. Furthermore, the analysis did not find any significant differences in the rhetorical performance of advanced NES and NAS writers regardless of the language of composing of the Arab participants. On the contrary, there was much greater within-group than between-group variance in the rhetorical performance of the participants.

Results of the study cast serious doubts on the validity of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis and suggested that other individual, contextual, and/or situational variables play a more significant role in the writers' rhetorical performance than native language background does.

To my parents for their unconditional love and sacrifices

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would have never seen light without the help, support, and guidance of many people. I am especially indebted to my dissertation advisor and graduate mentor, Dr. Michael M. Williamson for his guidance, support, and patience. Mike, I cannot thank you enough. I am also grateful to Dr. Jeannine Fontaine and Dr. Gary Dean, my dissertation committee members, for their invaluable feedback and encouragement. Special thanks are due to Drs. Saad Gamal El-Din, Shaker Rizk, Amira Agameya, and Jean Nienkamp for their insightful feedback on my dissertation proposal.

I would like to also thank Drs. Bill Grabe of NAU and Barbara Kroll of CSU for introducing me to contrastive rhetoric at the TESOL Summer Institute and Dr. Bahaa-Eddin Mazid of UAE University for providing me with a couple of references that got me interested in the study of written persuasive discourse from a contrastive rhetoric perspective. I should add that though this dissertation has been inspired by many people, I, alone, am responsible for its flaws.

This dissertation would not have been possible without the help of the study participants who managed to find the time in their busy schedule to participate in the study and Drs. Alvine, P. Bizzaro, R. Bizzaro, Emerick, Fontaine, Ghatti, Hanauer, Hayward, Kuipers, Rafoth, Slater, and Shafer, who invited me in their classrooms to introduce my study to their graduate students. Drs. Abdelfattah Moftah, Sayyah Al-Ahmad, and Jiron-King, in particular, were of tremendous help during the data collection stage. Thanks a million, Dr. Jiron-King. You are my heroine.

Throughout my learning journey, I was fortunate enough to have so many dedicated teachers and mentors who have nurtured my love for learning. I would like to

express my gratitude to each and every one of them. I would like to start with Mr. Abdelwahhab Ibrahim, my cousin who taught me how to read and write at the age of three. I would like to also thank Mr. Kamal Khalifa, my English high school teacher, who nurtured my love for English. I am particularly indebted to Dr. Shaker Rizk, Dr. Abdelfattah Moftah, and Dr. Abdelsalam ElKoumy, my undergraduate professors and mentors at SCU; and Dr. Mahmoud Abdeen, Dean of the College of Education at SCU, and Dr. A. M. Abdelrahim, Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities at SCU, who were instrumental in securing funding for my graduate study in Egypt and the US.

I would like to acknowledge the insights I gained from working with my graduate professors at IUP, Drs. Aghbar, Bencich, Gebhard, Hayward, Hurlbert, Levinson, Tannacito, Pagnucci, Savova, Shepler, and Yan, who made my graduate study an enjoyable and fruitful experience. The same is true for Mrs. Cathy Renwick and Mrs. Bertha Cecconi, the Graduate English secretaries. Thank you everyone for making me feel at home.

At a personal level, I have also been fortunate to have wonderful, understanding, and supportive family and friends. I am grateful to my parents, parents-in-law and siblings, Soad, Sameer, Sameh, Muhammed, Hussam, and Salwa for their love, patience, prayers, and sacrifices. Mervat, my soul mate, words cannot express how much I appreciate your being there for me and for the kids all the time. Your tireless spirit and optimistic smile are the two things that helped me go thru this long journey. Ahmed and Mazen, thank you for being the best sons one could ever have. I love you so much.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the support and camaraderie of my friends, classmates, and colleagues, M. Ahmed, Fahad Al Jumah, Abdelrahman Al-Oleiwy, Walid

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This research endeavor examines the persuasive writing of advanced Arab native speakers of Arabic (NASs) and US native speakers of English (NESs) from a contrastive rhetoric perspective. To be more specific, this study explores whether some rhetorical dimensions of English as a second language (ESL) persuasive writing are particularly problematic for advanced native Arabic speaking (NAS) writers as a result of transfer of rhetorical strategies from their native language. In doing so, the study investigates the validity of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis and in the meantime expands the scope of contrastive rhetoric, "the investigation of the different ways writers from different backgrounds organize and present written material that reflect the preferences of each particular culture" (Reid, 1993, p. 270), to include other genres (persuasive writing in this case) and language backgrounds (i.e., Arabic). This introductory chapter will first foreground theoretical and pedagogical motivations for the study and reasons for focusing on the written persuasive discourse of Arab writers. Then, the purpose and rationale of the study will be laid out. A formulation of the research questions and a brief account of the significance of the study will follow. The chapter will conclude with an overview of the dissertation.

Motivation of the Study

Like most contrastive rhetoric studies, this research project was motivated by Kaplan's (1966) controversial contrastive rhetoric hypothesis that ESL students transfer rhetorical patterns from their first language to their ESL writing. The contrastive rhetoric hypothesis stipulated that transfer of rhetorical patterns is not only evident in the writing

of novice ESL learners, but also in that of advanced ESL writers who have mastered the syntactic patterns of the target language, but their compositions still have "a persistently un-English 'feel'" (Doushaq, 1986, p. 28) and a taste of "peculiar strangeness" (Koch, 1981, p. 2). Although largely adopted by ESL educators (Leki, 1991), Kaplan's speculations—yet to be substantiated by valid empirical evidence—have been subject to strong criticism (e.g., Kubota, 1997, 1998a, 1998b,1999; Mohan & Lo, 1985; Vähapässi, 1988). Critics questioned the accuracy of Kaplan's descriptions of rhetorical and cultural thought patterns in different cultures (e.g., Bar-Lev, 1986; Cahill, 2003; Guest, 2006; Kubota 1999, 2004; Pennycook 1998; Susser 1998). They also charged that his "reductionist" conclusions about the etiology of ESL students' writing problems were based on faulty ontological, epistemological, and axiological premises (to be discussed in detail in Chapter Two). The present study seeks to investigate to what extent Kaplan's claim applies to the persuasive writing of Arab advanced ESL writers in light of the controversy over the ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions of contrastive rhetoric.

Specifically, this study was pedagogically motivated by the concern that ESL students' failure to wrap their content in rhetorical patterns expected by native English speaking (NES) audience causes their writing not to convey the intended message or achieve the intended outcome (Reid, 1984). Use of rhetorical patterns unfamiliar to the intended audience "… may not only strike readers as lack of rhetorical elegance, but as lack of coherent writing or even thinking, which can seriously affect the credibility of non-native writers" (Mauranen, 1993, p. 2). In academic settings, failure of ESL writers to meet the rhetorical expectations of their NES readers translates into negative

evaluations and lower grades by subject-matter teachers even if adequate content was provided by the student (Currie, 1990). It also translates into lower self-esteem on the part of ESL students (Agnew, 1994). Such a high price ESL learners have to pay for their failure to meet the expectations of mainstream US instructors has motivated the study to investigate whether students' struggle with academic writing assignments is due to negative transfer of rhetorical patterns from their native language, or is due to other contextual, situational, and/or individual factors. From a pedagogical standpoint, answers to this debate are crucial to how ESL and ASL (Arabic as a second language) writing teachers can help their students make informed rhetorical choices as they compose for their intended audience and thus achieve success in academic and professional settings.

The study was equally motivated by my conviction that if contrastive rhetoric is to reach valid ontological conclusions about rhetorical variation across languages and cultures, it needs to shift its focus of study to the analysis of persuasive rather than expository discourse. Persuasive discourse is more appropriate for contrastive rhetorical analysis than expository discourse because persuasion lies at the heart of rhetoric. van Dijk (1988) maintains that "… both classical and modern rhetoric deal with the persuasive dimension of language use, and more specifically, with the account of those properties of discourse that can make communication more persuasive" (p. 28). Scollon (1997) observes that even though Aristotle has specified "persuasive language use" as the aim of rhetoric, most contrastive rhetoric studies (with the exception of a few) content themselves with contrasting language structures while they "say nothing about strategies of persuasion, audience influences, and the like that are the heart and soul of Aristotelian rhetoric." (p. 353).

Although argumentative/persuasive writing assignments are the most common tasks in tertiary education (Carlson & Bridgeman, 1986; Connor, Gorman, & Vähäpassi, 1988; Crowhurst, 1991; Johns, 1993; Knudson, 1994; Lloyd, 1996), written persuasive discourse has been neglected in both ESL research and pedagogy because persuasion was often confused with exposition and/or argumentation since the 19th Century (Connor & Lauer, 1985, 1988). According to Connor and Lauer, only recently have rhetoricians such as Kinneavy (1969, 1971) distinguished persuasion as an aim of discourse—from expository, expressive, and literary aims of discourse—any of which can be realized by a variety of means such as narration, description, classification, and evaluation. Recent research by Connor and Lauer (1985, 1988) has further distinguished the study of persuasion from that of argumentation. Based on Aristotle's concepts of *logos, ethos,* and *pathos*, they argued that while argumentation employs rational appeals to convey the writer's point of view, persuasive discourse draws upon a variety of rational, credibility, and affective appeals to effect a desirable change in the audience's point of view. By definition, persuasion subsumes argumentation and is thus more suited for the study of cross-cultural rhetorical variation than argumentation for it encompasses more rhetorical dimensions than argumentation does and thus provides a broader basis for cross-cultural comparisons.

The lack of research on cross-cultural variation in persuasive writing has left the most pressing and fundamental ontological questions in contrastive rhetoric yet to be answered. For example, Kaplan's most fundamental claim that rhetoric and its underlying "logic (in the popular, rather than the logician's sense of the word)" (Kaplan, 1966, p. 2) are not universal but predetermined by one's native language has yet to be substantiated

or disproved by valid empirical evidence. While Connor and Lauer's (1988) examination of the English writing of students from three different cultural backgrounds, namely US, British, and New Zealand, has suggested that the logical argumentation strategies that the students employed in their writing had more similarities than differences, more research on other languages is needed to determine whether examination of the persuasive strategies of students from totally different language backgrounds would yield the same results. The current study aims to bring such fundamental ontological issues that form "the heart and soul" of contrastive rhetoric to the forefront by focusing on the comparison and contrast of persuasive writing performance across languages and cultures in response to Scollon's (1997) call and in light of Kinneavy's (1969, 1971), Connor and Lauer's (1985, 1988), and Connor's (1990) characterization of persuasive discourse.

Although it is beyond the scope of this study to explore every single culture to draw a comprehensive picture of the persuasive use of language across cultures, this study aims to shed some light on rhetorical variation in persuasive writing performance in two distinct cultures, namely, US and Arab. Specifically, this study explores whether there are any similarities and/or differences in the rhetorical performance of NESs and NASs on a number of analytical measures of select rhetorical dimensions. The rhetorical dimensions investigated are argument superstructure, informal reasoning strategies, use and effectiveness of rational, credibility and affective appeals, and degree of persuasive adaptiveness. In doing so, the study revives a healthy trend in contrastive rhetoric research that has appropriately shifted its epistemological focus to the study of persuasive writing (see, for example, Connor, 1987; Connor & Lauer, 1985, 1988; and Mauranen, 1993).

The decision to focus on the Arabic-English language pair was motivated by, and thus addresses, (a) lack of valid and reliable research on the rhetorical problems of the persuasive written discourse of Arab writers; (b) lack of information on how such problems are similar to and/or different from those of native English speakers; (c) conflicting results from previous research inquiries into Arab argumentative/persuasive writing; and (d) lack of insights onto what rhetorical strategies, if any, Arab ESL writers transfer from their first language when producing persuasive writing in English. Filling in the gap in our understanding of the differences and/or similarities of the rhetorical strategies employed by native speakers of English and Arabic in their persuasive writing is crucial for fruitful ESL and ASL writing instruction.

Unfortunately, most research on writing by native speakers of Arabic has concentrated on sentence-level constructions (e.g., Al-Sindy, 1994; Benson, 1980; Diab, 1996; El-daly, 1991; MacLean, 1993; Meziani, 1978, 1980, 1981, 1983, Mohamed & Omar, 1999; Scott & Tucker, 1974; Willcott, 1972), expository prose (e.g., Doushaq, 1986; Kaplan, 1966; Liebman, 1992; Ostler, 1987a, 1987b; Reid, 1988, 1992; Williams, 1994), or narratives (Soter, 1988). Although a first step in the right direction, the very few studies that investigate argumentation in Arabic (namely, Kamel, 1989; Koch, 1981; Ouaouicha, 1986) provide unexplained conflicting conclusions and suffer from serious research flaws that undermine the validity of their findings (see Chapter Three for a detailed review), justifying the need for the present study to scrutinize the premises and conclusions of available research on Arabic rhetoric and examine the rhetorical differences and/or similarities in the persuasive writing performance of Arab and US writers in light of a better-informed contrastive rhetoric framework.

Purpose and Rationale of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the validity of Kaplan's notion of contrastive rhetoric as concerns the persuasive writing of Arab advanced ESL writers. This is accomplished by (a) exploring whether a writer's first language/cultural background can be predicted from his or her rhetorical performance on a persuasive writing task; (b) exploring if some rhetorical dimensions of English persuasive writing are particularly problematic for Arab advanced ESL writers; and (c) investigating whether rhetorical problems, if any, can be linked to first language interference. In order to achieve the goal of the study, writing samples were solicited from Arab NAS and US NES doctoral students majoring in English. Arab participants provided writing samples in both ESL and their native language, Arabic (AL1). US participants provided writing samples in their native language (EL1). All writing samples were in response to the same persuasive writing task.

The writing samples were analyzed and compared for variation in quality of select rhetorical dimensions of persuasive writing from a native English speaker perspective. The analysis was conducted via the use of theory-based and empirically-validated analytic tools adopted from Connor (1999) and Connor and Lauer (1985; 1988). These tools measured how well the ESL writers constructed their argument, used reasoning and persuasive appeals to support their point of view, and adapted their rhetoric to address their audience counterarguments. In addition, the persuasive essays were rated holistically for their overall writing quality.

Based on a review of existing theory and research (see Chapters Two and Three), it has been hypothesized that if the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis was true, the rhetorical

performance of a writer would accurately predict his or her first language/cultural background. The degree of accuracy, if any, would indicate how strongly one's first language/cultural background impacts his or her rhetorical preferences. Likewise, if statistical analysis of data fails to discriminate among writers from different language backgrounds solely based on their rhetorical performance, the validity and thus generalizability of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis would then be called into question. This very last statement would be especially true if the rhetorical performance of a writer would nonetheless accurately predict the overall quality of his or her essay regardless of his or her first language/culture background.

It has also been hypothesized that in order for the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis to be confirmed, two conditions have to be met. First, regardless of their English language proficiency level, ESL writers would use similar, if not identical, rhetorical strategies in both their ESL and native language persuasive essays. Second, with everything else being equal (e.g., gender, educational level, major of study, writing context, writing task, . . . etc.), there would be a significant difference in the rhetorical quality of persuasive writing by English L1 and English L2 writers. In other words, the between-group variance in rhetorical quality would be significantly bigger than the within-group variance. If the results of a contrastive rhetoric study suggest that any one of the two conditions were not met, then the study cannot claim that it lends positive empirical support for the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis. On the contrary, such an outcome would cast doubts on the validity and generalizability of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis.

Such an inference is based on two premises. First, if the comparison of the ESL and native language writing of the same group of ESL writers on the same writing task confirmed that the nonnative English speakers (NNESs) did better in their native language writing than they did in their ESL writing, lack of linguistic proficiency in the foreign language would not be ruled out as the etiology of the participants' problems in their ESL writing. Second, if the comparison of the English L1 and English L2 writing of two groups of writers of comparable characteristics on the same writing task showed no significant between-group variation in rhetorical quality, then the assumption of cross-language variation on which the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis is founded would be invalid. In turn, the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis would be rejected. In this case, at least one of two alternative interpretations would be possible: Either (a) both NES and NAS writers have similar writing problems regardless of their first language/cultural background, or (b) other contextual, situational, and/or individual variables play a more significant role in writers' rhetorical performance than does first language/cultural background. In either case, first language/cultural background cannot be justifiably implicated as the monocausal source of ESL writers' rhetorical problems.

Research Questions

In light of the above rationale, the following research questions were formulated:

1. Can performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task accurately predict the writers' overall writing performance?

2. Can performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task accurately predict the writers' language/cultural background?

3. Are there significant differences in the ESL and Arabic L1 writing performance of the same Arab advanced ESL writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task?

4. Are there significant differences in the performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same English persuasive writing task?

5. Are there significant differences in the performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same native language persuasive writing task?

6. Are select rhetorical dimensions of English persuasive writing particularly problematic for Arab advanced ESL writers?

7. Are the problems of Arab advanced ESL writers with select rhetorical dimensions, if any, due to first language transfer?

Significance of the Study

The researcher believes this research project is significant for the following reasons:

1. The researcher is not aware of any valid studies contrasting the persuasive writing of both English and Arabic native speakers using quantitative analytic tools. Thus, there is a pressing need for unraveling the rhetorical preferences of Arab writers and the areas of English persuasive writing that tend to be problematic for Arab ESL students

as well as investigating whether first language transfer is implicated as the cause of these problems.

2. This study is of theoretical value as it aspires to contribute to a more comprehensive theory of contrastive rhetoric in general and add to our understanding of the nature of cross-cultural and cross-linguistic variation in persuasive written discourse in particular. More specifically, results of the study do address outstanding ontological and epistemological issues in the theoretical assumptions of contrastive rhetoric (Such issues will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two).

3. This study is also valuable for research methodology on contrastive rhetoric since it sheds light on how research design flaws might skew the results and undermine the conclusions of contrastive rhetoric studies. Besides, results of the study provide further empirical examination of the validity and reliability of Connor's (1999) and Connor and Lauer's (1985; 1988) analytic tools used in the study.

4. This study is of equal practical value. Based on the results of the study, research implications and pedagogical recommendations will be suggested.

Dissertation Overview

This dissertation consists of six chapters. Chapter One has introduced the topic of this research project, addressed motivations for the study, and discussed the purpose, rationale, research questions, and significance of the study. The following two chapters review related literature with the goal of establishing a theoretical framework for the study. Chapter Two provides a historical background for the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis, discusses in detail issues in the theoretical assumptions of contrastive rhetoric, and extracts guidelines for the current study from the discussion. Chapter Three

reviews contrastive rhetoric studies—on Arabic in general and on Arabic argumentative and persuasive writing in particular—that are closely related to the current study. In light of the theoretical framework established in the first three chapters, Chapter Four spells out the hypotheses of the current study and proposes an empirical research design to test them; variables, study participants, and data collection and analysis procedures will be presented in detail in Chapter Four. Chapter Five investigates issues of adequate *tertium comparationis* and the validity of the analytical measures used in the study. Then, it presents and discusses the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis testing results. Chapter Six concludes the study by recapitulating the main findings of the study, discussing research and pedagogical implications of the findings, noting the study limitations, and offering suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE I

The current study investigates some rhetorical dimensions of the ESL and AL1 persuasive writing of Arabic-native speakers from a contrastive rhetoric perspective in an attempt to characterize the rhetorical performance of native Arabic speakers and to discover areas of English persuasive writing that might be particularly problematic for Arab ESL students. The goal is to contribute to a more comprehensive theory of contrastive rhetoric in general and add to our understanding of the nature of cross-cultural and cross-linguistic variation in persuasive written discourse in particular. This chapter establishes a theoretical framework for the study by providing an account of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis and a discussion of its ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions foregrounding controversial issues in contrastive rhetoric that have motivated and informed the current study. Evaluation criteria for existing contrastive rhetoric studies on Arabic as well as research guidelines for the current study will be extracted from the discussion of such issues.

The Birth of Contrastive Rhetoric

Kaplan (1966) is credited with expanding the scope of contrastive analysis beyond sentence boundaries. In his controversial publication, entitled "Cultural Thought Patterns in Intercultural Education," Kaplan noted that the writing problems of ESL students are not only a byproduct of their transferring structural patterns from their native language, but are also due to transfer of rhetorical strategies. According to Kaplan, when such rhetorical strategies, brought in from the native culture, do not match audience expectations in the target culture, the ensuing writing fails to logically convey the

message to the intended audience, namely, native speakers of the target language. Kaplan claimed that the reason for such failure in communication is that rhetorical structure, as well as the "logic (in the popular, rather than the logician's sense of the word)" upon which it is based, is culturally bound (1966, p. 2). In other words, he believed that as children acquire their native language, they also acquire culturally acceptable forms of reasoning and rhetorical expression, which differ from culture to culture. Kaplan concluded that since logic and rhetorical structure are by no means a universal phenomenon but are culturally defined, a perfectly logical argument in one culture might be viewed as sophistical or illogical in another.

According to Kaplan (1966), when composing in English, a typical ESL learner who has not yet developed an understanding of the sociocultural constraints of English discourse, its underlying logical system, or rhetorical preferences falls back to those of his or her native language. The detrimental result of this compensatory strategy is first language negative interference at the discourse level. In order to help ESL students achieve academic success in the target language, ESL teachers, Kaplan argued, need to bring to the attention of their ESL students what rhetorical patterns are acceptable in English and which ones are unacceptable. He maintained that second language learning research needs to first identify the rhetorical patterns unique to the native language/culture and compare them to those preferred in the target language/culture. Ostler (1987b), a student of Kaplan, echoes his stance when she writes:

> … ESL teachers need first to appreciate the differences in rhetoric in different cultures and then learn to teach these distinctions, as an aid to improving both the reading and writing skills of their students. (p. 169)

Kaplan himself initiated the suggested line of research inquiry, which he labeled contrastive rhetoric, by studying paragraph development in the English expository writing of about 600 students from different cultural backgrounds compared to that of the typical English expository paragraph. He concluded from his analysis that "each language and each culture has a paragraph order unique to itself" (1966, p. 14). He categorized the student writing that he analyzed into five distinguishable "rhetorics" or "cultural thought patterns," namely English, Romance, Russian, Oriental, and Semitic based on differences in paragraph development. He visually represented his findings of cross-cultural variation in logic and writing with the following diagrams (Figure 1), which later became known as the "doodle" diagrams.
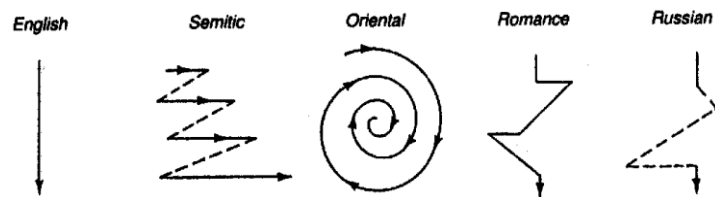
Figure 1. Kaplan's (1966) "doodle" diagrams.

According to Kaplan, English writing follows a linear pattern of development that starts with a topic sentence followed by details that progressively support the main topic in a deductive fashion; Romance writing diverges from the main topic in the form of quasi-linear digressions; Oriental writing employs an indirect approach distinguished by inconclusive spiral progression of ideas; partial parallelism and subordination are the salient features of Russian writing. Kaplan claimed that as a Semitic language, Arabic "is

based on a complex series of parallel constructions, both positive and negative" (1966, p. 6) as contrasted to the "linear" nature of the English expository paragraph.

In a later publication, Kaplan maintained:

… the primary focus of writing in Arabic rests on the language of the text, not on its propositional structure. The distinction implied here is an important one. In pedagogic terms, it is unlikely that a learner can acquire a text type that has no reality for him or her; thus there is another argument for teaching composition. The argument is not for teaching only the form of this text type; rather the argument implies that both the form and the ideological process through which one arrives at the form need to be taught … (1988, pp. 289-290)

In other words, Kaplan (1966, 1967, 1972, and 1988) believed that both rhetoric and logic are culturally tied. For him, argumentative writing by Arabs deviates from the linear and logical norms of English discourse not only because such a writing genre does not exist in Arabic, but also because the logic in its Aristotelian, syllogistic sense is an alien concept to Arabs. For Kaplan, ESL teachers could help Arab students meet the Western audience's expectations by not only teaching Western rhetorical conventions but also Western "logical" thought patterns even if this meant teachers would "run the very serious risk of being legitimately accused of *brainwashing* [italics added]" (Kaplan, 1967, p. 16).

Putting his notion in practice, Kaplan (1967) suggests:

If it is desirable in English to relate certain ideas in terms of main and subordinate structures, then the foreign student needs to be taught how to determine which structure he should make subordinate and why. In the same way that this must be

accomplished at the syntactic level through the teaching of structures of
modification, it needs to be accomplished at the rhetorical level by teaching the
larger structures of modification; that is, the kinds of paragraphs which are
intended to advance the thought of the whole essay as well as the kinds of
paragraphs which are intended to go back over ground already covered and supply
the necessary support, analogy, metaphor, illustration, etc. (p. 15)

Issues in Contrastive Rhetoric

Kaplan's initial contrastive rhetoric hypothesis has caused controversy in ESL
writing research circles. On one hand, Kaplan's intuitive assertions that ESL students'
problems with academic writing in US educational settings can be remedied when linked
to their native language have appealed to a great many ESL educators. For example,
Walker (2007) describes his "eureka! Moment" when he was first introduced to
contrastive rhetoric as follows: "I … became enamored with contrastive rhetoric as it
seemed to elucidate very well the rhetorical and cultural difficulties that my Korean
students encountered when writing academic essays in English" (p. 5). Enthusiastic about
the promising pedagogical value of contrastive rhetoric, researchers hastened to
investigate cross-cultural rhetorical variation, offering research results confirming
Kaplan's taxonomy of cultural thought patterns and thus supporting the contrastive
rhetoric hypothesis. For extensive reviews of research on contrastive rhetoric, see Connor
(1996), Connor and Kaplan (1987), Grabe and Kaplan (1989), Leki (1991), Reid (1993),
and Silva (1993).

While some ESL educators and researchers celebrated the new discoveries of
contrastive rhetoric, others cast serious doubts on the validity of contrastive rhetoric.

Critics of Kaplan's contrastive rhetoric hypothesis pointed out serious flaws in Kaplan's initial study as well as subsequent studies that employed his research methodology, providing their own empirical evidence that rhetorical variation is not necessarily caused by negative transfer from first language and offering their own alternative explanations. Some even pointed out that Kaplan's classification of cultural thought patterns is biased and value laden (e.g., Kubota 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2001; Saville-Troike & Johnson, 1994; Spack, 1997; and Zamel, 1997). Such controversy over contrastive rhetoric has helped the contrastive rhetoric enterprise experience a paradigm shift and renewed hope it will evolve into a theoretical base with implicational value in the ESL writing classroom (Connor, 1996).

This section addresses issues in the theoretical assumptions of traditional contrastive rhetoric. The purpose here is fourfold: (a) to shed light on how constructive criticism of such assumptions has resolved a number of controversial issues in contrastive rhetoric and is thus gearing it towards the right direction, where ESL student writers are no more ingenuously viewed as imprisoned by constraints imposed by their first language, but rather as active learners whose emerging rhetoric is an outcome of the interaction of a complex variety of cultural and non-cultural factors; (b) to identify contrastive rhetoric issues yet to be resolved in order for contrastive rhetoric to emerge as a well-defined paradigm with a solid theoretical foundation; (c) to extract guidelines for contrastive rhetoric research, including the current study, that need to be followed if contrastive rhetoric is to obtain conclusive results of valuable pedagogical implications; and (d) to position the current study within its theoretical framework.

Issues in the theoretical assumptions of contrastive rhetoric will be addressed from three perspectives: ontological, epistemological, and axiological. The nomenclature and classification employed here follows a modified taxonomy of theoretical assumptions in Littlejohn and Foss's (2008) *Theories of Human Communication*. Since these philosophical terms have been employed differently in the social sciences, it becomes imperative to first explain how these terms are used in the current argument.

Ontological assumptions are those philosophical suppositions about being, existence, and the relationships among existing entities. In the context of contrastive rhetoric, ontological assumptions address issues of the existence and nature of rhetorical variation across languages and/or cultures and the relationship between language and thought in general and rhetoric and reasoning patterns in particular. To be more specific, contrastive rhetoric addresses the ontological question of whether writers from different language and/or cultural backgrounds employ different rhetorical structures. If they do, is the variation due to linguistic determinism or other unrelated factors? In other words, are writers' rhetorical choices predetermined by their native language and/or culture, or are they dynamically made by active, decision-making individuals based on a variety of contextual factors? Are the writers' rhetorical choices limited by the writing situation, the writing task, and/or the writers' perceptions about the knowledge, values, and attitudes of their audience? In the case of ESL writers, is the variation in their ESL writing from that of native English speakers, if any, due to transfer of rhetorical strategies from their native language or due to developmental, contextual, and/or situational variables? Do ESL students transfer rhetorical strategies they learned in the course of their ESL training back to their L1 writing?

Epistemology is the philosophical exploration of what constitutes knowledge and how knowledge is obtained. In their attempt to identify the ontological underpinnings of rhetorical variation across languages, contrastive rhetoricians explore whether knowledge of rhetorical strategies is universally innate and thus does not vary from culture to culture or is relative and changes from one culture to another, from one language to another, or even from time to time. Such attempts are based on and influenced by the researcher's epistemological assumptions about what research methodology can be relied on to best produce valid knowledge about rhetorical variation across languages and/or cultures. For example, rationalist, empiricist, social constructionist, or critical approaches to contrastive rhetoric lead to different types of knowledge about the reality and nature of rhetorical variation. Similarly, research outcomes are affected by assumptions about how rhetorical structures are best identified, described, and categorized; what constitutes rhetorical variation; how to best compare and contrast texts for rhetorical variation; what writing samples are best representative of a specific cultural group; and what textual, contextual, and situational variables to include in or exclude from the analysis.

Axiology addresses concerns of ethics and value assumptions. One such concern in contrastive rhetoric is ethnocentrism, where a researcher regards a particular language, culture, or rhetoric as superior or inferior to others. Such value judgments undermine the reliability of any research and call to question its results and conclusions. Another axiological concern is whether it is the role of the ESL writing teacher to teach the "logical" thought patterns of the target language and discourage the use of those of the students' native language even if this meant teachers would "run the very serious risk of

being legitimately accused of brainwashing" (Kaplan, 1967, p. 16) and undermining the students' native culture.

The fact that the ontological, epistemological, and axiological issues in contrastive rhetoric are addressed in the current argument under separate headings should by no means suggest that these different theoretical assumptions operate independently. On the contrary, they constantly interact with and dynamically affect each other to form a unified theoretical framework for contrastive rhetoric. A researcher's ontological worldview or axiological predisposition, for example, affects his or her epistemological decisions as to what variables to investigate and how to investigate them. Results of the investigation might help refine the researcher's ontological assumptions and/or foreground new etiological possibilities that could be further investigated. However, specific issues in a research paradigm can best be pinpointed if each of these three premises were investigated individually. The rest of this chapter will be devoted to the discussion of ontological, epistemological, and axiological issues in contrastive rhetoric in such manner.

Ontological Issues in Contrastive Rhetoric

Kaplan based his contrastive rhetoric hypothesis on the then-current linguistic relativity and negative transfer hypotheses. However, as these two hypotheses came under fire for their inadequacy, two competing ontological frameworks were proposed: A modified contrastive rhetoric hypothesis that explains the writing problems of ESL students in terms of a broader cultural influence, and an opposing interlanguage perspective that sees ESL student writing problems as a natural byproduct of the

developmental learning process they go through as they learn a new language. This section sheds light on arguments for and against these three ontological frameworks.

      Linguistic relativity and negative transfer. The initial ontological framework of Kaplan's (1966) contrastive rhetoric notion was based on two then-current paradigms, one in anthropology and the other in psycholinguistics: a strong version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis—also known as the linguistic relativity hypothesis—and the negative transfer hypothesis respectively. The strong version of the linguistic relativity hypothesis, which was based on a controversial interpretation of earlier works by Sapir (1929) and Whorf (1956)—hence the name, stipulated that language controls one's reality and thought; if a certain linguistic form does not exist in a certain language, speakers of this language cannot come to terms with the reality or thought associated with such linguistic form. Greatly influenced by this hypothesis, Kaplan claimed that one's native language determines one's logic and rhetorical choices. The negative transfer hypothesis, proposed by Fries (1945) and Lado (1957), claimed that syntactic errors by foreign language learners are due to first language interference. In other words, foreign language learners transfer incompatible grammatical structures from their native language into the target language causing negative interference. Kaplan extended such claim of negative transfer to include undesirable transfer of rhetorical structures.

      Although there is no empirical evidence to support either the linguistic relativity or negative transfer hypotheses, Kaplan (1966) utilized both to explain the writing problems of ESL students. In 1972, he affirmed that his "original conception was merely that rhetoric had to be viewed in a relativistic way; that is, that rhetoric constituted a linguistic area influence by the Whorf-Sapir hypothesis … [he] would still maintain, as

[he] did in 1964, that rhetoric is a phenomenon tied to the linguistic system of a particular language" (1972, Foreword). He claimed that rhetoric and its underlying logic are not universal, but predetermined by one's first language and culture. In his own words: "Logic (in the popular, rather than the logician's sense of the word) which is the basis of rhetoric, is evolved out of culture; it is not universal. Rhetoric, then, is not universal either, but varies from culture to culture and even from time to time within a given culture" (Kaplan, 1966, p. 2); "rhetoric, the method of organizing syntactic units into larger patterns, is as much a culturally coded phenomenon as the syntactic units themselves are" (Kaplan, 1967, p. 11). Ironically, Whorf himself believed that "thought does not depend on grammar but on laws of logic or reason which are supposed to be the same for all observers of the universe" (1956, p. 208). However, Kaplan maintained that when speakers of other languages compose in English, they are not able to write in logical or linear progression because such concepts do not exist in their native cultural thought patterns. According to Kaplan, in the absence of logical and linear patterns from the ESL writers' cognitive inventory, ESL students transfer rhetorical patterns from their native language to their ESL writing.

To Kaplan's credit, he has modified his position on the relationship between thought and language several times (e.g., 1987, 2001) in response to criticism of his linguistic determinism hypothesis as well as recent research findings. He has long abandoned his belief that rhetorical variation across cultures is a reflection of culturally-defined thought patterns. He now agrees that all cultural thought patterns that he described in his 1966 analysis do exist in all languages, including English. In his own words:

In fact, it is now my opinion that all of the various rhetorical modes identified in

the 'doodles article' are possible in any language … The issue is that each

language has certain clear preferences, so that while all forms are possible, all

forms do not occur with equal frequency or in parallel distribution. (1987, p. 10)

Apparently, Kaplan has taken a more flexible stance towards the interplay of

language and thought; a particular logic, Aristotelian logic, for example, is no more a

monopoly of a certain language. However, he maintains, rhetorical patterns are not

equally distributed, either; rhetorical and logical preferences significantly vary from one

language to another. Controversially, he still insists that "English is more linear than

other languages" (Kaplan, 2001).

In summary, Kaplan launched the contrastive rhetoric enterprise in 1966 as an

attempt to explain the writing problems of ESL students. However, his approach limited

the study of cross-cultural variation in writing to the study of negative transfer of

rhetorical features from the target language. Kaplan's reductionist approach was affected

by the linguistic relativity and negative transfer hypotheses. Although Kaplan modified

his initial ontological stance, he still upholds his unsubstantiated stereotypical view (a)

that English rhetoric is linear, while other rhetorics are nonlinear and (b) that native

language determines rhetorical choices made by ESL students when writing in English.

Such ethnocentric ontological assumptions by Kaplan have caused critical

pedagogues to question the axiological manifestation of the contrastive rhetoric construct.

The controversy over the axiological assumptions of traditional contrastive rhetoric will

be expounded on later in this chapter. For now, let us turn to more fundamental

ontological challenges to the initial contrastive rhetoric hypothesis.

Broader cultural influence. Some ESL educators (e.g., Connor, 1996; Liebman, 1988, 1992; Raimes, 1991) took exception to the strong version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, on which Kaplan based his contrastive rhetoric hypothesis. They maintained that ESL student writing problems could be best explained in light of a weak version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis that rejects the speculation that language controls thought, logic, or rhetoric in favor of a much more reserved proposal that one's cultural background, among other factors, influences cognitive processes, including rhetorical preferences. Proponents of the broader cultural influences cited refutations of the strong version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis from psycholinguistics, anthropology, psychology, and linguistics (e.g., Clark & Clark, 1977; Fishman, 1977; Malotki, 1983; Pinker, 1994; Spelke & Newport, 1998).

They maintained that one's native language does not predetermine one's success or failure in learning a second language; however, one's native culture can affect mastery of the second language in general and ESL writing in particular in multiple ways. This is especially true if the ESL student keeps on transferring linguistic and/or rhetorical patterns that are problematic from the second language perspective, a strategy often used by novice ESL writers. In this "new" ontological framework of contrastive rhetoric, ESL writing problems are still the result of transfer of rhetorical patterns from native culture to ESL writing. However, the influence of one's cultural background on one's rhetorical preferences is not necessarily confined to transfer of logical and rhetorical patterns from one's native language but can be due to other cultural dimensions such as L1 literacy practices, writing functions, writing conventions, the frequency and distribution of

different writing genres. For example, Connor (1996) concludes her review of the most significant contrastive rhetoric studies on English and Chinese by asserting that:

> … contrastive rhetoric studies have discovered differences between Chinese and English writing. These differences are explained by a number of sociopolitical and cultural reasons. It is believed that the organization of the eight-legged essay by itself is not the reason for the seeming indirect writing of Chinese writing. Instead, explanations that consider cultural orientation toward self, others, society, and social interactions are brought into the interpretation. (p. 41)

Liebman (1992) proposes a 'new' contrastive rhetoric hypothesis that brings other variables than first language background into the picture.

> This new contrastive rhetoric considers not only contrasts in how people organize texts in different languages, but also other contrasts such as their approach to audiences, their perception of the purposes of writing, the types of writing tasks with which they feel comfortable, the composing processes they have been encouraged to develop, and the role writing plays in their education. Understanding these contrasts will be as helpful to teachers as understanding the textual contrasts other contrastive rhetoricians have noted. (Liebman, 1992, p. 142)

From such a broader perspective, contrastive rhetoric is no longer interested in proving that one's native language controls one's logic and thought patterns, but rather in exploring variation in cross-cultural dimensions such as literacy practices, writing processes, and rhetorical traditions that could contribute to our understanding of the etiology of ESL student writers' strengths as well as problematic areas that need

development—Contrastive rhetoric studies based on or informed by this ontological stance will be reviewed in the next section.

The broader cultural influence stance is backed by a renewed interest in the weak version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which is slowly regaining ground as a result of a cohort of carefully designed empirical studies in cognitive psychology indicating its viability (e.g., Hunt & Agnoli, 1991; Luna & Peracchio, 2001; Schmitt & Zhang 1998; Tavassoli 1999, 2001; Tavassoli & Han, 2001). The weak version suggests that language, among other factors, influences cognitive processes. However, this line of research has yet to provide valid and reliable conclusive evidence of the hypothesis. As Lucy puts it "Despite long and well motivated interest in the [linguistic relativity] issue, concrete research and even practical approaches to research remain remarkably undeveloped" (1997, p. 294).

For example, Zhang and Schmitt (1998) empirically examined whether a lexical-semantic feature (classifier, a Chinese structure nonexistent in Indo-European languages) affected how Chinese and Anglo-American speakers classified the same objects. Zhang and Schmitt found a correlation between first language and object classification. They did establish the reliability of their study by replicating their experiment ten times with different participants and stimuli objects. However, they could not confirm a causal relationship between the two variables because they could not establish the validity of their findings. To be more specific, they could not confirm that the variation in the participants' grouping of items (cognitive process) was due to the absence/presence of the lexical semantic feature (language) or due to some other cognitive processes (such as memory).

In summary, while proponents of the effect of broader cultural influence on the rhetorical preferences of ESL students did not question the claim that students transfer rhetorical patterns from their native language when writing in English, they rejected the claim that language predetermines one's rhetoric or thought patterns. Instead, they argued a myriad of cultural factors influence one's rhetorical choices.

The developmental hypothesis. A third group of ESL practitioners rejected the viability of both the linguistic relativity hypothesis and the negative transfer hypothesis as the etiology of the writing problems of ESL students (e.g., Mohan & Lo, 1985). In addition to the reservations made by proponents of the broader cultural influence hypothesis about the linguistic relativity hypothesis, they argued that the negative transfer hypothesis was criticized and dismantled by interlanguage theory—also known as the developmental hypothesis (e.g., Nemser, 1971; Selinker, 1972; Shaughnessey, 1977)— that proved with empirical evidence that foreign language learners do not acquire a second language overnight, but rather go through a series of intermediate developmental (interlanguage) stages characterized by errors similar to those made by children as they acquire their first language.

Advocates of the developmental hypothesis argued that the rhetorical variation Kaplan, and later others, observed in the English writing of ESL students is not necessarily due to first language interference or cultural influence, especially when ESL students receive the same writing instruction as English L1 students, but could be attributed to the developmental stages that ESL students go through in their progress towards mastery of second language (L2) writing. Their ontological position was based on the findings of ESL writing research that reported three phenomena contradictory to

the predictions of both the linguistic relativity and negative transfer hypotheses and supported their developmental hypothesis.

First, ESL learners follow a language development pattern parallel to that of native English speakers. Raimes (1985, 1987) and Zamel (1976) have shown, for example, that both ESL students and novice English L1 students share the same writing problems. Second, low rated essay writing across cultures tends to have more similarities than differences; Benson, Deming, Denzer, and Valeri-Gold (1992), for example, reported that both ESL and native English-speaking basic writers exhibited similarities in their topic choices, topic sentence use, and topic development (see also Connor, 1985). Third, there is a positive correlation between students' educational level and the quality of their English L1 and ESL writing. For example, Mohan and Lo (1985) reported that native language was not a predictor of the quality of paragraph development in second language writing, but grade level was.

Criticism of the developmental hypothesis. However, the developmental hypothesis that native culture of ESL students has nothing to do with their writing problems is not without its critics. Leki (1991), for example, charges that the "anticontrastive rhetoric position" has yet to explain the writing problems of advanced ESL students who have mastered English. Kaplan (1988) responded to the developmental hypothesis by asserting:

> It would be possible, in a reductionist sense, to place the responsibility for these differences separately on the educational systems (as Mohan & Lo, 1985, have done), assuming that educational systems are responsible for the preservation and promulgation of preferred rhetorical types, but that would be an

oversimplification. Educational systems do not serve as the intellectual frontline

of most cultures; rather, they reflect thought as they reflect more deeply

embedded cultural preferences. (p. 290)

In summary, proponents of the developmental hypothesis argue that problems in

the English writing by non-native speakers of English can be best explained in terms of

lack of ESL writing training rather than native language interference. However, such an

ontological perspective of the etiology of ESL students' writing problems is not without

its own critics.

Conclusion and implications for this study. It should be noted that the on-going

ontological controversy over the etiology of ESL student writing has proven to have a

positive effect on the evolution and expansion of contrastive rhetoric. Researchers from

all ontological frameworks set out to investigate cross-cultural rhetorical variation and its

etiology, expanding the scope of contrastive rhetoric to include more languages, genres,

and variables (Connor, 1996; Connor & Kaplan, 1987; Grabe & Kaplan, 1989; Leki,

1991; Reid, 1993; Silva, 1993). The expansion in contrastive rhetoric research has

provided more accurate characterization of cross-cultural rhetorical variation and its

etiology (Connor, 1996).

However, coverage of languages and cultures has been spotty; while there is a

multitude of contrastive rhetoric studies focusing on Asian languages, very few studies

have attempted to unravel the rhetorical features of Arabic in general, and Arabic

persuasive writing in particular. Those very few studies provide unexplained conflicting

conclusions and suffer from serious research flaws that undermine the validity of their

findings. This has left the most fundamental ontological question of what role, if any,

Arabic language and culture play in shaping Arabs' rhetorical preferences unanswered. The current study attempts to answer this question. However, this can only be done after controversial issues in the epistemological and axiological assumptions of contrastive rhetoric are dissected. The following section sheds more light on how the ontological view that language controls or at least shapes thought as well as its manifestation in contrastive rhetoric has been challenged from an epistemological perspective.

Epistemological Issues in Contrastive Rhetoric

Contrastive rhetoric addresses one fundamental question that mainly stems from two divergent ontological worldviews. That question is whether rhetoric and its underlying logic are linguistically determined or not. In order to find a conclusive answer to this question, a contrastive rhetorician needs to first compare and contrast texts by natives of two or more cultures to investigate whether there is rhetorical variation in the logical presentation of arguments across cultures and/or languages or not. If no significant rhetorical variation among various cultures were detected, then rhetoric and its underlying logic would be counted as universal traits; neither language nor culture would be deemed as exerting influence on thought patterns, logic, or rhetoric. If the examined texts exhibited rhetorical or logical variation among two or more cultures, then the researcher would still need to provide further evidence the variation detected is due to first language background not to other developmental, contextual, or situational factors. In other words, in order for a generalization about the monocausal effect of native language and/or culture on one hand on thought patterns, logic, or rhetoric on the other hand to be valid, a cause and effect relationship between the two needs to be established.

A major epistemological issue in the investigation of the relationship between rhetoric and language/culture is how rhetorical patterns in different languages/cultures are best identified, described, categorized, and compared. To do this, Kaplan (1966, 1967) and other contrastive rhetoric researchers who employed his research methodology utilized an empirical approach that relied on the textual analysis of rhetorical features in ESL student writing. This traditional contrastive rhetoric approach has been called to question by both empiricists and social-constructivists. Empiricists questioned the validity, reliability, and thus generalizability of the research findings of traditional contrastive rhetoric methodology (Panetta, 2001). Social-constructionists charged that any contrastive rhetoric research paradigm overlooking situational or contextual factors is unacceptable. This section highlights epistemological issues in traditional contrastive rhetoric and their methodological implications from empiricist and social-constructionist perspectives.

Empiricists and contrastive rhetoric. Empiricists questioned the validity of Kaplan's research findings because his research design incorporated inadequate *tertium comparationis,* or common grounds for the comparison, which resulted in inaccurate descriptions of the claimed culture-specific rhetorical patterns. Kaplan's conclusions were also dismissed as unwarranted overgeneralization because he did not offer any statistical proof that claimed cross-cultural variation in rhetorical patterns is significant or that there is a direct cause and effect relationship between language background and rhetorical patterns that rules out other plausible explanations of cross-cultural variation in student writing. Empiricists also questioned the reliability of Kaplan's results based on the fact he relied on his intuition rather than on a systematic analytical framework, lacked

knowledge of the foreign languages he examined, and did not employ any interrater reliability measures. Such validity and reliability concerns were not only limited to Kaplan's 1966 study, but also extended to other contrastive rhetoric studies that followed his research approach. The following is a more detailed account of the epistemological concerns empiricists expressed about traditional contrastive rhetoric.

   Validity issues in contrastive rhetoric research. Since contrastive rhetoric is mainly concerned with the comparison of student writing across cultures and languages, adequate *tertium comparationis* is a prerequisite for any contrastive rhetoric findings to pass as valid conclusions and can thus be safely generalized (Connor, 1996; Connor & Moreno, 2005; Janicki, 1986; Moreno, 2008; Ouaouicha, 1986; Scollon, 1997). In other words, when conducting a contrastive rhetoric study, the researcher has to ensure that the writers from all his or her cultural groups are of comparable characteristics in terms of the language of composing (e.g., native language, second language, or both), language proficiency, writing ability, age, gender, educational level, writing task, topic, intended audience, writing genre, time constraints, and writing context, among others. Unless such factors are controlled, and thus two or more comparable parallel sets of L1 texts are compared (Connor & Moreno, 2005), a causal relationship between language background and rhetorical variation cannot be claimed. Unfortunately, most student and professional writing samples analyzed by traditional contrastive rhetoric researchers did not meet the *tertium comparationis* prerequisite. This major research design flaw sheds serious doubts on the accuracy of the research conclusions, including Kaplan's, about cross-cultural variation in rhetorical patterns. The following is a brief account of the major *tertium comparationis* flaws in early contrastive rhetoric research.

Comparing ESL writing to English L1 writing. Kaplan assumed he could accurately describe the rhetorical patterns of a particular language by parsing the ESL writing of speakers of such language rather than directly analyzing their L1 writing. As a matter of fact, Kaplan's 1966 study was not the only contrastive rhetoric study to investigate L2 writing rather than native L1 writing. Among those researchers who followed the same approach are Atari (1983), Burtoff (1983), Carlson (1988), Choi (1988a, 1988b), Clyne (1987), Connor (1984), Cummings (1990), Dennett (1985, 1990), Frodesen (1991), Intaraprawat (1988, 1995), Mahmoud (1982), Mann (1986), Montaño-Harmon (1991), Norment (1984), Oi (1984), Ostler (1987a), Reid (1988, 1992), Santana-Seda (1975), Scarcella (1984a, 1984b), Stalker (1988), Soter (1988), and Zhuang-lin, Brown, and Brown, (1982).

Some critics of such an approach, that is indirect comparisons, (e.g., Cahill, 2003; Connor, 1995; Hinds, 1983; Kachru, 1985; Kubota, 1998a, 1998b; Mohan & Lo, 1985; Ouaouicha, 1986; Vähapässi, 1988) have argued that the analysis of ESL student writing does not necessarily yield accurate descriptions of the rhetorical patterns of the languages under study. They also charged that such a research construct does not prove negative language transfer. They reasoned that any rhetorical variation detected in the writing of ESL students could be due to interlanguage effect. In other words, such variation could be due to the developmental nature of non-skilled ESL writers rather than negative transfer of rhetorical strategies from the writers' native language. Early contrastive rhetoric researchers "often confused cross-cultural differences with developmental interference" (Mohan & Lo, 1985). Such rationale is substantiated by evidence of poor

mastery of basic English language structure and writing conventions found in the ESL essay samples that Kaplan provided in his 1966 report.

Research on the developmental writing of ESL students (e.g., Becker, 1995; Cumming, 1989; Johns, 1984; Leki, 1997; Mohan & Lo, 1985; Pery-Woodley, 1990; Raimes, 1985; Sasaki & Hirose, 1996; Zamel, 1983) has shown that the rhetorical patterns detected in such student writing are a natural by-product of the developmental learning process they go through as they master their ESL writing skills. Critics of indirect comparisons in contrastive rhetoric research claimed that in order to accurately describe rhetorical variation across two or more languages, the researcher needs to directly compare and contrast L1 writing by native speakers of such languages.

An interesting study by Grabe (1993) sought to counter such argument and provide evidence of the viability of Kaplan's indirect comparisons, that is reaching valid conclusions about the rhetorical variation in ESL writers by analyzing their ESL writing rather than their L1 writing. Grabe claimed that "the often criticized use of English L2 texts to interpret Spanish L1 influences" (1993, p. 118) is a viable approach to the examination of rhetorical variation across languages. He upheld Kaplan's research design approach maintaining "that careful examination of ESL student writing has the potential to reveal the same information as cross-language comparisons" (p. 125). He asserted that the results of such comparisons "can be replicated consistently with different groups of writers and in different educational contexts" (p. 118). However, Grabe came to this conclusion after comparing the findings of his research on English L2 samples to those of previous research that compared Spanish L1 compositions to English L1 ones. There is

no guarantee that holding direct comparisons between the native language and ESL writing of the same students would support Grabe's conclusions.

Researchers who held such direct comparisons are Cook (1988) and Indrasuta (1987), among others. Their findings indicate that students' lack of proficiency in ESL rather than first language background was the cause of the variation in the students' ESL writing, contradicting Grabe's claims. Cook examined the Spanish L1 and ESL writing by the same Spanish-speaking writers. She reported that the Spanish L1 writing of her students exhibited less "disunified" discourse than their ESL writing. Indrasuta compared the Thai and ESL writing of Thai students to the English writing of Anglo-American students. She found out that the Thai L1 essays of the Thai students were of better writing quality than those ESL essays by the same Thai students on the same topic. Although these findings do not disconfirm Kaplan's contrastive rhetoric hypothesis, they do cast doubt on Grabe's assertions that analysis of ESL student writing rather than their native L1 writing is enough to identify the salient rhetorical features of the writers' native language.

The current study avoids such research design flaw by soliciting writing samples only from highly advanced writers, namely doctoral students majoring in English. The study also analyzes and compares both the ESL and Arabic L1 writing by the same Arab students on the same writing task.

Comparing student writing to idealistic/professional writing. Another concern with earlier research studies in contrastive rhetoric is the comparison of ESL student writing (either in L1 or L2) to that of idealistic English prose or professional L1 writing by native speakers of English (e.g. Kaplan, 1966; Ostler, 1987a). Critics of such a

prescriptive approach (e.g., Connor, 1996; Hinds, 1983; Kachru, 1985, 1995, 1999; Vähäpässi, 1988; Ouaouicha, 1986; Swales, 1990) charged that student writing and professional writing are two completely different genres. While most ESL student writing is done in class mostly for the teacher as the single audience and within class time constraints, the same time or setting restrictions do not exist for professional writers, who write for a different type of audience. Besides, professional writers often enlist the help of peer reviewers and editors to polish their writing before it is published, a luxury not available for most ESL students in a typical in-class writing setting. In fact, Severino (1993a, p. 46) rightly describes the 600 essays analyzed by Kaplan (1966) as "first drafts" at best. After all, the huge gap in the linguistic and stylistic competence of ESL students and accomplished US writers should skew any comparison results toward accomplished US writers. Thus, to compare ESL student in-class writing to that of English native speaking professional writers violates the *tertium comparationis* principle, is unfair, and does not provide accurate descriptions of cross-linguistic variation.

Two related research findings are worth noting in this context. First, rhetorical analysis of writing by professional native-speaker English writers by Braddock (1974) has shown that the linear English paragraph fashion claimed by Kaplan (1966) and Ostler (1987a, 1987b) among others is not an all-inclusive rhetorical pattern. According to Braddock, professional native-speaking English writers do not always write in such fashion, but they employ other rhetorical structures that sometimes deviate sharply from that pattern. Severino (1993a) agrees that "… not all sub-genres of expository writing in English are linearly and hierarchically organized according to the top-down outline. Consider the multiple ways in which personal and business letters, personal and

journalistic essays, newspaper articles and editorials, and academic writing in each of the disciplines are organized" (pp. 46-47). Second, most English L1 students face the same challenges ESL students face as they master the complex writing skills (Raimes, 1985, 1987; Zamel, 1983). Both research findings betray the shortcomings of contrastive rhetoric studies based on the comparison of student writing to idealistic/professional writing.

Thus, for the results of any contrastive rhetoric study to be valid, the researcher needs to make sure that he or she is comparing professional writing to professional writing within the same genre or student writing to student writing at the same proficiency and educational level. The present study avoids such research design flaw by comparing writing on the same topic by graduate students at the same educational level. It has been hypothesized that if Kaplan's (1966) contrastive rhetoric claim is correct, then the between-group differences in the writing of Arabic and English native speakers at the same educational level in the same writing context and situation would be significantly bigger than the within-group differences. Otherwise, Kaplan's contrastive rhetoric hypothesis would be rejected or at least would not extend to English-Arabic rhetorical variation in persuasive writing.

Comparing beginner ESL writing to advanced English L1 writing. A third concern with sampling ESL student writing for contrastive rhetoric purposes is their language proficiency level. Since contrastive rhetoric investigates higher-level rhetorical structures in ESL student writing, it becomes evident that ESL essays by beginning ESL learners are not the best samples for cross-linguistic comparisons. The overwhelming limitations that beginning ESL writers have to cope with due to their limited command of

English grammar and vocabulary do certainly affect the overall quality of their ESL writing as well as reflect poorly on their use of rhetorical conventions. This is especially true when the writing task involves a rhetorically demanding genre such as persuasive writing. Connor and Lauer (1988) have found out that native speakers of English master persuasive writing at more advanced developmental stages. In a study by Mohan and Lo (1985), paragraph organization in English writing by 12th graders, though merely acceptable, was significantly superior to that by 8th graders. This was true for both ESL and native English speaking groups. Unfortunately, most contrastive rhetoric studies, including Kaplan's 1966 study, sampled writing by beginning ESL students, who have not yet mastered basic English grammar or writing conventions. Thus, it becomes unclear whether the poor writing quality of ESL students reported by earlier contrastive rhetoric studies is due to first language interference or poor command of English. Advocates of Kaplan's contrastive rhetoric hypothesis have yet to prove his claim that even accomplished ESL writers are unable to produce English writing of good quality but rather transfer rhetorical structures from their first language. By analyzing the persuasive writing of both advanced English L1 and ESL writers, namely, doctoral Arab and US doctoral students majoring in English, the current study aims to investigate this issue. To be more explicit, the current study seeks to determine whether the ESL writing problems of Arabic-native speakers are unique to them and can thus be attributed to first language interference, or similar to those problems found in native English speaking writers and can thus be attributed to factors other than transfer of rhetorical patterns from first language.

Overgeneralization. Although Kaplan had a huge corpus of more than 600 essays, he did not employ any quantitative analyses of his data to establish a cause and effect relationship between language background and rhetorical patterns. Instead, he relied on his intuitive observations (Mohan & Lo, 1985). This has caused many to dismiss Kaplan's 1966 descriptions and diagrams of the different culture-specific thought patterns as inaccurate, intuitive, subjective, and speculative overgeneralizations (e.g., Guest 2006; Leki, 1991). Connor and Moreno (2005) argue that in contrastive rhetoric research, "qualitative contrastive analyses alone cannot produce" valid, generalizable conclusions about cross-cultural rhetorical variation. "Instead, they must be reinforced with quantitative contrastive analyses that investigate the relative frequencies of equivalent phenomena" (p. 160). Absent any quantitative evidence of cross-cultural rhetorical variation that eliminates other plausible explanations such as developmental, contextual, and situational factors, Kaplan's overgeneralized claim that language controls or even affects cultural thought patterns remains in check.

Such unwarranted overgeneralization of results has plagued a great many early contrastive rhetoric studies. McCagg (1996) and Kubota (1997) have illustrated how Hinds' (1980, 1981, 1983a, 1983b, 1984, 1987, 1990) conclusions about Japanese rhetoric were plagued with unwarranted overgeneralizations. Reporting on more than seventy contrastive rhetoric studies, Silva (1993) noticed a tendency in contrastive rhetoric reports to overgeneralize results and claim unwarranted causal relationships despite absence of "statistical tests of significance" (p. 660). He cautioned future contrastive rhetoric researchers to "[be] reasonable and responsible when making generalizations and/or cause and effect claims based on their findings" (p. 669). Guest

(2006) derives ample examples from contrastive rhetoric research on Japanese to illustrate how often contrastive rhetoric researchers take liberty in unreasonably exaggerating cross-cultural differences and overgeneralizing their findings.

To sum up, inadequate *tertium comparationis* caused by comparing beginner ESL writing rather than advanced native L1 writing to idealist/professional English L1 writing and lack of inferential statistical checks of contrastive rhetoric hypotheses are examples of the major validity concerns in contrastive rhetoric research. The research design of the current study takes these concerns in consideration. The next section sheds light on the second epistemological concern in contrastive rhetoric research raised by empiricists, namely reliability issues.

Reliability issues in contrastive rhetoric research. Empiricists dismissed Kaplan's intuitive approach to the description of rhetorical patterns employed by writers from different language backgrounds as unreliable and therefore inadequate for providing a basis for cross-linguistic rhetorical comparisons (Leki, 1991). Kaplan's critics were quick to point out that Kaplan's lack of first-hand knowledge of the languages that he described and his reliance on his intuition rather than a unified analytical framework has resulted in overgeneralized and inaccurate descriptions of the rhetorical patterns of these languages (Connor, 1996). Besides, since no interrater reliability measures were secured or a unified analytical framework was utilized, there is no guarantee that a different researcher would have made the same descriptions or reached the same conclusions that Kaplan reached. The same misfortune has plagued many early contrastive rhetoric studies.

Reliability flaws have caused many researchers to challenge early descriptions of rhetorical patterns in different languages, especially those made by Kaplan in his 1966 article. Cahill (2003, p. 173), for example, argues that what has been interpreted in Asian languages as nonlinearity or digression is an optional rhetorical component that could be used "to develop an essay or paragraph further by alternative means," namely, example or anecdote, equivalent to the Western rhetorical concept of "amplification."

Cheng (2003) asserts:

Recent research (Eason, 1995; Zhang, 1997; Zhang, 1999; Wu & Rubin, 2000) does not support the claims that Chinese students write indirectly, implicitly, and unassertively. These researchers have reported that Chinese students are able to compose in a straightforward way, formulate explicit arguments supported with reasons and detailed information, and state their personal stance in their English or Chinese writing. (p. 18)

Citing evidence from recent contrastive rhetoric studies, Kubota (2004) concurs with Cahill (2003) and Cheng (2003) that early descriptions of Chinese rhetorical patterns lacked accuracy. She points out:

In Chinese, critics argue that the *ba gu wen* (eight-legged essay), which has been claimed to affect Chinese students' writing in English (Kaplan, 1972), exerts little influence on contemporary writing in Chinese . . . . (Kirkpatrick, 1997; Mohan & Lo, 1985). Although Li (2002) points out a trace of the eight-legged essay seen in the writing that high school students practice, she contrasts it with university-level writing that focuses on logic, clarity, analysis, interpretation, and development of one's own ideas. Likewise, there is little evidence that the four-unit pattern, *qi-*

cheng-zhuan-he, which Hinds (1990) identifies as culturally specific, influences

contemporary expository writing in Chinese (Kirkpatrick, 1997). Bloch and Chi

(1995) further argue that even classical Chinese rhetoric was never monolithic but

invited varied views, some of which promoted logical argumentation and critical

examination of the canon. (p. 11, italics in the original)

Similarly, Hirose (2003) and Kubota (1998a, 1998b) have challenged Kaplan's

assertion that Japanese writers prefer inductive styles. Kubota (1998b) has also shown

Western rhetoric to have been greatly influencing modern Japanese academic discourse.

As far as Arabic is concerned, Bar-Lev (1986) challenged Kaplan's suggestion

that Semitic languages are characterized by parallelism. Bar-Lev countered that what

Kaplan has interpreted as lack "of hierarchical organization" is indeed "fluidity," that is a

preference for flat, serial clause-connection, symbolized by connectors of continuation

such as "so" or "and." "Fluidity," according to bar-Lev, "is an alternative means for

expressing text-cohesion, not the absence of hierarchical organization" (1986, p. 237).

After all, a correlation does not necessarily exist between parallel or sequential

progression on one hand and writing quality on the other hand (Black, 1997; Ferris,

1994).

Besides, although Kaplan claimed that his concern was rhetorical rather than

syntactic variation (1966), his analysis never went beyond paragraph development or

addressed chunks of written discourse larger than the paragraph. In fact, his analysis of

Arabic only focused on syntactic structures and intersentential boundaries rather than

rhetorical features at the larger discourse level.

Conclusion and implications for this study. To conclude, reliance on intuition rather than a systematic analytical framework coupled with lack of first-hand knowledge of the foreign languages examined and absence of interrater reliability measures cast serious doubts on results of early contrastive rhetoric studies. The current study avoids such reliability issues by recruiting two trained raters, both of whom are bilingual speakers of English and Arabic, to analyze the writing samples examined in the study. Interrater agreement is further statistically established via a Pearson's correlation coefficient test of interrater reliability. Furthermore, instead of relying on unreliable intuitive descriptions of the rhetorical features in the writing analyzed, the raters employed a unified set of objective quantitative analytical tools to identify and measure carefully defined rhetorical features. Such analytical tools and rhetorical variables will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four. For now, a discussion of the social constructionists' criticism of the epistemological assumptions of contrastive rhetoric is in order.

Social constructionists and contrastive rhetoric. While empiricists criticized the epistemological assumptions of traditional contrastive rhetoric from a mainly methodological perspective, social constructionists, who believe "literacy is embedded in institutional contexts which shape the practices and social meanings attached to writing" (Barton, 2007, p. 46; see also Flower, 1994), focused on the broader assumptions of contrastive rhetoric epistemology. They charged that early contrastive rhetoric research epistemology unduly reduced the multitude of complex contextual and situational factors that affect how an individual writer constructs his or her writing to a single factor, namely, linguistic determinism. Thus, they rejected monocausal explanations of the etiology of the struggles and successes of ESL student in favor of an acknowledgment of

a broader sociocultural etiology. They argued that ignoring the effect of sociocultural variables on writers' rhetorical preferences is misleading and does not yield the most reliable results or valid conclusions about cross-cultural variation. According to Liebman (1992), "Looked at in isolation … texts mislead. They do not tell the whole story about the writer and about how that text came to be. What seems like a structural problem—a poorly organized text, for example—may be caused by something else" (pp. 143-144).

Thus, social constructionists foregrounded the dynamic nature of writing as a culturally-embedded activity that is influenced by the context in which it takes place (Cook-Gumperz 1986; Gee, 2005; Johns, 2003; Pahl & Rowsell, 2005; Pittard, 1999; Street 1993). They emphasized that cross-cultural variation in rhetorical preferences, if any, can be best examined and interpreted in light of a broader sociocultural etiology (e.g., Carson, 2001; Carson, Carrell, Silberstein, Kroll, & Kuehn, 1990; Leki, 1997; Matsuda, 1997; Severino, 1993a; Swales, 1990). Leki, for example, argued that "Rhetorical choices are not directly linked to thought patterns; they are made in response to social, political, and rhetoric contexts and histories (1991, p. 236).

Based on this "new" contrastive rhetoric epistemology, social constructionist researchers set out to highlight the contextual and situational factors that could provide alternative explanations to the rhetorical choices made by ESL writers and thus threaten the validity of contrastive rhetoric studies if not controlled in the research design. This section outlines a sampling of such contextual and situational variables. First, contextual variables such as the rhetorical tradition/context, literacy practices, and writers' past writing (instruction) experiences, and discourse community are highlighted. Then,

situational variables such as writing task/prompt, topic familiarity/interest, and subject matter knowledge are outlined.

    Contextual Factors. *Rhetorical tradition/context.* From a social constructionist perspective, the rhetorical context in which the texts are constructed plays an important role in shaping the rhetorical choices made in the writing process (Connor, 1996; Hewings, 2006; Mauranen, 2001; Scollon, 1997; see also Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000). Leki (1991) accurately points out that the examination of written discourse across cultures should "move beyond the texts themselves to an examination of the rhetorical context in which they are embedded" (p. 129). Any investigation of rhetorical variation across cultures is incomplete if it does not take into account such contextual variables as formal and informal literacy practices, writers' past writing experiences, and discourse community membership.

    Literacy practices. Seminal research by scholars such as Heath (1983), Scribner and Cole (1981), and Carson (2001; see also, Dong, 1998) underscores the effect of literacy practices on the acquisition and/or development of literacy. Scribner and Cole (1981) investigated the social manifestations of various literacies among the Vai community in West Africa. Heath (1983) studied the effect of oral traditions on the literacy development of African-American children. Both studies have shown that groups with different literacy experiences and practices perform differently on different social and cognitive skills/situations. Both studies have also demonstrated that variation can and does occur within the same language and culture.

    Carson (2001) reported on the process of L1 literacy acquisition in Japanese and Chinese settings and how it is different from that in Anglo-American settings. She

pointed out some learner expectations and L1 literacy acquisition practices that could

facilitate or impede L2 literacy development of Japanese and Chinese ESL students. In

her own words:

> ESL students come to second language writing classrooms with expectations of
>
> how writing is taught and learned. To the extent that their expectations do not
>
> match pedagogical practices, they are likely to be confused about the purpose and
>
> effectiveness of these methods. Their previous experiences in learning to read and
>
> write may not yield effective strategies in ESL writing classrooms where the task
>
> of learning to write differs not only in the complexity of its demands, but also in
>
> its social context and, ultimately, in its social functions. (p. 154)

Therefore, before making any conclusions, contrastive rhetoric studies need to consider

the effect of potential mismatch between literacy expectations and rhetorical background

on one hand and L2 classroom practices on the other hand on ESL student writing.

Writers' past writing (instruction) experiences. Carson's (2001) research

foregrounds a related contextual variable that could explain cross-cultural rhetorical

variation, namely writers' past writing (instruction) experiences. Social constructionists

maintain the educational context in general and writers' past L1 and L2 writing

(instruction) experiences in particular are directly linked to overall writing quality as well

rhetorical choices. In addition to the effect of literacy practices on shaping writing

constructs, social constructionists argue that the educational system in which the student

was acculturated either directly or indirectly affects his or her rhetorical preferences (e.g.,

Vähapässi, 1988; Weigle, 2002). Hirose (2003) argues that "We cannot discuss student

L2 organizational patterns without taking into consideration student L1 and L2 writing

background in terms of writing conventions, instruction, and experience, as well as L2 proficiency level" (p. 182). The effect of student's past writing experience on their writing strategies has been documented by Berman (1994), Bosher (1998), Carson and Kuehn (1994), Cohen and Brooks-Carson (2001), Jarratt, Losh, and Puente (2006), Phung (2006), Shi (2003), and Uzawa (1996).

Jarratt, Losh, and Puente (2006), for example, shed light on how three bilingual student writers come to the writing classroom with complex writing choices influenced by their past experiences and future goals. Phung (2006) explored Chinese and Mexican ESL college students' perceptions about the L1 rhetorical instruction they received in their native countries. She looked at:

> the kinds of classes where writing took place and the amount of writing done, the kinds of writing tasks assigned by native teachers, the role of audience in their L1 writing, the techniques used by their native teachers to teach writing, the aspects of writing they were encouraged to develop, and their view concerning the role writing plays in their education. (p. 1)

She concluded from her survey "that the native writing instruction received by these ESL students plays an important role in forming the perceptions that they hold towards the purposes of writing and various writing tasks long before they enter ESL classrooms" (p. 1).

Perhaps the most comprehensive cross-cultural study that investigated the effect of the educational context on the writing quality of ESL students is the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) study (Gorman, Purves, & Degenhart 1988; Purves, 1988; Purves & Purves 1986; Purves & Takala,

1982), which examined L1 writing instruction in 14 countries. To be more specific, the study aimed to "identify factors, which explain differences as well as typical patterns in the performance of written composition with particular attention to cultural background, curriculum, and teaching practices" (Purves & Purves 1986, p. 179). Although only two of the 14 countries included in the study, namely, Nigeria and Thailand, were non-Western, the study confirmed that formal literacy instruction practices varied greatly across the board, from the time allotted to writing to the definition of "good" writing (Purves & Hawisher, 1990).

Carson's 1992 study of educational practices in Japanese and Chinese settings shows how the L2 literacy development of Japanese and Chinese students might be affected by such practices. For example, Japanese and Chinese students, who were taught to write for solidarity and shared social purposes in their L1, might find it difficult to write for an English audience where individual self-expression is expected (However, see Spack's 1997 critique of Carson).

After investigating the rhetorical patterns of Hebrew and American native writers as well as the writing instructional methods in both cultures, Folman and Sarig (1990) concluded that the cross-cultural variation in the rhetorical preferences of both groups is due to the variation in writing instructional methods rather than in thought patterns. A follow-up study by Folman and Connor (2005) concluded that the variation in the emphases in the native Hebrew and US senior high school writing classes was the main source of variation in the rhetorical patterns employed by students in their native L1 writing.

Research has shown that instructional experiences might not only affect writers'

rhetorical preferences but also their social behavior in the ESL classroom (Allaei &

Connor, 1990). Carson and Nelson (1994) have pointed out that classroom activities

commonly used in ESL classrooms such as pair/group work are not that common in

Japanese or Chinese educational settings. When required to perform such activities in the

ESL classroom, most Japanese and Chinese students would react to such activities in

manner that is totally different from that of typical native English speaking students, for

while the goal of such activities would be individual benefit from an American student

perspective, Chinese and Japanese students see such activities as aiming to achieve group

harmony and satisfy its needs.

It might be tempting to assume, as Kaplan (1966) and Leki (1991) did, that

because of "the age and level of education of the many ESL graduate students studying in

English-speaking countries, it is difficult to take the position that these L2 writers are

inexperienced in writing in L1" (Leki, p. 124). However, there is ample evidence that this

is not the case in other cultures, where students are rarely required to produce essay-long

responses to typical academic English writing tasks (e.g., Hirose, 2003). Reflecting upon

her own L1 writing experience, Hirose wrote in 2003, "… as a Japanese who was born

and received education up to graduate school level in Japan, I have not taken a single L1

writing course, and other Japanese bilingual academics share this background" (p. 184).

Hirose reports the same is true when it comes to L2 writing instruction in some

contexts. In her own words:

Regarding L2 English writing, Japanese students' experience is practically non-

existent. L2 writing instruction in high school is oriented toward translation from

L1 to L2 at the sentence level (e.g., JACET Kansai Chapter Writing Teaching

Group, 1995). Because writing is the least emphasized skill in English language

education at every level including university, it is possible for a Japanese non-

English major university graduate not to have taken any English writing courses

or not to have had any English writing experience. (2003, p. 185)

Yoshimura (2002) also noted the same. Eggington (1987) and Walker (2005; both cited

in Walker, 2007) reported that Korean students had similar experiences in both L1 and

L2 classrooms.

Many researchers pointed out that many of the writing problems of the ESL

students in their study could be due to the writers' inexperience (e.g., Choi, 1988;

Eggington, 1987; Mohan & Lo, 1985; Shi, 2002) and/or inadequacy of L2 writing

instruction (e.g., Kubota, 1998b; Sasaki & Hirose, 1996) rather than linguistic

determinism.

Even if students had received writing instruction, the instruction they received

could have emphasized different genres or functions. This applies to both L1 and L2

instruction. In a massive nine-month survey of English L2 writing instruction at a high

school in Germany, Reichelt (1997) reports that the English L2 writing instruction she

observed is greatly different from that of typical writing instruction in English L1

environments. Reichelt writes:

German instruction focuses in many ways on passing on a literary and intellectual

heritage and involves students reading and writing about rather difficult texts by

traditional German authors. In contrast, the focus of instruction in English classes

is acquisition of the language, and thus the topics explored in these classes are

much freer than what is covered in German classes. The topics and texts which

students in the upper grades of English class read and write about usually relate to

more contemporary social, cultural, and political issues of countries in which

English is considered a native language. (pp. 271-272)

Reichelt also notes that while both ESL and English L1 students in US

educational settings are required to write full-length essays, most of the writing done in

English L2 writing classes in Germany is in the form of short answers in response to "a

series of sub-questions which, in essence, provide the organization for [student] writing"

(1997, p. 271). According to Reichelt, such writing tasks in German settings focus on the

students' understanding of content rather than on their ability to organize such content in

essay form (p. 283).

Hirose (2003) notes that L1 writing instruction in Japanese L1 settings

emphasizes expressive writing. Little emphasis is given to "formal L1 expository or

academic writing instruction at any level of Japanese education" (p. 183). Liebman

(1992), who surveyed Arab and Japanese students about their L1 writing instruction

experiences, reported that:

Japanese students perceived their past rhetorical instruction as isolated,

emphasizing the expressive function of writing, whereas students in Arab-

speaking countries perceived their past rhetorical instruction as oriented toward

the transactional function of writing. Such differences in a perceived past affect

how students from these countries compose and how they perceive what we are

asking them to do. (p. 157)

Liebman also found out that while in US educational settings, argumentative/ persuasive writing tasks are common, neither the Japanese nor the Arab students were required to write much on argumentative/persuasive topics during their L1 schooling. Rather, the writing tasks the students had to fulfill in their home cultures emphasized writing for transactional purposes.

Exploring the reflective ESL writing of Chinese-speaking students on their L1 "rhetorical traditions and writing experiences," Severino (1993a) observed that Anglo-American and Chinese educational settings sponsor different writing "processes, products, and pedagogies" in terms of preference and frequency. She noted that such differences might be the root cause of the difficulty that Chinese-speaking ESL students face as they try to master their ESL literacy skills.

Mohan and Lo (1985) traced the poor writing quality of ESL writing by Hong Kong students to the instructional environment of the students which focused, especially at the early ESL learning stages, on grammatical accuracy at the sentence-level at the expense of discourse-level organizational strategies—an observation also made by Severino (1993a) and Liebman (1992). Comparing teachers and students' attitudes toward writing instruction from Hong Kong and British Columbia, Mohan and Lo emphasized that differences, if any, can be attributable to the role of educational system and the emphasis it places on writing development more than to negative language interference.

The excessive coordination, that Kaplan claimed is a salient feature of Arabic rhetoric, was also the salient feature in the "immature writing" of English L1 students according to research by Hunt (1965, 1968) suggesting that lack of training in L2 writing

might be the cause of the excessive coordination that Kaplan claims characterizes the ESL writing of the Arab students whose writing he analyzed.

Cumming (1989) concluded from her study of the ESL writing of French authors that the quality of their ESL writing is directly linked to their writing expertise in L1. In other words, the more writing the French authors did in their first language, the better their ESL writing was. A significantly positive correlation was maintained in three different writing tasks, namely letter, argumentative, and summary writing. Kubota (1998b) and Sasaki and Hirose (1996) reported similar results from their investigation of Japanese students' writing.

Eggington (1987) notes that Korean academics trained in English-speaking countries produce academic writing that reflects English-preferred rhetorical styles while the academic writing of Koreans trained in Korean institutions are more characteristic of the Korean style.

Writing manuals. While most of the studies outlined above focused on teacher-led instruction, others examined instructional manuals in different languages. Arguing that "… research on instructional materials helps to draw a more accurate picture of rhetorical conventions and what underlies these conventions" (Liu, 2005, pp. 2-3), Liu analyzed six online American and Chinese writing manuals on argumentative writing. He reported that although manuals on both languages emphasized use of logical reasoning in argumentative writing, the US manuals emphasized "formal logic and informal reasoning," while their Chinese counterparts stressed "dialectical logic," and "analogy." Liu also noted that while "the need to address opposition" was presented by the American writing manuals as a must, it was seen by Chinese manuals as optional.

In his examination of Chinese writing manuals published before 1991, Kirkpatrick (1997, 2002) reported that the manuals provided writing instruction that was more or less similar to that common in American educational settings; for example, the manuals emphasized linearity and coherence. Based on his findings, Kirkpatrick questioned Kaplan's (1966) claim that Chinese writing follows the classical ''eight-legged essay'' pattern.

To conclude, there is ample evidence from existing research that writers' past writing experiences as well as the L1 and L2 writing instruction they have received vary greatly from one context to another and affect their rhetorical choices. It should be noted here that while research on the similarities and/or differences among languages in writing instruction could provide insights on the etiology of cross-cultural rhetorical variation, it does not necessarily confirm or disconfirm the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis since writing instruction does not necessarily manifest itself in actual student writing. For example, while Liu (2005) reports that American manuals on argumentative writing emphasized counter-argumentation as a must, studies of the L1 writing of US writers showed counter-argumentation was rarely detected in English L1 student writing (e.g., Connor, 1987, Connor & Lauer, 1988; Ferris, 1994).

Discourse community. Another issue that social constructionists have had with traditional contrastive rhetoric epistemology is that it ignores the potential effect of the discourse community norms in which writing takes place. They argued that knowledge is socially constructed within discourse communities. As they evolve, different discourse communities develop different rhetorical requirements and expectations of its members. Such requirements and expectations do also differ from discipline to another (e.g.,

Bizzell, 1982; Dudly-Evans, 1997; Johns, 1997; Nystrand 1982; Swales 1990). Leki

notes that "… rhetorical patterns of any culture are surely more complex than they were

once thought to be, more dynamic and protean, responding to the interaction between

discourse communities and individual writers over time and in varied contexts" (1991, p.

134). Accordingly, social constructionists debated texts cannot be studied in isolation, but

rather need to be analyzed in terms of both the writer's goals and reader's expectations

(Nystrand, Himley, & Doyle, 1986) within the discourse community in which it takes

place.

Some studies found out that the rhetorical variation in ESL writing is due to the

fact that writing was performed for different discourse communities. For example, Taylor

and Chen (1997), who compared the English L1, ESL, and Chinese L1 writing of Anglo-

American and Chinese authors, reported that rhetorical variation could be more explained

in terms of the discipline the writers belonged to rather than their native language or

culture. Clyne (1984; cited in Leki, 1991) found out that German academic writing in

math and engineering approximates the English academic style than does German

academic writing in chemistry.

It should be noted here that the argument that different discourse communities

orient their audience differently does not disconfirm the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis.

On the contrary, it could be equally used to uphold the basic claim of contrastive rhetoric

that writers from different cultural backgrounds make different rhetorical choices. As

Leki (1991) puts it:

It seems reasonable to assume that different cultures would orient their discourse

in different ways. Even different discourse communities within a single language,

such as those constituted by different academic disciplines, have different writing

conventions: preferred length of sentences, choice of vocabulary, acceptability of

using first person, extent of using passive voice, degree to which writers are

permitted to interpret, amount of metaphorical language accepted. If different

discourse communities employ differing rhetorics, and if there is transfer of skills

and strategies from L1 to L2, then contrastive rhetoric studies might reveal the

shape of those rhetorical skills and strategies in writers from different cultures.

(pp. 124-125)

It is the responsibility of ESL teachers to help familiarize different "discourse

community members" with alternative rhetorical preferences among their ESL student

population (Connor, 1998; Dudly-Evans, 1997). This can only be done if we have enough

and accurate information about the rhetorical preferences of members of different

discourse communities and cultures, which is the goal of contrastive rhetoric. Only then

can ESL teachers use such information to help "simplify the students' task by offering

glimpses into the differences between those two representations. These glimpses are

intended to help students present themselves (i.e., their texts) as already part of the

discourse community they are addressing" (Leki, 1991, p. 136).

However, any attempt to study cross-cultural rhetorical variation should be done

within the context, norms, and expectations of the discourse community for which the

writing was produced in order for such information to be valid. While a comparison of

the journalistic writing of Arab literary critics to the academic writing of US biologists

would be questionable, a comparison of the L1 scholarly work of Arab and US biologists

submitted to a similar research publication has the potential to reveal similarities and as

well as differences in the rhetorical choices made by the two groups within the same well-defined discourse community. Needless to say, this is only true if writers from both groups produced their articles in their native language. Cross-cultural studies that compare ESL writing to that by native speakers of English will still have to prove that any detected differences are not due to writers' lack of knowledge of audience expectations specific to their target discourse community; it is natural for the rhetorical strategies of ESL writers to be affected by the degree of initiation and socialization that the ESL writer has gone through as he or she strives to become a member of his prospective discourse community.

Contrastive rhetoric studies have already shed light on the developmental processes and struggles that ESL students go through as they get initiated into their prospective academic discourse communities (e.g., Belcher, 1994; 2007; Casanave, 1995, 2004; Connor & Kramer, 1995; Connor & Mayberry, 1995; Flowerdew, 2000). It has also been pointed out that some problematic features in ESL student writing can be better explained by discrepancy between audience expectations and writer assumptions rather than crosslinguistic variation (e.g., Connor, 2003; Krapels, 1990; Scarcella, 1984b). For example, in a study investigating introductions by native and non-native freshmen writers in US colleges, Scarcella (1984b) asserted that native writers' tighter and more effective introductions in her study were due to the greater familiarity that the Anglo-American writers had with their intended audience (i.e., their teachers' expectations) than the non-native writers did.

To sum up, contrastive rhetoric studies need to incorporate in their research design checks that differentiate between rhetorical features salient to a given

cultural/language background and those features that ESL writers resort to as they try to adjust to their newfound discourse community. Contrastive rhetoric studies also need to address the impact of audience awareness and audience expectations on writers' products—an issue that was neglected by early contrastive rhetoric studies.

By establishing adequate *tertium comparationis* and taking the effect of contextual factors such as the rhetorical tradition, literacy practices, and writers' past writing (instruction) experiences into consideration, the current study aspires to provide more accurate insights into the ontology of cross-cultural rhetorical variation in the writing of Arab and US students.

Situational Factors. In addition to foregrounding the potential effect of contextual factors on how writers construct their writing, social constructionists also brought to light the need to consider the role that the "rhetorical situation" plays in shaping any piece of writing before any conclusions about cross-cultural variation are made. According to Bitzer (1968), the rhetorical situation is "the context in which speakers or writers create rhetorical discourse" (p. 1). Writing task/prompt, topic familiarity/interest, and subject matter knowledge are examples of situational variables that can potentially affect rhetorical choices that one makes when composing. Since most early contrastive rhetoric studies, including Kaplan's 1966 study, did not control for such situational variables, the claim that rhetoric is culturally-determined remains unsubstantiated.

Task complexity and task type have been correlated with student L2 writing performance (e.g., Hamp-Lyons & Mathias, 1994; Kuiken & Vedder, 2008). Hamp-Lyons (1990) cites ample research reports that confirm that students' writing

performance varies based on the writing prompt. Cheng (2003) reports that writing prompts that provided Chinese ESL students with more "rhetorical specification" about the purpose of the composition, intended audience, and expected structure triggered ESL writing that is more conforming to the Anglo-American rhetorical expectations. Mohan and Lo (1985) revealed that unfamiliarity with the topic negatively affected coherence in ESL student writing. Subject matter knowledge was also linked to overall writing quality (e.g., Brossell, 1986; Faigley, Cherry, Jolliffe, & Skinner, 1985; Mason & Scirica, 2006; Tedick, 1990). Guest (2006) cites two studies by Rose (1996) and Beebe and Takahashi (1989) that showed that the degree of directness in rhetoric by Japanese native speakers is linked to situational variables.

Like contextual variables, situational variables need to be statistically controlled in contrastive rhetoric research. This could be achieved if the writing samples were collected in similar settings. The data collection procedures of the current study (described in Chapter Four) were planned to minimize the potential effect of situational variables on the writers' rhetorical choices.

Conclusion and implications for this study. Constructive criticism by social constructionists of the inconclusive contrastive rhetoric research agenda has helped enrich and refine the contrastive rhetoric research paradigm and is therefore worthy being taken into consideration in future contrastive rhetoric studies. The epistemological issues that social constructionists raised about contrastive rhetoric research have dispelled the view of ESL learners as "cardboard characters" imprisoned by constraints imposed by their first language in favor of an acknowledgment of a broader sociocultural etiology (Leki, 1991). They have emphasized the dynamic nature of writing as a culturally-

embedded activity that is influenced by the context in which it takes place (e.g., Carson, 1992; Carson, Carrell, Silberstein, Kroll, & Kuehn, 1990; Folman & Sarig, 1990; Matsuda, 1997; Purves, 1988; Purves & Purves, 1986; Swales, 1990). In other words, writers, from such a perspective, are seen as individuals who are dynamically making instant rhetorical decisions as they construct their writing based on a multitude of contextual and situational factors (e.g., Matsuda, 1997; Swales, 1990).

Epistemological insights from social constructionist theory have also helped broaden the scope of contrastive rhetoric as contrastive rhetoric researchers started to investigate more contextual and situational variables that could contribute to the explanation of cross-cultural rhetorical variation, if any. This has helped clarify a lot of stereotypes and misconceptions about rhetorical preferences and thought patterns of ESL students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. It has also helped researchers and educators question the parsimonious approach of the initial contrastive rhetoric hypothesis and realize the complexity of variables that shape the rhetorical choices a writer makes when writing for a specific task in a specific context for a specific audience. However, research studies of this kind have just scratched the surface; more research on the effect of contextual and situational factors on writers' rhetorical choices is needed to provide us with a clearer picture of cross-cultural rhetorical variation and its etiology (Connor & Moreno, 2005).

Contrastive rhetoric studies that do not directly investigate contextual and situational factors need to address social constructionists' epistemological concerns to avoid the pitfalls of early contrastive rhetoric studies. This can be done by taking measures to ensure that writing samples analyzed are of adequate *tertium comparationis*

(Connor, 1996; Connor & Moreno, 2005; Janicki, 1986; Ouaouicha, 1986; Scollon, 1997) and between-group as well as within-group comparisons are held. In other words, while traditional contrastive rhetoric studies focused exclusively on the analysis of ESL writing and compared it to that of ideal or actual writing by native speakers of English, a more reliable approach would analyze both the L1 and L2 writing of the same students and compare it to that of native speakers of English with similar characteristics and in similar situations and contexts within the same discourse community. This way, most contextual and situational variables that could affect the research results could be controlled. Researchers should also consider the potential effect of uncontrollable contextual and situational variables as they interpret their own and existing research results.

In a nutshell, concerns voiced by empiricists and social constructionists about the epistemological foundations of traditional contrastive rhetoric have resulted in a refined epistemological framework for contrastive rhetoric that factors in the potential effect of contextual and situational variables on the construction of writing in the research design and interpretation of results. The current study is situated within this updated epistemological framework, for it compares the L1 and L2 writing of Arab ESL students as well as the L1 writing of Anglo-American students at the same educational level produced for the same writing task and collected under similar conditions. Uncontrollable variables will be pointed out and taken into consideration when results are discussed and interpreted. The analytical framework of the current study will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four. For the time being, a discussion of the most controversial assumptions of contrastive rhetoric, namely, the controversial axiological assumptions of contrastive rhetoric, is in order.

Axiological Issues in Contrastive Rhetoric

Ontological and epistemological assumptions were not the only theoretical foundations of contrastive rhetoric challenged by critics. The axiological assumptions of traditional contrastive rhetoric have also become the target of a lot of criticism from critical constructionists. The critical attack on contrastive rhetoric has inculcated negative misconceptions about the ethics and ideology of the contrastive rhetoric enterprise, undermined the potential of contrastive rhetoric inquiry to help speed the learning process of ESL writers, and thus delayed the evolution of contrastive rhetoric as a well-defined paradigm with solid theoretical foundation and sound pedagogical implications. This section summarizes the axiological concerns raised about traditional contrastive rhetoric, discusses factors that helped amplify the controversy over these concerns, and proposes an alternative axiological framework for contrastive rhetoric research and its pedagogical implications that can help settle the controversy and provide axiological guidelines for the current study.

Critical constructionists and contrastive rhetoric. Critical constructionists took exception to the ideological underpinnings of contrastive rhetoric. From an axiological point of view, they charged that the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis as Kaplan and early adopters introduced it is value-laden, culturally-biased, ethnocentric, and counterproductive. Kubota (1997, 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2001), Saville-Troike and Johnson (1994), Spack (1997), and Zamel (1997) are among scores of critics of contrastive rhetoric, who brought attention to the danger of stereotyping and marginalizing second language writers that is implied in attempts to categorize them in terms of their cultural or native language backgrounds from an ethnocentric perspective

that views English as the superior norm against which other languages are to be measured.

Saville-Troike and Johnson (1994) have expressed concerns that cross-cultural rhetorical comparisons are not value-free; on the contrary, such comparisons tend to "imply value judgments" that "privilege the English-speaker's point of view" (Saville-Troike & Johnson, 1994, p. 239) and marginalize that of the English language learner. They argued that:

> . . . the methodology and terminology of contrastive rhetoric … has given us a deficit model in which *it is difficult* to be objective. For instance our Japanese and Chinese students, in order to relate to the existing literature in contrastive rhetoric and to use the language and concepts of that discourse community, adopt and use the negative terms that Americans have used to describe 'what's wrong' with their rhetorical styles from the viewpoint of the American audience and analyst: 'nonlinear,' 'circular,' 'slow to get to the point,' 'indirect,' 'lacking cohesive ties,' 'digressive,' etc. To take a somewhat Whorfian view, they are being forced into a colonialist deficit perspective rather than a multiculturalist difference perspective. (p. 239; italics in the original)

Zamel (1997) criticizes the "cultural tendency to reduce, categorize, and generalize" about ESL students in a stereotypical fashion. She echoes Severino's (1993a, 1993b) warning that such reductionist tendency "leads to a deterministic stance and deficit orientation as to what students can accomplish in English and what their writing instruction should be" (Zamel, 1997, p. 341). Cahill (2003) argues that portraits of Chinese and Japanese *zhuan/ten* rhetorical structures in contrastive rhetoric literature as

circular are yet another manifestation of widespread "stereotypes about Eastern thought, psychology, culture, and writing" (p. 187)

Spack (1997) examines the repercussions of the unequal power situation resulting from labeling our students with general terms that are insensitive to their individuality. Spack does not only question the use of such labels as TESOL, LEP, and non-native speakers but also teachers' taken-for-granted right to label students in the first place. Spack argues such practices imply the ethnocentric view that English is superior to the native language of students of English. She maintains:

> In the process of labeling students, we put ourselves in the powerful position of rhetorically constructing their identities, a potentially hazardous enterprise. At worst, a label may imply that we sanction an ethnocentric stance. At the very least, it can lead us to stigmatize, to generalize, and to make inaccurate predictions about what students are likely to do as a result of their language or cultural background. (1997, p. 766)

Spack also warns that overgeneralizations "inevitably lead to stereotypical representations of students" (p. 773). Instead, she argues that "teachers and researchers need to view students as individuals, not as members of a cultural group, in order to understand the complexity of writing in a language they are in the process of acquiring" (p. 772).

Guest (2006) argues that the field of contrastive rhetoric research has been plagued by the following tendencies:

- an uncritical acceptance of speculative and subjective 'received wisdom' as fact;

- an application of this received wisdom in forms that the original authors did

  not intend;

- a propensity to reductionism, particularly to binary opposites, thereby creating

  false dilemmas;

- a propensity to reduce complex cultures to a few essential cultural pegs for the

  sake of easy interpretation;

- a tendency to exoticize and thus inaccurately represent foreign language

  features as representative of wholly 'other' cultural traits;

- an unwillingness to deal with, or ignorance of, critical research or research

  that has lead to opposing conclusions. (p. 13)

Kubota (1997) took exception to stereotypical overgeneralizations about

rhetorical styles in different cultures based on a few non-representative samples. In a later

publication, Kubota (1998b) cautions that the discussion of cultural differences in the

ESL classroom based on such overgeneralizations might lead to "biased value

judgments" that favor the target language at the expense of the students' native language.

Kubota proposes "the notion of human agency" as an alternative to traditional

stereotypical views of cultures. Kubota argues that "… writers in a certain culture are

diverse in their ability, experience, and intention. They actively engage in interpreting

and using linguistic codes as human agents" (p. 74).

In two follow-up articles, Kubota (1999, 2001) critiques traditional ESL writing

approaches in general and the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis in particular from

postmodern, postculturalist, and postcolonial perspectives. She argues that both propagate

"a cultural dichotomy between the East and the West" (1999, p. 9). She maintains that the

needless dichotomy generates "fixed, apolitical, and essentialized representations" (1999, p. 9) that otherize and exoticize the native culture, language, and rhetoric of ESL students in favor of a superior native English *Self* reflecting unbalanced power structures between the biased *Self* and exoticized *Other*. Kubota invites ESL educators to take a firm stance against such inequalities in power relations. To do so, Kubota suggests that they adopt a critical multiculturalist approach that "go[es] beyond simply affirming and respecting the culture of the Other and romanticizing its authentic voices—they need to critically explore how cultural differences as a form of knowledge are produced and perpetuated and how they can work toward transforming the status quo" (1999, pp. 27-28).

The etiology of the axiological controversy. Contrastive rhetoricians (e.g., Atkinson, 1999, 2004; Sower, 1999; Connor, 2002, 2004, 2005; Walker, 2007) have already responded to the axiological concerns of contrastive rhetoric critics. Responses varied from reluctant concessions to some of the points of contention (e.g., Atkinson, 1999, 2004; Connor, 2002, 2004) to harsh criticism of postmodernism (e.g., Walker, 2007). Although it is beyond the scope of the current study to even-handedly scrutinize the postcolonial critique of contrastive rhetoric summarized above, this study concurs with the view that the original ontological stance set forth by Kaplan in his 1966 publication that language controls logic, culture, and thought is axiologically controversial. Such axiological concerns can be addressed in both contrastive rhetoric research and ESL writing pedagogy by advocating for the adoption of a set of unbiased and value-free research and pedagogical guidelines, some of which are already in effect in recent contrastive rhetoric publications (Connor, 2005). In the meantime, this study concurs with proponents of contrastive rhetoric that postmodern "criticism stems in part

from critics' lack of understanding about current perspectives in contrastive rhetoric and changes that have taken place in this area in the past decade" (Connor 2002, pp. 493-494). However, it should be noted that such misunderstanding is due in part to the fact that despite current positive changes in the axiological perspectives of contrastive rhetoric, Kaplan's unsubstantiated ethnocentric claims about and diagrams of cultural thought patterns, reminiscent of the early contrastive rhetoric days, continue to appear in contrastive rhetoric publications, ESL writing textbooks, and classroom practices, renewing concerns about the axiological assumptions of contrastive rhetoric. The remainder of this section will elaborate on what caused the axiological controversy and how it can be resolved.

Setting the stage for an Anglo-American biased tone. Although Kaplan cautioned about the potential axiological repercussions of contrastive rhetoric, an Anglo-American biased tone in some contrastive rhetoric publications, can be traced to his early diagrams and descriptions of cross-cultural rhetorical variation.

To Kaplan's credit, from the onset of contrastive rhetoric in 1966, he warned that his descriptions of rhetorical styles in different cultures are speculative. He emphasized that "Much more detailed and more accurate descriptions are required before any meaningful contrastive system can be elaborated" (Kaplan, 1966, p. 15). He also advocated that contrastive rhetoric be value-free by setting the following axiological maxims:

1. "The English language … is not a better nor a worse system than any other, but it is different" (Kaplan, 1966, p. 3).

2. The contrastive rhetoric hypothesis "is not intended to offer any criticism of other existing paragraph developments; rather it is intended only to demonstrate that paragraph developments other than those normally regarded as desirable in English do exist'' (Kaplan, 1966, p. 14).

3. It is not in the best interest of our ESL students to replace their native rhetorical structures with those of English. "While it is necessary for the non-native speaker learning English to master the rhetoric of the English paragraph, it must be remembered that the foreign student, ideally, will be returning to his home country, and that his stay in the United States is a brief one. Under these circumstances, English is a means to an end for him; it is not an end in itself" (Kaplan, 1966, p. 19).

However, the language and tone that Kaplan used to introduce his contrastive rhetoric hypothesis betrayed serious abandonment of his value-free maxims. In the same 1966 article, Kaplan was convinced that "The foreign student who has mastered the syntax of English might still write a bad paragraph or a bad paper unless he also masters the logic of English" (Kaplan, 1966, p. 15) implying that ESL students are incapable of reasoning until ESL teachers embark on a legitimate process of "brainwashing" that involves teaching of English rational thinking and rhetorical patterns. In his own words, "But remember, please, that at this stage you are not merely teaching the student to manipulate language—you are actually teaching him to see the world through English-colored glasses. In doing so you run the very serious risk of being legitimately accused of brainwashing" (Kaplan, 1967, p. 16). In 1988, Kaplan repeated his ethnocentric and essentializing stance when he asserted that Arabs not only lack knowledge of heuristic texts, but are also unable to learn how to produce them unless "both the form and the

ideological process through which one arrives at the form [are] taught …" (pp. 289-290).
As late as 2001, Kaplan admitted that he "continue[s] to believe that English is more
linear than some other languages."

A classic example of Kaplan's ethnocentric claims is the infamous article he co-
authored with Ramanathan (1996) in which they argued that L1 composition texts are not
appropriate for ESL students because the textbooks focus on "critical thinking skills,"
which Ramanathan and Kaplan believed are foreign concepts to non-native speakers of
English. Ramanathan and Kaplan's (1996) unsubstantiated claims are frequently quoted
in postmodern critiques of contrastive rhetoric (e.g., Benesch, 1993, 1999, 2001;
Canagarajah, 1999; Kubota, 1999; Raimes & Zamel, 1997; Spack, 1997; Stapleton, 2001;
Zamel, 1997). Spack (1997) even muses how much critical thinking skills Ramanathan
and Kaplan themselves possess to come to such a conclusion from the premises they
examined.

In a nutshell, Kaplan's comments about English and other languages carried a
biased tone that has set the contrastive rhetoric stage for bias towards English at the
expense of other languages and cultures.

Echoing the Anglo-American biased tone. In addition to setting the tone for
"Anglo-American bias," (Connor 1996, p. 55) in subsequent contrastive rhetoric
publications, Kaplan's speculative stereotypical and ethnocentric statements about
different languages and cultural thought patterns continue to circulate among some ESL
professional circles as undisputed facts. Connor summarizes how Kaplan's controversial
conceptualization of cultural thought patterns dominated the scene when she writes, "For

thirty years, contrastive rhetoric has been practiced within a ruling paradigm suggested by Kaplan's first research" (Connor 1996, p. 6).

Ethnocentric views of Japanese. To illustrate, although Kaplan's intuitive descriptions of Japanese rhetoric have been empirically challenged (e.g., Cahill, 2003), Dyer and Friederich (2002; cited in Guest, 2006) report them as solid facts when they write: "We know, for example, that the Japanese rhetorical style in expository writing is circular, with a thesis coming at the end rather than at the beginning, as in linear Western argument" (Dyer & Friederich, 2002, p. 266). Fox (1994; quoted in Zamel, 1997), too, writes that Japanese students "may be feeling a little ashamed about not being straight-line thinkers" (p. 114). Other researchers who propagated Kaplan's claims that Asian writers are non-straight line thinkers include Bolivar (1994), Cai (1993) Clyne (1994), Eggington (1987), McKay (1993), Oi (1999), Oi and Kamimura (1997), Scollon and Scollon (1997), Wang, 1994 and Young (1994).

Ethnocentric views of Arabic. In her article entitled, "ESL Composition: The Linear Product of American Thought," Reid (1984) propagated Kaplan's ethnocentric view that "Most American academic prose is dominantly linear, utterly straightforward, and very specific in its presentation of material" while "Most international students will have quite different writing backgrounds" (Reid, 1984, p. 449) from that of native English speakers. To support her claim, Reid alleged "Just as few nations prize efficiency as highly as the United States, so few peoples present written material in such a direct and unelaborated manner as Americans. Arabic, for example, is an immensely poetic language, filled with coordinate clauses and a tendency toward generality and analogy; use of detail or supporting data is not essential" (1984, p. 449). Allen (1970) repeated

Kaplan's assertions that Arabic rhetoric is packed with of unnecessary repetition and paraphrasing, while English is not. In his contrastive study of the English writing by Jordanian and Anglo-American students, Atari (1983) echoes Kaplan's claims that

> … the differences in the written discourse strategies of Arab students reflect differences in thought processes that are culturally-bound. The source culture in which the Arab student belongs, as in any other culture, breeds a certain form of outlook and perception of reality. (Atari, 1983, p. 6)

Similarly, Clark and Bamberg (2003, p. 377) present Kaplan's unsubstantiated claims about the influence of the Quran on Arabs' rhetorical strategies as facts.

Even non-native English speaking contrastive rhetoricians fall for the ethnocentric-as-usual trap when they find it inescapable to defend and adjudicate other languages against the dominant language, namely English. Consider the following excerpt from Mohamed and Omer (2000) as they present the case of Arabic rhetoric:

> Finally, the differences in cohesion between the two languages are not the result of linguistic differences between the two languages, nor do they reflect any differences in the cognitive abilities of the writers in the two cultures. Indeed, from a linguistic point of view, the range of cohesive devices investigated are equally available for use by the writers in the two cultures. Thus, for instance, *Arabic is as capable as English is* [italics added] in signalling cohesive relationships very precisely. Arabic is rich in the various forms used to realise grammatical cohesion as well as in synonyms. *It is therefore perfectly possible in Arabic to avoid repetition* [italics added] of the same lexical items or sentences. It is also perfectly possible in Arabic to avoid 'ambiguous' pronominal reference. In

fact, linguistically speaking, there is little difference in what can be done - with

reference to cohesion - in the two languages. Hence, the differences in the

cohesive devices between the two languages are not linguistically determined.

Rather, they are culturally-determined. In more specific terms, the differences in

the social ties in the two societies are, in a sense, reflected in the differences in the

cohesive ties used by writers in the two cultures. (pp. 70-71)

Statements such as "Arabic is as capable as English is" reveal how Arabic is adjudicated against English. The defense that "It is therefore perfectly possible in Arabic to avoid repetition" betrays the essentializing and ethnocentric view inherited from Kaplan that repetition is an undesirable rhetorical strategy that is foreign to English rhetoric.

Other ESL educators were also quick to transform Kaplan's speculations to practical teaching ideas. As Leki put it, "… the findings of early contrastive rhetoric studies were whole-heartedly embraced in many ESL writing classes, which actually taught that English speakers think in a straight line while Asians think in circles and others think in zigzags" (Leki, 1991, p. 123). Yorkey (1977), for example, notes that "Teachers at the American University of Beirut refer to the *wa wa* method of writing because of the Arabic *wa* 'and', which is exceedingly used as a sentence-connector" (p. 14) echoing Kaplan's remark that Arab ESL writers use coordination excessively in their writing. Thompson-Panos and Thomas-Ružić (1983), too, echo Kaplan's hypothesis that "Foreign students who have mastered English syntax must learn its logic and rhetoric in order to relate syntactic elements within a paragraph and to relate paragraphs within a total context." (1983, p. 619). Therefore, they foreground some stylistic and rhetorical differences between English and Arabic such as the claim of Arabs' heavy reliance on

parallel constructions and repetition. Farquharson (1998) suggests that teaching Arab ESL students critical thinking skills is crucial to their success in the US educational system implying Arab students come to the United States incapable of thinking critically on their own.

Ethnocentric diagrams. Kaplan's ethnocentric speculations did not only appear in ESL journal articles (e.g., Carpenter & Hunter, 1981; Dehghanpisheh, 1979), but were also incorporated in composition textbooks such as Bander (1983) and Cobb (1985). Kaplan's diagrams, though can be best described as oversimplistic (Braddock, 1974; Center 2004; Hinds, 1983; Leki, 1991; Mohan & Lo, 1985; Sa'adeddin, 1989), "have been widely reprinted, appearing even in ESL composition textbooks" (Leki, 1991, p. 123). They even made their way to books on cross-cultural communication (e.g., Singer, 1987). Connor (1996) summarizes the problem with Kaplan's diagrams when she explains they, as well as his hypothesis,

> … have been interpreted too simplistically and too literally. Novices reading the article assume that all writers of a particular language compose all their writings in the organizational pattern described by Kaplan. It is even more unfortunate that Kaplan's diagram is taken to mean that a writing pattern reflects a thinking pattern. In other words, the Chinese write in circles; therefore, they must think in circles. (p. 31)

To sum up, although Kaplan asserted that contrastive rhetoric is not meant to declare English superior to other languages, his descriptions and diagrams of logic and rhetorical strategies in different languages betray some cultural bias toward English. The

ethnocentric bias has compromised some research and pedagogical applications of contrastive rhetoric and prompted criticism by critical theorists on axiological grounds.

An alternative axiological framework. If contrastive rhetoric is to emerge as a well-defined theoretical paradigm with sound axiological foundation, it should address the axiological concerns of critical theorists found legitimate by adopting a value-free approach to the study of cross-cultural variation that assigns all languages and cultures equal values. In the meantime, such a value-free approach to contrastive rhetoric needs to eliminate dichotomizing, stereotyping, essentializing, otherizing, exoticizing, gatekeeping, and/or marginalizing research and teaching practices. It is imperative that the new contrastive rhetoric paradigm acknowledge the complexity inherent in the study of cross-cultural issues and avoid reductionist or ethnocentric interpretations of cultural phenomena. Instead of dealing with ESL students from a stereotypical deterministic perspective, ESL teachers should deal with second language learners as individuals whose rhetorical choices are affected by a complex variety of cognitive, cultural, and contextual experiences including but not limited to exposure to multiple cultures and rhetorical situations. "Their texts and interpretations can challenge us to recognize our own rhetorical prejudice and to reconceptualize our perspectives on academic discourse—a mutually enriching process" (Zamel & Spack, 1998, p. xi).

Research under the new contrastive rhetoric framework should resist speculative or intuitive explanations of cross-cultural variation in favor of empirically proven facts concluded from well-designed studies with sound research methodology. Ideally, the research will be conducted by a team of researchers who are native speakers of the languages and/or cultures examined—or at least solicit and incorporate the advice of

native speaker experts on the research design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of the results. The research will foreground both similarities and or differences across the languages and/or cultures examined, examine all plausible explanations of the similarities and differences, and interpret the results in light of the research design, contextual, and situational limitations of the study avoiding unwarranted overgeneralizations. In this regard, it is imperative that descriptions and explanations of rhetorical similarities and/or differences be non-judgmental.

In pedagogy, ESL writing teachers should exhibit a flexible attitude toward the rhetorical preferences of second language learners by avoiding biased judgments and providing space for other varieties of written expression. Silva (1997) calls for fairer evaluation practices of ESL student writing. Steinman (2006) "argue[s] that we have a lot to learn by becoming more flexible and open readers/evaluators of texts authored by those who are writing in a language other than their first" (p. 2). Steinman concurs with Zamel and Spack (1998) that "One way to enable students to find their way in the academy, we believe, is for us to accept wider varieties of expression, to embrace multiple ways of communicating. This is exactly what we are asking students to do" (Zamel & Spack, 1998, p. xi). Hyland (2003) reminds us "it is necessary to recognize that features in our students' essays may be evidence of alternative patterns and understandings, rather than of individual inability or poor study habits" (p. 37). Only then, can we appreciate our ESL students' writing and grade it fairly.

ESL writing pedagogy implicating valid findings of contrastive rhetoric research, if any, should present rhetorical patterns preferred in the target culture as an alternative not a substitute for the learners' preferred rhetorical patterns. While ESL teachers have an

obligation to provide their ESL student writers with the linguistic and rhetorical tools

they need to succeed in their academic study and professional career (Connor, 1998,

2002; Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005; Leki, 1991), this does not necessarily happen by

requiring them to purge their L1 rhetoric, but by providing them with alternative tools to

use in their target discourse community to meet the expectations of their new audience,

and thus gain acceptance in that community (Sower, 1999). This can be done by "raising

ESL students' awareness of various factors that are involved in structuring text, including

the reader's expectations of certain organizational patterns" (Matsuda, 1997, p. 56)." The

[ultimate] goal should be to help ESL writers become proficient "commuters among

literacy communities" (Steinman, 2006, p. 11) "so that as international citizens, they may

move from writing culture to writing culture easily" (Steinman, 2006, p. 11), or from one

discourse community to another.

 In summary, the axiological concerns by critical theorists deemed legitimate

should inform both contrastive rhetoric research and ESL writing pedagogy in order for

contrastive rhetoric to emerge as a well-defined paradigm with solid theoretical

foundations and sound pedagogical implications.

<div align="center">

Conclusion

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 Chapter Two provided a detailed account of controversial issues in the theoretical

assumptions of contrastive rhetoric from ontological, epistemological, and axiological

perspectives in order to shed light on the complex issues involved in the study of cross-

cultural rhetorical variation, situate the current study within its theoretical framework,

extract guidelines for the analysis and interpretation of written discourse from a

contrastive rhetoric perspective, and establish criteria for the evaluation of contrastive

rhetoric studies. The following chapter reviews contrastive rhetoric studies relevant to the present study in light of these criteria.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE II

The current study examines the Arabic L1 and English L2 persuasive writing of Arab writers and the English L1 writing of Anglo-American writers for signs of cross-cultural rhetorical variation. The goal is to extract empirical evidence to confirm or disconfirm Kaplan's contrastive rhetoric hypothesis, at least as it pertains to Arabic and English. To be more specific, the current study seeks answers to seven main questions, namely:

1. Can performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task accurately predict the writers' overall writing performance?

2. Can performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task accurately predict the writers' language/cultural background?

3. Are there significant differences in the ESL and Arabic L1 writing performance of the same Arab advanced ESL writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task?

4. Are there significant differences in the performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same English persuasive writing task?

5. Are there significant differences in the performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same native language persuasive writing task?

6. Are select rhetorical dimensions of English persuasive writing particularly problematic for Arab advanced ESL writers?

7. Are the problems of Arab advanced ESL writers with select rhetorical dimensions, if any, due to first language transfer?

Chapter Two has provided a theoretical framework for the study. This chapter further expounds on this framework by reviewing contrastive rhetoric studies more closely related to the current study. The Chapter starts with a discussion of contrastive rhetoric studies on Arabic followed by a thorough examination of the very few contrastive rhetoric studies that investigated how Arab writers construct argumentative/persuasive writing in comparison to the way native speakers of English do. Examination of these studies of Arab writers in light of the research evaluation criteria presented in the previous chapter will identify their research flaws and conflicting conclusions and thus justify the need for the current study.

Contrastive Rhetoric Studies on Arabic

Shouby (1951)

A long time before Kaplan's study, researchers have reported differences between Arab culture and language on one hand and that of the West on the other hand. Setting out to investigate "The Influence of Arabic Language on the Psychology of the Arabs," Shouby (1951) provides a controversial intuitive account of the cultural differences between Arabs and Westerners. Shouby believes "Arabic is constituted of diffuse undifferentiated, and rigid units and structures" (p. 292); the Arab writer's "duty does not extend so far as to make his meaning clear-cut and equivocal … so long as he pays attention to the grammatical and idiomatic aspects of his writing." For Shouby, Arabic is

coupled with general vagueness of thought. She claims that the rhetorical consequence of these features is that Arabic rhetoric lacks "attention to the connective aspects of sentences" (p. 293) as well as to reader expectations.

Furthermore, Shouby claims:

Arabic literature and language seem to overemphasize the significance of words as such, paying less regard to their meaning than is usually the case in Western literatures and languages. The play on words, for instance, is an important element in Arabic literature, and jokes based upon a play on words are predominant in all types of wit and humor. Arabic names of places, things and persons are important constituting a vital element of their integrity and influencing the attitude of people toward them. The tendency to fit the thought to the word or to the combination of words, rather than the word to the thought, is a result of the psychological replacement of thoughts by words, the words becoming the substitutes for thoughts, and not their representatives. (p. 295)

According to Shouby, the consequence of this is that "As may be expected, some of the errors in reasoning carried out in Arabic (more than is to be observed in the semantics of analytic languages) are exclusively due to the confusion between words and the things they represent" (p. 295). She further asserts that the reason behind the empty arguments sometimes produced by intelligent and learned Arab speakers is the affective mood created by the emotive and impulsive signs the Arabs show while speaking (p. 298).

Shouby notes that "the style of Arabic prose is still too florid (as judged by the standards applicable to English prose) to be considered factual and realistic. This feature is due to the fact that Arabs use numerous grammatical, stylistic and rhetorical devices to

achieve overassertion and exaggeration" (1951, pp. 298-99). Added to this is Arabs' "repetitive overattention to minute details, but without reintegrating these details into a composite and well-organized whole" (p 299).

Careful consideration of Shouby's intuitive descriptions of Arabic language and culture bring to attention the fact that there might be grammatical, stylistic and rhetorical differences between English and Arabic—later proposed by Kaplan (1966). However, these intuitions should be cautiously dealt with, for Shouby derives most of the examples on which she based her judgments on Arabic from Classical Arabic, which is no longer used in its pure form in modern standard Arabic. Besides, her tone is obviously axiologically-biased; in fact, Leki (1991) accurately describes her work as "dubious" (p. 126). After all, her ethnocentric judgments lack empirical proof and should not pass as generalizations on Arabic language or culture until representative samples of modern standard Arabic writing in different genres are empirically studied.

Ostler (1987a)

In addition to the contributions of such scholars as Shouby (1951), the purpose of whose research is mainly psychological in nature, some researchers followed Kaplan's tradition for the study of the rhetorical contrast between English and Arabic. Among those scholars is Ostler (1987a). Ostler compared the ESL expository writing of 21 Saudi Arabian students in a controlled setting (namely, placement test) to 10 samples of English paragraphs randomly selected from published books by Anglo-American professional writers. All writing samples were analyzed for intrasentential stylistic differences via Hunt's (1965) T-Unit model and extra-sentential stylistic differences via Pitkin's (1969) Discourse Bloc analysis as modified by Kaplan (1972). Ostler reported that, unlike

Anglo-American writers, Arab student writers wrote heavily stylistic texts marked with overuse of coordination and more subdivision (defined as number of Discourse Units per Discourse Bloc). Claiming to support Kaplan's hypothesis, Ostler suggested that the between-group variation in stylistic and rhetorical features is attributable to cultural differences. Ostler further ascribed the unique features of Arab ESL writing to the influence of Classical Standard Arabic and the Quran on the rhetorical style of the Arabs. She points out that, unlike English writing, which focuses on idea content, Arabic writing stresses the language of the text rather than its propositional content. Such claims echo claims made by Kaplan (1966) and Koch (1981).

Unfortunately, Ostler's comparisons are not based on an adequate *tertium comparationis*. Ostler does not consider the potential effect of subject matter knowledge, time constraints, revision opportunities, professional editing, and test anxiety on the writing quality of the two groups and consequently the outcome of her results. While the Arab participants in Ostler's samples were assigned a general topic to write on, the native English samples were randomly selected from published books by accomplished authors. It is very likely that the professional NES writers had better chances to write about topics on subject matter they were specialized in and counted on decades of professional writing experience to craft their paragraphs. The Arab students, on the other hand, were just starting their undergraduate studies and most likely approached the assigned topics from a non-specialist opinion approach. Kaplan (1988) stresses "the fact that a student has opinions about a given topic does not mean the student knows the subject well enough to write about [it]" (p. 297). Research has shown that expert writing is more sophisticated than novice/student writing—even when the writing compared is in the same native

language (e.g., Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1986, 1987; Berninger & Richards, 2002;

Bryson, Bereiter, Scardamalia, & Joram, 1991; Crammond, 1999; Kellogg, 1994).

Furthermore, while Arab writers were constrained by the time limit imposed by the

controlled test setting, such time constraints were not necessarily present when the

professional writers composed their writing. While the revision opportunities for the Arab

writers were limited by the test duration, the professional authors perhaps had many

opportunities for revision and peer editing before they submitted their writing drafts to

professional editors for more feedback. Kaplan (1987), an accomplished writer, confirms

this fact when he remarks that his paper "is in its third major reincarnation and may

undergo further evolution if there is a second edition of the collection in which it

appears" (p. 17). It would, therefore, be hard to dismiss the effect of the revision cycles

through which the professional samples underwent on the quality of these samples as

compared to the crude writing samples by the Arab examinees. Moreover, the controlled

versus free writing environment highlights the effect of test anxiety factors associated

with test settings as compared to the settings of the professional authors. Such contextual

and situational effects might have resulted in skewing the comparison results in favor of

the native English speaker group.

Ostler (1987b)

In comparison to Ostler's (1987a) previous study which used writing samples

from Anglo-American professional authors as the comparison baseline, the basis of

comparison for her second study (Ostler, 1987b) was writing by Anglo-American

freshman students. Using the same analytical tools, Ostler compared the English writing

of 160 English, Spanish, Arab, and Japanese students. Ostler's findings confirmed that

the four groups used unique stylistic and rhetorical patterns. However, findings showed that although Arabs continue to use more parallel constructions in their ESL writing than Anglo-Americans, they do incorporate complex structures. Use of relative clauses in particular was more evident in Arab ESL writing than in that by NESs. It is also evident that the difference between the two groups in rhetorical development is not a question of frequency or occurrence, but a matter of location. While Anglo-American writers developed most of their ideas in the introductory section of their essays, the Arab students delayed the main bulk of their idea development until after they wrote an elaborate introduction. Another remarkable observation Ostler made was that the Anglo-American corpus had "highly-developed" summarizing conclusions in contrast to those by Arab writers, which were less consistent and featured proverbial sayings.

Reid (1988, 1992)

Another researcher who followed a different direction within the contrastive rhetoric framework is Reid (1988, 1992). Using the *Writer's Workbench Program*, a computer-based text analysis tool, Reid analyzed the English writing of Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, and English native speakers. Reid's findings implicated differences among the four language groups concerning lexico-syntactic features (1988) and use of four cohesion devices (1992). For her 1992 study, Reid analyzed 768 English essays of native speakers of the four language backgrounds for percent of pronouns, coordinate conjunctions, subordinate conjunction openers, and prepositions. As far as Arabic is concerned, Reid reported that Arab student writers used more personal pronouns and coordinate conjunctions, but less subordinate conjunction openers and prepositions than native speakers of English did. More interestingly, Arab student writers manipulated

more coordinate conjunctions than did students belonging to other language backgrounds incorporated in the analysis (Reid, 1992, p. 104). However, absent from Reid studies is any analysis of the macro rhetorical structures of the student essays. It is not clear how the mostly intersentential features Reid analyzed affect the rhetorical choices of the students at the discourse level or the rhetorical quality of their writing.

Williams (1994) and Mohamed and Omer (1999)

Williams (1994) investigated the differences between English and Arabic using a different approach. His approach depended on making two translations of an Arabic text; a literal one and an idiomatic one and then comparing use of cohesive devices in both translations (1994, p. 127). He concluded that cohesive features found in written Arabic are similar to those features common in oral culture (1994, p. 127).

Mohamed and Omer's (1999) approach to the study of Arabic rhetoric was somewhat similar to Williams'. They compared two Arabic short stories by two Arab novelists and English translations of the stories by professional native English translators, as well as a third Arabic short story and an English one. The stories were mostly published in the 1960s. Mohamed and Omer mainly compared coordination and subordination; they concluded that the Arab stories contained more coordination while the English translations contained more subordination. The authors argued that the linguistic variation in the texts implied global rhetorical variation.

Conclusions by Mohamed and Omer as well as Williams (1994) cannot be generalized for a number of reasons. First, their samples are too limited to warrant valid generalizations. Second, the dated samples analyzed do not necessarily reflect linguistic or rhetorical features of today's Arabic rhetoric. Third, the literary nature of the texts

analyzed casts doubts of the applicability of findings to non-literary texts. In his 1966 study, Kaplan noted that coordination is more common in English literary styles, anyway. Fourth, the authors did not establish a cause and effect relationship between coordination and logical organization of the text. On the contrary, other studies (e.g., Black, 1997; Ferris, 1994) have shown that there is no relationship between sequential and parallel progression on one hand and text quality on the other hand. In conclusion, more research that compares the rhetorical rather than the "poetic" features (Scollon, 1997) is needed before conclusions can be made about cross-cultural rhetorical variation.

Sa'Adeddin (1989)

Sa'Adeddin (1989) explains the negative transfer of text development from Arabic L1 into English L2 by arguing that English prose permits the visual mode only as a means of developing texts whereas in Arabic "the visual mode . . . is merely one of the options (1989, p. 36). He adds that Arabs prefer the aural mode of text development to the visual one. This causes native English speakers to see Arab writing as "trespassing, presumptive, illiterate, haranguing and breathing down the neck of the audience" (1989, p. 44).

> Sa'Adeddin differentiates between the aural and visual modes as follows:
> If the producer . . . chooses to develop his text aurally, the surface text will often
> bear such markers of orality as repetition in the channel; recurrent and plain lexis;
> overemphasis, exaggeration; the repetition of specific syntactic structures;
> discreteness; loose packaging of information; an abundance of floor and attention-
> holding expressions; a lack of apparent coherence; an abundance of improvisatory
> elements (including 'repair'); rhetorical organizers and face-to-face interactions;

development by addition and accumulation; lack of self-awareness in the writing

process, and a simplicity of thematic structure. But if the producer opts to develop

his text visually, all markers of orality will be pruned, unless otherwise dictated

by the context of utilization. (1989, p. 38)

Sa'Adeddin derives proof of the visual mode of text development in the writing of

Arab native speakers by providing the English translation of two Arabic written texts

characterized by "logical progression, linearization, coherence and economy of

expression" (1989, p. 45). He concludes with the argument that Arabic speakers' use of a

different mode from that preferred by native English speakers in writing implies

ignorance of the sociolinguistic expectations of the receivers rather than absence of

logical reasoning in Arabic rhetoric.

Doushaq (1986)

In contrast to the aforementioned approaches investigating the rhetorical

differences between English and Arabic writing, Doushaq (1986) compared the Arabic

L1 student writing to their English L2 writing. Analyses of student writing revealed that

in both languages student writing lacked text organization, paragraph unity, text

cohesion, text development, and appropriate use of language functions and relevant

expressions (1986, p. 37). Though student writing in both languages lacked coherence,

the essays written by English-major students were more coherent than were those of the

Arabic-major students. Bearing in mind that the former received instruction on the

development of writing skills in their ESL classes, Doushaq suggested that there might

have been a "reversed positive transfer in the process of learning language skills" (1986,

p. 35) from ESL to Arabic L1 "confirming that weakness in the writing skills in the

foreign language is due to some extent to an original weakness in the mastery of Arabic writing skills" (1986, p. 37).

While Doushaq's study confirms that the Arab participants in his study performed lower than expected, it remains unclear how his Arab participants' performance compared to their NES counterparts. Besides, it is possible that the participants in Doushaq's study wrote more coherent essays in English than they did in Arabic because they did receive ESL writing instruction. However, it is equally possible that the linguistic and rhetorical variation between the ESL and Arabic L1 essays was because Doushaq's English-majoring participants rarely practiced composing in their Arabic L1.

Liebman (1992)

Criticizing Kaplan's methodology, which was based only on the finished products of student writers neglecting "the contrasts in composing and the circumstances of production" (Liebman, 1992, p. 142), Liebman investigated the educational background of 35 Japanese and 54 Arab students through questionnaires that contained open ended questions, scale questions, and ranking questions. Her objective was to shed light on how the way in which ESL students have learned (or been instructed) their L1 might have affected their L2 rhetorical choices.

According to Liebman, Both groups of students reported "heavy emphasis on grammar, whether during instruction, or during evaluation" (p. 148). Prewriting activities were rarely part of the writing classroom and were only limited general class discussions of the assigned topic and teacher-provided models of good papers. During the writing process, teachers' help was limited to providing students with outlines to guide them or details to include in their writing. Students surveyed in this research stated that at the

revision stage, teachers limited their input to the correction of students' writing products. The teachers' corrections were mainly focused on correction of sentence-level errors.

Responses to Liebman's questionnaires revealed that the writing tasks that the Arab students had to fulfill in their home cultures emphasized writing for transactional purposes. Neither the Japanese nor the Arab students were required to write much on persuasive topics. However, Arab students pointed out that their teachers emphasized use of logical evidence and example in persuasive writing while Japanese students were taught to express their feelings.

The significance of Liebman's research lies in that she was among the first to advocate the exploration of students' previous instructional environment for the purpose of understanding the reasons for some of the culturally-related rhetorical strategies found in ESL student writing. Her findings are also of pedagogical value; knowledge of students' past educational backgrounds and thus their present expectations can guide ESL writing teachers instructional practices. Being aware that Arab students, for example, equate revision with error correction, teachers of ESL writing to these students can make informed decisions on designing activities that encourage their Arab students to revise for meaning and discourse-level changes rather than sentence-level corrections. However, the disadvantage of Liebman's research approach lies in the fact that students' recollection of what their previous instructors emphasized might not be accurate. Besides, writing instruction does not necessarily manifest itself in actual gains in student writing performance.

Contrastive Rhetoric Studies on Arabs' Argumentative/Persuasive Writing

There is abundant literature contrasting the linguistic features of Arabic and English (e.g., Al-Sindy, 1994; Benson, 1980; Diab, 1996; El-daly, 1991; MacLean, 1993; Meziani, 1978, 1980, 1981, 1983, Mohamed & Omar, 1999; Scott & Tucker, 1974; Willcott, 1972). There is also considerable contrastive rhetoric research on the expository writing of Arab students (e.g., Kaplan, 1966; Doushaq, 1986; Mohamed & Omer, 1999; Ostler, 1987a, 1987b; Reid, 1988, 1992; and Williams, 1994; reviewed earlier). However, very few studies have investigated how Arab writers construct argumentative/persuasive writing. Unfortunately, these few studies suffer from serious research design flaws and offer conflicting conclusions about the persuasive strategies and/or problems of Arab writers. This section will thoroughly examine the premises and conclusions of the studies on argumentative/persuasive writing by Arabs in light of the research evaluation criteria outlined in the previous chapter.

Koch (1981)

Although Koch (1981) did not explicitly position her research endeavor under the auspices of contrastive rhetoric, nor did she even seem to be aware of the contrastive rhetoric debate and its contribution to the field of ESL writing (at least at the time she conducted her study), her research has definitely contributed to the contrastive rhetoric debate and is frequently cited in contrastive rhetoric literature on Arabic. According to Koch, her study was motivated by her observation that ESL writing by her Arab students exhibited signs of "peculiar strangeness" that was partly due "to higher-level, global 'mistakes' in how ideas are put together and how topics are approached" (p. 2). The fact

that Koch's inquiry focused on Arabic L1 persuasive discourse by Arab authors adds to its significance to the current study.

Arabs' persuasive strategies. In a series of publications, Koch (1981, 1983a, 1983b, 1983c, 1984; Johnstone, 1986, 1990, 1991) claims that the rhetorical structure of Arabic is highly paratactic. In other words, an Arabic text "proceeds horizontally rather than vertically, in which ideas of equal importance for an argument are chained together" (Johnstone, 1990, p. 230). Koch also claims that presentation and repetition of ideas rather than logical argumentation is the sole strategy of Arabic persuasive discourse. In her own words:

> An [Arab] arguer presents his truths by making them present in discourse: by repeating them, paraphrasing them, doubling them, calling attention to them with external particles … Arabic argumentation is structured by the notion that it is the presentation of an idea - the linguistic forms and the very words that are used to describe it - that is persuasive, not the logical structure of proof which Westerners see behind words. (Koch, 1981, p. 195)

In this sense, Koch's description of Arabic is almost identical to that of Kaplan's (1966). Koch's belief that the rhetorical styles of Arab writers are constrained by limitations imposed by Arabic syntax echoes Kaplan's initial relativist views about cross-cultural rhetoric.

Koch's research design. In her first publication (1981) on the subject, Koch provides examples of repetition in Arabic discourse mainly from two text excerpts on Arab nationalism by Syrian politician Sati al-Husri (1880-1968) that she analyzed using an eclectic ethnographic approach. Koch also occasionally provides examples from

shorter excerpts from two political speeches (a 159-word paragraph and a 145-word one) by late Egyptian president, Jamal Abd Al-Nasir (1918-1970), and an excerpt from a literary piece (150 words) by Egyptian literary critic Shawqi Dhayf (1910-2005). According to Koch, the excerpts she analyzed relied heavily on the use of synonym couplets, morphological parallelism, and repetition of lexical roots on the phrase level as well as repetition of syntactic and cohesive structures, paraphrasing, and parallelism on the sentence and discourse levels as their sole persuasive strategies. Koch refers to such strategies as "paradigamtic patterning" as opposed to "syntagmatic patterning" (or logical sequencing) used by Western authors. Koch argues that the use of paradigmatic patterning in Arabic is not solely for stylistic or decorative purposes but serves a higher rhetorical function of persuading the audience.

Epistemological issues in Koch's research. Regrettably, Koch's statements that Arabs argue by repetition of claims rather than by logical argumentation have been widely quoted and circulated despite the fact that they were invalid overgeneralizations based on a questionable research prototype. This section shows how Koch's research underlies serious flaws that invalidate her outcomes and limit their generalizability.

Nonrepresentative samples. Instead of sampling a variety of current written texts that truly represent written Arabic persuasive discourse, Koch picked outdated texts that best fit her dogmatic notions of how Arabs argue. In doing so, Koch (1981) claimed that "a single text, or even a single sentence, can mirror a whole culture" (p. 9). The researcher begs to differ; one can only generalize about a population if, among other conditions, a large enough representative sample was randomly selected from the population. Most ethnographers would explicitly warn their readers not to fall in the trap

of overgeneralizing the findings of their research to the larger population from which the sample of study was drawn. Ouaouicha (1986) agrees with Hoijer (1954) that "ethnographic research should not jump to conclusions from a limited number of occurrences of a linguistic/cultural phenomenon in the data; one must make sure the data is representative and the phenomenon frequent enough" (Ouaouicha, 1986, p. 68). Unfortunately, the texts Koch picked are far from a representative sample of Arabic persuasive discourse.

Besides, Koch did not consider the effect of the educational and demographic background of the authors she sampled on the outcomes of the analysis. A closer look at the excerpts that Koch built her argument on reveals that the two main excerpts that she analyzed were written by political campaigner Sati al-Husri, who despite his Syrian origin, was raised and educated in non-Arab Istanbul, Turkey. Al-Husri did not return to the Arab world until he was 39 years old (Cleveland, 1971). Although this fact was briefly alluded to by Koch, a discussion of its repercussions on Koch's findings is found nowhere in her seven reports of her ethnographic study. Absent from Koch's argument is any discussion of how al-Husri's writing has been affected by his Turkish upbringing, education, and work experience. Obviously, al-Husri's education in a non-Arab country has not only affected his rhetorical style but also his basic mechanics of writing. Koch herself has noticed "obvious inconsistencies in [his] use of punctuation marks" (Koch, 1981, p. 110). Before the influence of such long exposure to a non-Arab culture is ruled out or at least taken into account, the claim that al-Husri's writing represents Arabic argumentation cannot hold.

The texts of the other two authors from whose writing Koch extracted examples of repetition in Arabic do not have a better chance of passing as representative samples of Arabic argumentation. Once again Koch did not incorporate any research on how the upbringing of the late Egyptian president, Jamal Abd Al-Nasir, the second author from whose speeches Koch has extracted examples of repetition in Arabic discourse, affected his writing. Any bibliography of Abd Al-Nasir would confirm that Abd Al-Nasir was preoccupied with politics since he was eleven to the extent that he neglected his schooling. For example, he only attended 45 days during his senior high school year (Stephens, 1972). Upon graduation from high school, Abd Al-Nasir shortly joined the law school and then was admitted to the Military Academy, where he completed his military training. His study at both schools was in English. In short, Abd Al-Nasir received more training in English than he did in Arabic. Kamel (1989) concurs that Abd Al-Nasir's discourse "might just easily be taken as representative of military discourse in English" (p. 44). The fact that Dhayf's text was a literary text disqualifies it as representative of non-literary discourse, since literary texts are repetitive by nature (Kaplan, 1966; see also Allen, 1991). After all, the three short excerpts by Abd Al-Nasir and Dhayf (ranging from 145 to 159 words) Koch used were too short to provide any valid insights into the rhetorical strategies of their authors, let alone the whole Arab population.

Besides, Koch's corpus, five texts—or excerpts of texts to be more accurate—is not big enough to represent the prolific discourse produced by Arabs or to provide grounds for stereotypical generalizations about the rhetorical strategies of millions of Arab writers. Koch's valuable ethnographic inquiry of her corpus could at best provide

significant insights into the rhetorical style of the authors whose writing she analyzed and the interconnected factors that have contributed to their preference of a writing strategy over another. The outcomes of ethnographic research at such a narrow and subjective scale cannot be applied to any other individuals without other means of validation beyond those investigated in the research design. Until this is accomplished, the stereotypical overgeneralization about Arabic by Koch has no merit.

Effect of textual and contextual factors. Overgeneralizations of research outcomes based on a too-small, non-representative sample are not the only reason the validity of Koch's conclusions are called into question. Although linguists have long emphasized that intratextuality plays an important role in our understanding of a text (e.g., Chandler, 2002), Koch did not analyze the original texts in full length, or at least discuss the hermeneutic impact of the full texts on the rhetorical structure of the parts that she analyzed. Instead, Koch picked an excerpt of each (as short as 145 words), claiming, but not asserting, that the excerpts could be examined as "coherent wholes" (Koch, 1981, p. 7) even though she admits that she did not even have access to the original texts the excerpts came from. Furthermore, Koch did not provide any convincing argument why she selected these specific excerpts out of the full texts. One is tempted to think that she handpicked these very excerpts because they are the best examples she could find to persuade her audience of her preconceived conviction that writing by Arabs is void of logical argumentation.

Repetition in political discourse. The absence of any discussion of the hermeneutic effect of textual and contextual factors on Koch's samples further weakens the validity of her research outcomes. The texts by Al-Husri and Abd Al-Nasir, Koch

analyzed, were meant for political consumption—and in the case of Abd Al-Nasir were oratorical speeches delivered orally—for the purpose of rallying up sympathetic masses. The repetitive style that Koch reported could be attributed to the political nature of the discourse under investigation rather than to cultural background. Halmari (2004) showed how former US presidents, Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton, frequently used poetic means, such as alliteration and metaphor, in their State-of-the-Union political speeches to appeal to the emotions of their audience. She convincingly argued that use of poetics is a successful strategy US political speakers frequently use to boost the persuasiveness of their messages by imparting "an overall image of the speaker as an eloquent and, by derivation, a competent leader." (p. 123).

Investigating how different US politicians construct their argument, Hart (1973) observed that repetition is a characteristic of US political discourse. However, it is utilized by authors differently depending on their perceptions of the audience. Politicians addressing an audience that professes their viewpoint do not seem to find it necessary to substantiate or explicitly warrant their claims, but rather rely heavily on claim repetition. On the other hand, those trying to persuade a potentially "noncommitted" audience make sure that their claims are explicitly spelled out and repeated in hope for winning over such an audience (p. 89).

Hart's research sheds light on a yet another factor not considered in Koch's analysis, namely how assumptions about one's audience affect one's decisions regards the persuasive strategies to use. Hatim (1997) observes that the author's perception of the audience's attitude plays an important role in the former's choice of his or her discourse strategies. When an author judges his or her audience to be an open-minded audience,

xaali-th-thihn, he or she prefers exposition (monitoring) strategies. A *munkir,* 'one who denies,' audience would require argumentation (managing). An amalgamation of exposition and argumentation would be reserved for a *mutaraddid,* 'uncertain' audience. Similarly, the author's perception of whether his or her audience is supportive or unsupportive affects his or her decision to use through-argumentation or counter-argumentation (Hatim, 1997). Unfortunately, Koch's model does not account for how her authors' linguistic and rhetorical choices were influenced by their assumptions about the audience: its knowledge, point of view, shared values, attitudes, and convictions.

Axiological issues in Koch's research. Koch's tendency not to consider the potential effect of the interlocutor's assumptions is best exemplified by her account of a phone conversation that she (1983) mentioned she had with an Arab interlocutor. Koch's reading of the conversation betrays the flaws of ethnocentric approaches to the study of contrastive rhetoric. The following is Koch's description and analysis of the conversation in her own words:

I recently received a call from someone who had heard about my work on Arabic persuasive language and wanted to know more about it. My caller introduced himself with an Arab name. And although his English was fluent I could detect a slight Arabic accent. He began to conversation by mentioning who had referred him to me and describing his research in an area related to mine. Anticipating that he would want offprint and references but being unprepared for the call, I began slowly to phrase my response: his work sounded interesting, I was glad he had called, and I would be glad to . . . . But before I was able to continue, my caller began again. Once again he told me who had given him my name, and once again

he told me how similar his work was to mine. Before the conversation ended with

my giving him the references and agreeing to send him the things he wanted, he

had rephrased his story several more times, and I was only with difficulty keeping

myself from laughing — laughing not at him, but because of the wonderfully

ironic nature of the whole interaction. His request for information about how

Arabs convince people was a perfect example of how Arabs convince people:

namely, by repeating. Metalinguistic remarks like "listen you're doing it yourself"

have a way of bringing conversation to an abrupt end in embarrassed self-

consciousness, so I said nothing about my observations. But if I had thought of it

at the time, I would have liked to remind my caller of an Arabic proverb one of

my informants told me. The proverb goes *Kithratu al-takrar bi-ta?lim al-himar*,

and what it means is Enough repetition will convince even donkey. (1983, pp. 47-

48; italics in the original)

In the above example, Koch criticizes her interlocutor's repetitive accounts of

who referred him and how his work is related to hers as he requests copies of her work on

repetition. As always, Koch's conclusion from the conversation was that "… Arabs

convince people; namely, by repeating" (1983, p. 47). Koch's evident ethnocentric

approach to the analysis of her data have caused her not to consider other potential

interpretations why the Arab interlocutor acted the way he did.

One possible interpretation is that her Arab interlocutor might have used

repetition as a conversation repair strategy in reaction to her failure (from his cultural

perspective) to respond to his opening statements in a manner consistent with his cultural

expectations. When Arabs approach someone mentioning that a third party has referred

them to their interlocutor, they expect their interlocutor to first acknowledge (and most likely praise) the referrer, if not inquire about the referrer's well-being and family. Obviously Koch did not, but rather proceeded unexpectedly to discuss her work. Naturally, the Arab interlocutor on the other end of the line could have thought that there was a line breakup or that Koch did not fully understand his Arabic accent, so he could not help repeating his opening statements in thwarted attempts to trigger the expected response. Had Koch analyzed the exchange from a less ethnocentric approach, that takes into consideration the fact that different cultures have different expectations of how a phone conversation should proceed, most likely her reading of the situation would have been different. She could have even addressed the possibility that her interlocutor—judging from his own cultural perspective—might have considered her a rude, uncooperative interlocutor because of her ignoring his repeated opening statement.

Ouaouicha (1986) concurs that the "tilted power structure" resulting from Koch's claim of the superiority of her native language has stopped her short of reading other potential interpretations of the situation. Ouaouicha (pp. 248-253) explains how Koch has not addressed the likelihood that being aware of the different weights that different cultures ascribe to different argument strategies, her Arab interlocutor might have decided to stick to the stereotypical Arabic strategies of persuasion by repetition to "be himself" and thus assert his cultural identity especially that he thought his intercultural interlocutor is an expert who is aware of Arabs' preference for repetition.

In other words, Ouaouicha does not dismiss the possibility that the Arab interlocutor did on purpose use repetition strategies so as to act in a cooperative manner that meets the expectations of his interlocutor of repetitive illocution from Arab speakers

and thus to facilitate the intercultural verbal exchange. Sarangi (1994) explains that lack of mutual accommodation by intercultural interlocutors can lead to miscommunication. However, Koch, who claims to be the expert on the ins and outs of Arabic argumentation, is very keen on maintaining her cultural identity by insisting that her Arab colleague act according to her culturally-defined expectations. In the meantime, she does not only deny him the same right to maintain his cultural identity by using his own cultural-specific argumentative strategies—allegedly repetition in this case—but also ridicules him when he tries to do so.

Any of the potential interpretations mentioned above can only be verified after a systematic and ethnocentric-free analysis of interlocutors' motives and expectations is performed. Unfortunately, judging from a narrow ethnocentric perspective, Koch jumped to the unwarranted conclusion that her Arab interlocutor was sociolinguistically incompetent and that Arabs argue by repetition maintaining that her sociolinguistic competence and judgment cannot be questioned. The end result of such a power-tilted, ethnocentric approach is ungrounded stereotypical statements about other cultures. Unfortunately, Koch's ethnocentric approach with its potential drawbacks reflects a trend that has been prevalent among a large number of contrastive rhetoric researchers especially at the early stages of contrastive rhetoric evolution.

Inadequate knowledge of Arabic. Koch's ethnocentric approach to the analysis of data is further complicated by her lack of proficiency in the very language she investigated. Hoijer (1954, as cited in Ouaouicha 1986) stressed that researchers embarking on the study of any language phenomena should be equipped with "a profound knowledge of the language, and possibly even the ability to speak and

understand it well" (Hoijer, 1954, p. 99). The following shows that Koch lacks not only a profound knowledge of the Arabic language but also an understanding of its basic tenets.

To start with, Koch (1981) claims that "there are few adverbs or adjectives in Arabic," (p. 59) which is very untrue. Adjectives and adverbs are abundant in Arabic. Most nouns in Arabic can be inflected into adjectives; verbs into adverbs. See, for example, Haroon's (2001) treatment of adverbs (pp. 83-86); and adjectives (pp. 106-111) in Arabic. Like most live languages, Arabic is indisputably "a rich language with prodigious vocabulary and many synonyms" (Schub, 1977, p. 24).

There are also serious translation inaccuracies in Koch's translation of the original Arabic texts. She even mistranslated the title of her main text, namely, *'Al-waqa'i?u wa-al-'ahdathu: nathratun ?ammatun*, which she translated as *The facts and the events: General observations*. A back translation of her version, *'Al-haqa'qu wa-l-?ahdath: mulahathatun ?amma* reveals the inaccuracy. A more accurate translation would be *Historical and current events: An overview*. The danger of such errors in translation lies in the fact that the failure of a non-native speaker of Arabic to recognize the subtle difference between the componential meaning of *waqa'i?u* (historical events) and *'ahdathu* (current events) would lead her to think a lexical couplet is used while in fact it is not.

Koch (1983) also mistranslated and misrepresented an Arabic proverb she used to persuade her audience that the Arabic culture embraces repetition. She asserted her claim by showing how the Arabic proverb mirrored this reality. According to Koch, the proverb reads *Kithratu al-tikrar bi-ta?lim al-himar*, rendered by her as "*enough repetition will convince even a donkey*" (pp. 47-48), a translation that is worthy of scrutiny for a couple

of reasons. First, the translation is completely wrong. The verb *bi-ta?lim* does not mean *will convince*, *sa-tuqni?*, but rather means *will teach* (or *help someone learn*). Besides, Koch unnecessarily inserted the English word *even*, which cannot be traced back to the original Arabic proverb. Third, The proverb Koch quoted is not the original proverb, but rather a wordplay on the original which reads *Kathratu al-tikrar bi-ta?lim <u>ash-shuttar</u>*, *repetition will help the smart [memorize]*. The proverb, which is based on Western theories of conditional learning and behavioral audio-lingual language learning approaches, echoes a conviction prevalent at the time it was coined that repetitive language drills help learners acquire and retain knowledge. Its closest equivalent in English is *practice makes perfect*. In her version of the proverb, the word *the smart* has been replaced by the word *donkey* (note how the words *al-hima*r, the donkey and *ash-shuttar*, the smart rhyme in Arabic). Koch's mistranslation and misrepresentation of this proverb illustrates her lack of knowledge of basic Arabic, the same language that she is examining. After all, use of proverbs to prove cultural variation has been proven counterproductive (Miller, 1994; Rose, 1996; Susser; 1998).

Similarly, most of the examples that Koch provided of lexical couplets might seem to non-native speakers of Arabic or even unlettered Arabic speakers as synonyms while in fact they are not, but rather do encompass subtle semantic distinctions. For example, *al-ta'yidu wa-almusa?datu,* (Koch, 1981, p. 58) *moral and physical support* was translated by Koch as *aid and assistance*; *tatawalladu wa-tanša'u (p. 59), is-born and grows*, was rendered as *is born and emerges. Wuduhun wa-jila'un* (p. 58)*, clear and compelling,* was rendered as *clarity and clarity.* The resulting mistranslations were loosely used to claim that Arabs employ excessive use of synonym couplets.

Incomplete analysis of argumentation. Koch's study does not only suffer from methodological and analytical flaws, but also lacks sound theoretical grounds. In her inquiry of the argumentative strategies in Arabic, Koch was too much preoccupied with the analysis of repetition at the sentence level that she did not conduct any analysis of the macro structure of argument that proves absence of logical evidence in Arabic discourse. Kamel (1989) concurs that Koch's "unvalidated textual analysis did not rely on any valid model/system of argumentation" (p. 36). An interesting empirical study by Fakhri (1994) showed that the global rhetorical organization of Arab writers was not affected by the high frequency of coordination use at the local level.

Fakhri (1994) hypothesized that if Arab students transferred rhetorical patterns from their native language to their ESL writing, and such patterns were unique to Arabic writers, then a comparison of text organization patterns used by Arab and non-Arab ESL writers from different language backgrounds would reveal significant differences between the two groups. To test this hypothesis, he compared the ESL student writing of 30 Arab students and 30 non-Arab students for (a) loose packaging of information, (b) repetition and paraphrase, and (c) absence of metalingual organizers. Fakhri reported no significant differences in the ESL writing of Arab and non-Arab students "except for the number of instances of coordination with *and.*" However, Fakri remarked that ". . . in spite of its high frequency in the Arab subjects' essays, coordination with *and* does not seem to have a major effect on the global organization of these texts, contrary to what has been claimed in previous studies." Fakhri based his claim that excessive use of *and* by Arab speakers is not related to overall textual organization on the finding that analysis of

measures of text organization did not reveal any significant differences between Arab and non-Arab writers. He wrote:

> The analysis shows that most of these subjects used coordination as a low-level or local rhetorical strategy rather than a global strategy for paragraph development as suggested in Kaplan (1966: 6). Eighteen essays (out of thirty) clearly exhibit paragraph structure similar to what might be expected in an acceptable English text (i.e., with a topic sentence, supported by details, examples, and so forth). Coordination appears mainly in the elaboration of examples and supporting detail within the paragraph. This seems to be true even in the case of weak essays with a high frequency of coordination …

It should be noted, however, that Fakhri has not ruled out that training in ESL writing classes might have caused the Arab students in his research to use the English-like organizational patterns.

Fakri's conclusions cast serious doubts on Koch's underlying assumption that the presence of a linguistic/rhetorical feature (repetition in this case) precludes the presence of another feature (logical argumentation). Unless a valid and reliable model of analysis of the macro and micro aspects of argument in Arabic is employed, Koch's claim that arguing by logical evidence is a concept foreign to Arabs does not hold.

Besides, Koch's insufficient model does not account for the occurrence of repetition and parallelism in arguments produced by Westerners. Koch herself admits "[paradigmatic patterning] is more dominant [in English] than we realize, and that there is a deep-seated cultural bias about language, rhetoric, and discourse that keeps us from

seeing it" (p. 198). To illustrate this point, let us first have a look at how a single author

employs different repetition strategies in her English writing (Table 1).

Table 1

Analysis of Repetition in the Writing Style of a Single Author

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The following examples of repetition are actual examples extracted from the writing of a sample writer. The taxonomy of repetition strategies used is adopted from Koch (1981).

Repetition Strategy used	Example
Synonym Couplets	clear and compelling evidence (Koch, 1981, p. 198)
	more and more (Koch, 1981, p. 198)
Repetition of lexical roots	Foregrounds the foregrounded (Johnstone, 1994, p. xiii)
Repetition of complete sentences	My remarks are not intended as a rebuttal of the article. (Koch,1984, p. 542)
	Once again, my remarks are not intended as a corrective to [the] article. (Koch, 1984, p. 544)
Reverse paraphrase	. . . in that they are not abnormal but rather normal in the most crucial way. (Koch, 1981, p. 54).
Parallelism	how ideas are put together and how topics are approached (Koch, 1981, p. 2)
	Rhetoric is at the basis of the structure of language and language is at the basis of rhetoric. (Koch, 1981, p. 2)

Note use of parallelism in the following phrases and clauses from the paragraph below:

- "constraints on discourse are constraints on thought"
- "the way we make discourse coherent reflects the way we make the world coherent."
- "In the broadest sense … In the narrower context"
- "the syntactic constraints of a language are constraints on discourse"
- "the rhetorical constraints of a culture are constraints on the discourse of that culture"

In the broadest sense, constraints on discourse are constraints on thought. Or, in more positive terms, the way we make discourse coherent reflects the way we make the world coherent. In the narrower context of discourse there are two sources of constraint. One on hand, the form a discourse takes is a function of what it is made of: the words and structure of a language. In other words, the syntactic constraints of a language are constraints on discourse. On the other hand, the form of a discourse is constrained by its intended function; the rhetorical constraints of a culture are constraints on the discourse of that culture. (Koch, 1981, p. 183)

Also, note parallelism in the following phrases and clauses from the paragraph below:

- "Insofar as it is a study of Arabic writing . . . it is a contribution to applied linguistics."
- "Insofar as it deals with rhetoric . . . it is a contribution to a new area of concern for linguistics which might be called the ethnography of rhetoric."
- "And insofar as it touches on the issues of linguistic structure . . . it is a contribution to the theoretical study of language."

Insofar as it is a study of Arabic writing, and because it has its roots in Arabs' problems with English and my problem with Arabic, it is a contribution to applied linguistics. Insofar as it deals with rhetoric and is grounded in a strongly ethnographic approach to textual analysis, it is a contribution to a new area of concern for linguistics which might be called the ethnography of rhetoric. And insofar as it touches on the issues of linguistic structure and the creation of language in discourse, it is a contribution to the theoretical study of language. (Koch, 1981, p. 1-2)

Using the same invalid analytic approach Koch employed, a quick look at the repetitive and parallel language in the examples above would lead one to think that they come from a typical Arab writer. Most likely, one would also jump to the conclusion that the texts, from which the examples were extracted, lack any trace of logical arguments. As a matter of fact, all the examples above, abundant with the Arabic-like features described by Koch such as synonym couplets, repetition of lexical roots, repetition of complete sentences, reverse paraphrase, and parallelism, came from the writing of Koch herself. This ironic fact alerts us that any model of argument that lends itself to unproductive stereotypical judgments or fails to distinguish between shared and distinctive linguistic/ rhetorical features in two different languages is an incomplete one.

Misreading the Arabic rhetorical tradition. Koch's model does not only lack an explanation of repetition and parallelism in Western arguments, but also fails to provide any explanation as to why Arabs with no exposure to Western languages or cultures have produced perfectly linear arguments from a Western perspective throughout history. On the contrary, she (1984) echoes Kaplan's (1966) claim that to Arabs "the Aristotelian model of proof, which calls for subordination of supporting ideas to the 'main idea,' … the model for effective argument in English," is a foreign concept (Koch, 1984, p. 544). She further assumes but does not assert that Arabic "Argument by presentation has its roots in the history of Arab society, in the ultimate, universal truths of the *Qur'an* and in hierarchical societies autocratically ruled by caliphs who were not only secular rulers but also the leaders of the faith, and, later and until very recently, by colonial powers" (Johnstone, 1991, p. 117). Such exoticizing statements have already been called into question by such reviewers as Holes (1992), who writes "This [very

statement] strikes me as nonsense, and probably dangerous nonsense" (p. 556). In fact, the very opposite of Koch's claims is the case.

Both the Quran and Islamic tradition encourage the use of rational reasoning to seek the truth. The Aristotelian model of logic was the tool for such pursuit (Mckinney, 2004). Mir (1995) illustrates with ample examples how rebuttals are genuinely used in the Quran to refute the disbelievers' counterarguments by exposing how their arguments are based on logical fallacies such as *argumentum ad baculum, argumentum ad hominem, argumentum ad populum, argumentum ad verecundiam, petitio principii, and ignoratio elenchi.*

Merriam (1974; cited in Kamel, 1989) provides evidence from the Quran that it encourages reasoning as a means of reaching the truth. Commenting on Verse 18 of Chapter 21 in the Quran, in which Allah affirms that:

"We will Hurl Truth at Falsehood, until truth shall triumph and Falsehood be no more." This view of the advocate as an aggressive social agent who overwhelms his opponent by the power of argumentation closely parallels the Greco-Roman orientation towards persuasion (1974; quoted in Kamel 1989, p. 37).

Koch as well as Kaplan (1966) and Ostler (1987a, 1987b) does not seem to be aware that it was Muslim scholars such as al-Kindi (800-865), al-Rāzi (865-925), al-Farabi (870-950), and Avicenna (980-1037), to name a few, who preserved, translated into Arabic, and expounded the Greek scientific and philosophical literature under Muslim caliph rule. Peters (1968) chronicles that by 1050, Arab scholars had translated every single known work of Aristotle. It was not until the 12th century that European scholars started to translate the Greek literature from Arabic to European languages, and

thus reintroducing Aristotelian logic, among other Greek disciplines, to the West (Jolivet, 1988).

Observing the striking similarity between the argumentative model of the Quran and Aristotelian logic, Al-Farabi dedicated himself to translating, commenting on, and expounding Aristotle's and Plato's works. He has since been credited for preserving and transmitting these works to European philosophers and rhetoricians, gaining the title of the Second Teacher, Aristotle being the First. Al-Farabi maintained that Aristotelian logic provides a valid foundation for reasoning. Sabra (1980) describes how Al-Farabi's *Short Commentary on Aristotle's Prior Analytics* borrows examples from Islamic theology to illustrate Aristotelian concepts of inferences convincing the scholars of his time of the validity and value of Aristotelian logic and thus "securing for Aristotelian logic a permanent place in Muslim education" (p. 748).

Al-Farabi has written more than 43 books introducing, explaining, and classifying logic based on Aristotelian logic. Bloom introduces one of al-Farabi's commentaries, *The philosophy of Plato and Aristotle* as "one of the most authoritative commentaries on these two authors … It is of incomparable value not only for understanding of Arabic thought but also for an authentic interpretation of Plato and Aristotle" (Mahdi 1962, p. ix). As a matter of fact the distinction between 'idea,' *Takhayyul,* and 'proof,' *Thubut,* in logic, that Koch claims foreign to Arabs, is nothing but the birthchild of Al-Farabi.

Madkour (1963) describes Al-Farabi's style as follows:

The style of al-Farabi is characteristically concise and precise. He deliberately selects his words and expressions as he profoundly thinks of his ideas and thoughts. His aphorisms are pregnant with profound significance. That is why

Max Horten has given a large commentary to explain the small treatise entitled

Fuses al-Hikarn. Al-Farabi has a particular style; anyone accustomed to it can

well recognize it. He avoids repetition and redundancy and prefers brevity and

conciseness (p. 453).

Avicenna's discussion of the fundamental nature of "categorical concepts and

logical forms" was based on Aristotle's *the Prior Analytics (*Kemal, 1998). Kemal

explains how Avicenna's treatment of syllogism builds on Aristotle's thought as follows:

Borrowing from Aristotle, [Avicenna] also singles out a capacity for a mental act

in which the knower spontaneously hits upon the middle term of a syllogism.

Since rational arguments proceed syllogistically, the ability to hit upon the middle

term is the ability to move an argument forward by seeing how given premises

yield appropriate conclusions. It allows the person possessing this ability to

develop arguments, to recognize the inferential relations between syllogisms.

Moreover, since reality is structured syllogistically, the ability to hit upon the

middle term and to develop arguments is crucial to moving knowledge of reality

forward.

The impact of Muslim scholars on the evolution of European thought was not

confined to logic but also extended to rhetoric. Averroes, Avicenna, and Al-Farabi, for

example, translated Aristotle's *The Rhetoric* and commented on it (Butterworth, 1984).

According to Schaub (1996), the work of these three Muslim scholars has greatly

influenced "the European conception of rhetoric (p. 234). In Schaub's own words, their

commentaries "influenced the way classical thought and rhetoric was viewed in Medieval

Christian Europe. Averroes and his fellow Islamic thinkers served as a kind of 'filter'

through which Aristotelian discussions of logic, theology, and also rhetoric reached the West" (p. 239). Urvoy (1991, p. 127) confirms that 13th century European scholars relied heavily in their writing on the rhetorical concepts promulgated by Averroes to the extent that the latter was explicitly quoted in the writing of Thomas Aquinas, alone, at least 503 times.

In contrast to Koch's unfounded claims, Hatim (1997) provides a more credible evidence that Arab rhetoricians as far back as medieval ages unequivocally upheld the use of logical argumentation in general and counterargumentation in particular, thus calling into question Koch's (1984) unsubstantiated claim that logical argumentation is "a concept which is often foreign to Arab[s]" (p. 544).

To conclude, the serious epistemological, etiological, analytical, and methodological flaws inherent in Koch's inquiry invalidate her research outcomes and limit their generalizability. Her apparent unfamiliarity with Arabic language and culture as well as her narrow and subjective approach to the study of cross cultural differences in the way writing and/or argument is constructed lends itself to misuse, bias, and unproductive stereotypical judgments about how other cultures construct reality. Therefore, her overgeneralized ethnocentric statements about Arabs' rhetorical preferences should be taken with a grain of salt.

Ouaouicha (1986)

Motivated by Koch's research, Ouaouicha (1986) launched a contrastive rhetoric study in an ambitious attempt to (a) examine the validity of Kaplan's (1966) contrastive rhetoric hypothesis as it applies to the argumentative writing of Moroccan students; (b) investigate Koch's (1981) claim that repetition, parallelism, and lack of logical proof are

characteristics of Arabic argumentation; and (c) consider Toulmin's (1958) universal model of argument as an alternative to Kaplan's and Koch's models. Using an analytical framework based on Toulmin's (1958) layout of argument, which proposes that any argument is composed more or less of six components, namely claims, data, warrants, rebuttals, qualifiers, and backings, Ouaouicha analyzed randomly selected samples of the Arabic writing of Moroccan high school, junior and graduate students, and US graduate students as well as the English writing of Moroccan freshmen and juniors and US freshmen (10 writing samples from each of the 7 groups for a total of 70 samples). Ouaouicha's Argument Feature Analysis (AFA) also incorporated the analysis of such macro aspects of argument as rhetorical situation address, task fulfillment, audience address, emotional appeals, and ethos as well as a measurement of repetition based on a simple word count of verbal and semantic word repetition in randomly selected 100-word excerpts from the writing samples.

Ouaouicha's conclusions. Ouaouicha reported that:

1. Use of linear and non linear modes of reasoning was evident in the writing of both Moroccan and US students.

2. Students from both language backgrounds exploited the claim/data substantiation structure and used explicit and implicit warrants when writing in their native language and/or the foreign language.

3. US students used more audience awareness strategies and emotional appeals in their argumentation than Moroccan students did.

4. Rebuttals, qualifiers and backings were minimally used by all student groups.

5. Repetition and parallelism are evident in the writing of Arab students but not dominant enough to be considered as an identifying feature of Arab argumentative writing (p. 189); writing samples by Moroccan authors contained less high-frequency repetitions than did those by US authors (p. 219).

6. Moroccan writers used slightly more data than did US writers (p. 192).

7. Based on his results, Ouaouicha rejected Kaplan's and Koch's models at least in regards to argumentative writing concluding that:

> … the data analyzed show no significant differences in the structure of argument between English argumentative texts written by American and Moroccan freshmen raised and educated in their respective countries. The differences that were noticed are ones that can be explained not through linguistic determinism, but through an investigation of the social and historical aspects of the culture the students bring into the classroom and the one in which they become members at school. (Ouaouicha, 1986, pp. 193-194)

Thus, an alternative hypothesis proposed by Ouaouicha is that the differences authors exhibit in the way they construct writing are best explained in light of the conventions of the discourse community they belong to rather than the preferences of the native language they have acquired.

Significance of Ouaouicha's study. Ouaouicha's study is a significant one for contrastive rhetoric research in general and for the present study in particular for a number of reasons. To start with, unlike most contrastive rhetoric researchers at Ouaouicha's time, who compared ESL student writing to that of professional or imaginary models, Ouaouicha's study compared the Arabic L1 and EFL writing of

Moroccan students to the English L1 and AFL writing of their US counterparts. Ouaouicha stresses that:

> … for the findings to be valid, the comparison and contrast should be conducted along a *tertium comparationis*; for example, a comparison of students' writing with published material will not yield reliable results. The two groups come from two different discourse communities: an educational institution and a professional writers' group respectively. Very often students' texts are compared to abstract models in writing textbooks or in the researcher's imagination. This amounts to a simple comparison of the actual to the desirable and the potential, perhaps the ideal. A more meaningful comparison in this case is that of native speakers with ESL learners at a similar level of education.
>
> The writing skill is a very difficult one to acquire in one's native language, let alone in a second/foreign language. One need only talk to Freshman English teachers or skim through basic writing journals to realize what problems English writing teachers face. If this is the case within the native language, any conclusion about second language writers remains very tentative. Therefore, before definitive conclusions can be drawn about a certain L2 group, a comparable native-speaker group must be examined. (1986, pp. 262-263)

Such perspective positioned Ouaouicha among the first scholars to criticize the ethnocentricity widespread at his time in contrastive rhetoric research circles. Ouaouicha's goal was to restore "the importance and usefulness of Contrastive Rhetoric while proposing alternative bases and perspectives that would elicit fair and balanced

attitudes towards various social groups, be they language-classified or otherwise" (pp. 6-7).

Besides, Ouaouicha's study is among the first studies to extend the scope of contrastive rhetoric by studying genres other than expository writing, namely argumentative writing, and by examining texts written in languages other than English, namely Arabic L1 and L2, a combination scarcely studied by contrastive rhetoric researchers. While most studies before Ouaouicha focused on the expository English writing of ESL students, Ouaouicha collected and analyzed argumentative writing samples by both Moroccan and US authors from different educational levels written in both native and target languages. This allowed Ouaouicha to hold a wide spectrum of comparisons of the writing of Moroccan and US authors. For example, he was able to compare the argumentative writing of the same Moroccan junior students composing in both English and Arabic, the English writing of Moroccan and US freshmen, and the Arabic writing of Moroccan and US graduate students as well as that of Moroccan high school students. This also enabled him to examine a broad range of variables such as the language of composing, the native language background, and the educational level of the authors.

Last but not least, in his examination of how Arabs and Americans construct argument, Ouaouicha rejected the use of syllogism as a tool to examine argumentation because of its apparent limitations and put together an alternative analytical framework that pays equal attention to both the macro and micro universal aspects of argumentative discourse and can be used in the direct comparison of argumentative writing regardless of the language of the text.

Issues in Ouaouicha's study. Although Ouaouicha's study has avoided a number of common flaws in previous contrastive rhetoric studies, it is not free from its own serious flaws. The following is a summary of the most evident flaws in Ouaouicha's study.

Appropriateness of the writing prompt. As Ouaouicha himself pointed out, the writing prompt requiring students to name a specific teacher for a best teacher award might have been culturally biased. Ouaouicha observed that nine out of the ten Moroccan junior students who wrote on the topic failed to nominate a specific teacher for the award when composing in Arabic. However, when writing about the same topic in English, the same Moroccan juniors fulfilled the task 80% of the time. In explaining this phenomenon, Ouaouicha pointed out the Moroccan students' cultural perception that it is tactically inappropriate to nominate a teacher for the award other than their teacher of Arabic who they knew was going to read and grade their papers, so they played it safe by discussing the qualities of a good teacher in general falling short of nominating a specific teacher and thus failing to fulfill the task. When composing in English, the students knew that their teacher was not going to read their papers since he did not speak English so they felt it was safe to nominate a specific teacher for the award other than their class teacher. Regardless of the reason why students failed to nominate a specific teacher for the award in their Arabic compositions, it remains true that a culturally biased topic would skew the results of the analysis and render any direct comparisons between the writing of the students from different groups invalid. This could have been avoided by choosing a writing prompt that is culturally bias-free.

Inadequacy of analytical measures. The analytical framework Ouaouicha

proposed as a better alternative to syllogism does avoid the pitfalls of syllogism but

introduces its own set of problems. For example, in his analysis of the writing samples

for rhetorical address, audience address, emotional appeals and ethos, Ouaouicha only

checked the papers to see whether these features were present or not without going any

further to measure how frequently or effectively these features were employed by the

different groups to support their arguments. Presence of an argument component does not

automatically mean that it was used equally effectively or even in the same manner by

authors from different language backgrounds and/or educational levels. Although

Ouaouicha calculated the frequency of the use of claims, data, warrants, qualifiers,

backings, and rebuttals, no analytical tool was employed to measure how effective these

features were in producing balanced and weighty arguments. A more accurate analytical

model that takes into consideration both the quality and the quantity of the features

examined is, therefore, needed.

Besides, Ouaouicha relied in his analysis of the macro aspects of argument

structure on calculating the average data per claim ratio for every group. However, his

calculation was based on dividing the total number of data units by all authors in a group

by the total number of claims by all the authors in the same group rather than tallying the

average data per claim per paper ratios and dividing the outcome by the number of

papers. Use of the former method over the latter opened the door for outliers to skew the

results rendering between-group comparisons invalid.

Reliability issues. Ouaouicha did acknowledge that determining which chunks of

discourse can be classified as claims or data units is not a straightforward task, but one

that would invite lots of differences in opinion among different writers and readers. Accordingly, one would think that Ouaouicha would enlist the help of more than one rater to analyze the data. One would also expect Ouaouicha would run statistical analyses to ensure interrater reliability. However, it is evident from his report that he did not, violating a basic rule of research and sacrificing the reliability of his results.

Similarly, Ouaouicha spoke of "significant differences" among his seven groups and provided conclusions based on these "significant differences" in spite of the fact that he did not run any statistical analyses to show whether the differences are statistically significant or not and rule out that these differences are merely due to chances, especially considering the limited number of writing samples ($n = 10$) in each of the seven groups.

Inconsistency of results/reporting. Ouaouicha's reporting of his results has been inconsistent and thus confusing throughout his research report. For example, in a table (p. 150) summarizing the argumentative features of the Arabic writing of his Moroccan graduate participants, Ouaouicha reports that 5 out of 10 participants used ethos to support their argument; only 1 out of 10 employed emotional appeals; and 5 out of 10 addressed the audience in their writing. However, Ouaouicha got these figures mixed up in another two tables: one comparing the performance of Moroccan and US graduate students (p. 151) and the other providing an all summary of the results of the seven groups of writing samples that he analyzed in the study (p. 191). According to these two tables, only 2 out of 10 Moroccan graduate participants writing in Arabic used ethos to support their argument; 5 out of 10 employed emotional appeals; and only 1 out of 10 addressed the audience in their writing.

Ouaouicha's inconsistency in reporting his results in the tables could have been dismissed as typographical errors. However, the same inconsistency is betrayed in his descriptive summaries of the results. In his description of the macro features of the Arabic writing of Moroccan graduate students, Ouaouicha claimed that "Five [out of 10 Moroccan graduate students] used ethos to try to establish themselves as an authority in the field, hence rendering their arguments weightier … Only one paper used emotional appeal to win the audience over to his choice of candidate for the prize" (pp. 148-149). Ouaouicha also reported that 2 out of 10 US graduate participants composing in Arabic used ethos, and another 2 out of 10 employed emotional appeals (p. 146). However, he contradicted these reports when he concluded that "With the exception of emotional appeal, American papers outdid Moroccan papers in the macro-aspects of the essay" (p. 152).

Another example of the discrepancy in Ouaouicha's research results is his comparison of how the Moroccan Junior students fulfilled the task in their English and Arabic compositions. According to Ouaouicha, "two [out of the 10 Arabic papers by Moroccan Juniors] did not fulfill the task, i.e. did not give a specific name for the nomination" (p. 153); "[a single] paper was the only one [of the 10 English compositions by Moroccan Juniors] to fulfill the task" (p. 155). However, in his comparison of the two groups, Ouaouicha concludes that "Moroccan juniors writing in Arabic and English showed very little difference, except in the number of nominations made in each set of papers: eight in the English papers as opposed to only one in the Arabic ones" (p. 230).

A third example of Ouaouicha's inaccuracy in reporting the results is his reporting of the number of US freshman students who used ethos, audience address, and emotional

appeals in their English writing. According to Ouaouicha, "Six [out of 10] papers used ethos to establish additional credibility" (p. 160). However, a different figure was reported in the table summarizing the Argument Feature Analysis findings for all papers, namely nine out of ten papers (p. 191). Similarly Ouaouicha wrote, "Four papers used emotional appeal as a persuasive tactic" (p. 160), but reported the figure as six in the summary table (p. 191). The number of US freshmen addressing the audience in their English papers is nine according to the table on Page 161, but four as reported on Page 191. However, Ouaouicha claimed that "All the [English] papers [written by the US freshmen] addressed the audience."

To sum up, although Ouaouicha's study is a significant one from a theoretical standpoint, extreme caution has to be exercised in generalizing its results and conclusions for it contained serious research design, analysis, and reporting flaws that have negatively affected its reliability and validity. A more carefully designed study that investigates out quantitative and qualitative differences in the way Arab and US students construct their argument is called for.

Kamel (1989)

Another researcher who studied the argumentative writing of Arabs from a contrastive rhetoric perspective is Kamel (1989). Kamel compared the English and Arabic argumentative writing of 44 ESL/EFL Arab students at various educational levels on two different topics using three quantitative measures, namely, syntactic maturity, audience adaptation, and argumentation strategies. Kamel went on further to investigate how the language proficiency level of the ESL subgroup as measured by their

performance on a Michigan Placement Test Form A (MPTFA) correlated with their performance on the three dependent measures above.

Kamel's goal was to test Kaplan's claim that the English compositions of ESL students show that students transfer composing strategies from their native language to the target language. Kamel also tested Koch's (1981, 1983) claim that Arabs depend heavily on repetition and presentation rather than on logical evidence for argumentation and persuasion in Arabic.

Kamel's conclusions. According to Kamel, when writing in Arabic, ESL/EFL learners wrote longer and more syntactically mature essays, used more audience adaptation strategies, and produced more balanced arguments than they did when composing in English. Based on these findings, Kamel concluded "that rhetorically sophisticated Arab writers do not seem to transfer that sophistication to writing in English. Rather they have yet to learn to produce warranted arguments in English" (pp. 104-105, emphasis in the original).

Kamel also concluded that the ESL group generally produced better arguments on the English task than the EFL group did. While both groups produced balanced arguments on the Arabic task, the EFL group produced more balanced arguments than the ESL group did. Based on her research findings, Kamel rejected Koch's (1981, 1983) claims that Arabic argumentation relies heavily on repetition and presentation. Kamel also found no evidence that Arab writers transfer repetition strategies to their English writing. Besides, Kamel reported that students' scores on the MPTFA positively correlated with their production of more complex essays that are better geared towards audience expectations and employ more effective argumentation strategies. Kamel's

overall conclusion was "that rhetorical abilities in second language may be attributable to a combination of exposure, experience, and linguistic proficiency in the target language rather than to rhetorical transfer from the native language of the writers" (p. 122).

Issues in Kamel's study. Although Kamel's research is of great value to an issue seldom tackled by contrastive rhetoric researchers, her study exhibits some limitations that might affect the reliability, validity, and thus generalizability of her findings. The following is a discussion of these limitations.

Small sample size. Kamel herself pointed out the disadvantage of her relatively small sample. This disadvantage is compounded by the fact that although the 44 participants in Kamel's study did write in Modern Standard Arabic, they came from as many as seven different countries and thus used seven different varieties of Arabic.

Effect of ESL instruction. Unlike most earlier contrastive rhetoric studies, which relied solely on the analysis of ESL writing, Kamel's study analyzed and compared both the English and Arabic writing of the same ESL/EFL learners. However, like Doushaq's (1996) study, left out from Kamel's study is a comparison of the writing of her ESL/EFL participants to the English writing of native speakers of English. This leaves the door open to speculation that though Kamel's participants wrote better arguments in Arabic than they did in English, still the writing of native speakers of English might have surpassed theirs. There is also the possibility that native speakers of English might have used different argumentation strategies (data and warrants) to support their claims and/or to accommodate their audience.

Overall writing quality measures. Another limitation of Kamel's study is the absence of any measures of overall writing quality in the analysis to check against the

three analytical measures she used in the study. Unless such measures are provided for the essays under investigation, there is no way one can tell the students' production of more T-units, audience adaptation units, data, claims and warrants resulted in better writing quality.

Audience adaptation measures. While it is true that audience adaptation is a sign of sophistication in the argumentative strategies of language learners, the tally approach Kamel adopted in her measurement of this variable is inadequate. The fact that a student used audience adaptation strategy in his or her writing does not necessarily mean such strategy was effective in achieving his or her goal of getting the audience to adopt their point of view. To ensure the validity and generalizability of the results, a more adequate measure of audience adaptation would have queried both the quantity and quality of audience appeal strategies used by the participants.

Analysis of persuasion. Another shortcoming of Kamel's study is that she limits her analysis of persuasive writing to the analysis of informal reasoning. While Kamel's argument that students in her study did not transfer informal reasoning strategies from their native language to the target language may be valid, this does not necessarily extend to other characteristics of argumentative/persuasive writing. Students might have transferred a preference in their native culture to use more affective appeals than rational ones when composing in the target language or vice versa. A more comprehensive approach to the issue of negative transfer of rhetorical strategies in persuasive writing would have included an examination of the type and frequency of persuasive appeals used by the writers in the native and target language in the analysis.

Analysis of informal reasoning. In her analysis of informal reasoning, Kamel only tallied and compared the sheer number of claims, data, and warrants assuming that the more claims, data, and warrants the students wrote the more effective and balanced their arguments would be. In fact, a balanced argument is one in which the writer supports and warrants every claim he or she makes with data and warrants. In other words, if a writer produced two claims, eight data units and eight warrants, this does not mean his essay contained balanced arguments, for the eight data units and the eight warrants might have been used to support and warrant a single claim leaving out the other claim unsupported and unwarranted. This is exactly what Atari (1983) found out in his research when he pointed out that Arab writers tend to focus their attention on supporting and warranting one claim while neglecting the other claims they have made in the same essay. Thus, one can safely conclude that Kamel's analysis of informal reasoning was inadequate for the purpose of her research.

While Kamel reported that "when composing in Arabic, the EFL group produced more claims and data than the ESL group" (p. 97), a closer look at the raw data she published in her study (p. 97) reveals that the ESL group produced more balanced arguments in Arabic than the EFL group did. It is true the EFL students produced 24 claims and 21 data units more than the ESL group did on the Arabic task. However, a quick calculation of the number of data units per claim from the raw numbers she provided reveals a completely different scenario; the ESL group produced 8.89 data units per claim on the same task; that is 56.51% more data units per claim than the EFL group, which only produced 5.68 data units per claim. Similarly, while the EFL group produced a mere 1.35 warrants per claim, the ESL group produced 4.11 warrants per claim. This

means that the ESL group produced at least three times more warrants per claim than the EFL group did. Actually, the ESL group produced more than four times more warrants per claim than the EFL group if we included the 60 warrants that Kamel excluded in her tabulation of the results (See Kamel, 1989, p. 96 for details). The new tallies suggest that contrary to what Kamel reported, the ESL group did better than the EFL group.

     Interaction Effect of topic and gender. This makes one wonder if the better performance the ESL group showed on the Arabic task as compared to their performance on the English task and as compared to the performance of the EFL group on both the Arabic and English tasks is due to an interaction effect between the nature of the topic and the gender composition of both groups. For valid contrastive rhetoric results, the researcher has to ensure that the writing samples analyzed be composed for a similar purpose and drawn from a comparable context (Connor & Moreno, 2005; Swales, 1990). The English task in Kamel's study required the students to write on a topic that is of equal interest to both Arab males and females, namely, support for either the building of a school or a factory in a village community. However, the Arabic task required the participants to write on soccer, which was an exclusively male sport in the Arab world until very recently. Throughout the Arab world, males are not only much more interested in soccer than females, but are also very fanatic about it. This was especially true during the 1980s, the period during which Kamel collected her data. Since the ESL group was dominantly male (21 males and 1 female), it is not surprising that they performed better on the Arabic topic than on the English topic, for the Arabic assignment seems to have invoked a response to an issue that was then hotly debated among Arab male soccer fans, namely, professionalism versus amateurism in soccer.

To sum up, Kamel's study is one of very few studies that investigated Arab student argumentative writing from a contrastive rhetoric perspective. However, her results would have been more valid if she examined more student writing preferably from the same country; had an equal number of male and female students write on the same topic rather than on two different topics; compared the student writing she collected to that by native speakers of English; compared the students' performance on the analytical measures to their overall holistic scores; and examined both the quantity and quality of the claims; data, warrants, and audience adaptation units the students used.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that there is a still a gap in our understanding of Arabs' persuasive strategies due to lack of research on this area. The very few studies that examined the argumentative/persuasive strategies of Arabs suffer from serious research flaws and present conflicting conclusions. Thus, the word is still out on what rhetorical strategies Arab writers prefer to use in their persuasive discourse; whether such preferences are similar to and/or different from those of native English speakers; and what rhetorical strategies, if any, Arab ESL students transfer from their first language when producing persuasive writing in English.

This study aims to fill in this gap by examining Arabs' persuasive written discourse from a contrastive rhetoric perspective in light of existing contrastive research body on persuasion and Arabic rhetoric as well as the healthy debate on the theoretical assumptions of contrastive rhetoric. To be more specific, the current study investigates similarities and/or differences in the way Arab and Anglo-American writers globally structure their argument, use reasoning and persuasive appeals to persuade their readers,

and adapt their rhetorical structures to address their audience counterarguments. The study is designed in a manner that does not only add to our understanding of what rhetorical dimensions of persuasive writing are problematic for Arab writers, but also produces more input to confirm or disconfirm Kaplan's controversial contrastive rhetoric hypothesis that the writing problems of ESL students are due to first language transfer. (Kaplan, 1966). The rationale and design of the study will be the sole focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter Two has argued that more empirical research is needed to either confirm or reject Kaplan's (1966) contrastive rhetoric hypothesis that (a) an author's first language shapes or at least influences his or her ESL rhetorical choices and that (b) ESL writers' rhetorical problems stem from first language interference. Chapter Three has demonstrated that available research on persuasive/argumentative writing by Arab speakers, though a welcome step in the right direction, does not provide valid information about whether Arabic and English native speakers use similar or different persuasive strategies. It still remains undecided whether first language interference can explain the ESL persuasive writing problems of native Arabic speakers. The present study attempts to fill in this gap in light of a theoretical framework informed by the issues in contrastive rhetoric discussed in Chapter Two.

English L2 and Arabic L1 persuasive essays by native speakers of Arabic as well as English L1 persuasive essays by native speakers of English on the same topic were collected, analyzed, and compared in order to achieve a threefold goal: (a) determine what rhetorical dimensions of English persuasive writing, if any, are particularly problematic for native Arabic speakers, (b) investigate the claim that the writing problems of native Arabic speakers are due to negative interference, and thus (c) confirm or disconfirm the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis as it applies to the persuasive writing of Arab advanced ESL writers. Chapter One has laid out the purpose, rationale, and research questions of the study. This chapter reiterates the research questions for the readers'

convenience, formulates the hypotheses to be tested, and describes the data collection procedure, and the analytical measures used in the study.

Research Questions

In light of the contrastive rhetoric issues discussed in Chapters Two and Three, this study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. Can performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task accurately predict the writers' overall writing performance?

2. Can performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task accurately predict the writers' language/cultural background?

3. Are there significant differences in the ESL and Arabic L1 writing performance of the same Arab advanced ESL writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task?

4. Are there significant differences in the performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same English persuasive writing task?

5. Are there significant differences in the performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same native language persuasive writing task?

6. Are select rhetorical dimensions of English persuasive writing particularly problematic for Arab advanced ESL writers?

7. Are the problems of Arab advanced ESL writers with select rhetorical dimensions, if any, due to first language transfer?

Hypotheses

The study hypothesized that if the analytic measures used in the study were valid measures of rhetorical performance on persuasive writing tasks, statistical analysis of data will uphold the following hypothesis:

1. Performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task can accurately predict the writers' overall writing performance.

The study also hypothesized that if Kaplan's (1966) contrastive rhetoric claims were true, statistical analysis of the study participants' performance on the rhetorical measures would uphold the following hypotheses:

2. Performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task can accurately predict the writers' language/cultural background.

3. There are no significant differences in the ESL and Arabic L1 writing performance of the same Arab advanced ESL writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task.

4. There are significant differences in the performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same English persuasive writing task.

5. There are significant differences in the performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same native language persuasive writing task.

6. Select rhetorical dimensions of English persuasive writing are particularly problematic for Arab advanced ESL writers.

7. The problems of Arab advanced ESL writers with select rhetorical dimensions are due to first language transfer.

Null Hypotheses

For the purpose of hypothesis testing, the following null hypotheses (NH) were formulated:

1. Performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task cannot accurately predict the writers' overall writing performance.

2. Performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task cannot accurately predict the writers' language/cultural background.

3. There are no significant differences in the ESL and Arabic L1 writing performance of the same Arab advanced ESL writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task.

4. There are no significant differences in the performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same English persuasive writing task.

5. There are no significant differences in the performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same native language persuasive writing task.

6. Select rhetorical dimensions of English persuasive writing are particularly problematic for Arab advanced ESL writers.

7. The problems of Arab advanced ESL writers with select rhetorical dimensions are due to first language transfer.

To test the study hypotheses, persuasive writing of advanced NES and NAS writers was analyzed for cross-cultural variation in select rhetorical dimensions. The analysis focused on the comparison and contrast of the persuasive written performance of native Arabic and native English writers on measures of four rhetorical dimensions, namely argument superstructure, informal reasoning, persuasive appeals, and persuasive adaptiveness. Performance on the four rhetorical dimensions was measured via the use of theory-based and empirically-validated analytic tools by Connor (1999) and Connor and Lauer (1985; 1988). The rest of this chapter reports on the research design, participants, data collection procedure, and analytical framework of the study.

Research Design

The writing samples for this contrastive rhetoric study consisted of three sets of solicited persuasive texts from two independent groups: ESL (Set 1a) and AL1 (Set 1b) texts by Arab doctoral students enrolled in an English studies program; and EL1 texts by US doctoral students enrolled in an English studies program (Set 2); Table 2 summarizes the groups involved in the study.

Table 2

The Groups Involved in the Study

Variable	Group 1[a]		Group 2[a]
Native language	Arabic		English
Language of composing	English L2	Arabic L1	English L1
Data set	ESL[a] (1a)	AL1[a] (1b)	EL1[a] (2)

Note. [a] $n = 30$

Participants

To solicit writing samples for the analysis, the study sought to recruit 60 doctoral students majoring in English to voluntarily participate in the study: 30 Arab native speakers of Arabic (Group 1) and 30 US native of speakers English (Group 2). The decision to focus on the persuasive writing of doctoral students majoring in English was based on the following reasons.

First, due to age and cognitive maturity differentials, doctoral students as a group could be reasonably assumed to be generally more cognitively developed than undergraduate students. Thus, by measuring the performance of graduate students rather than that of undergraduate students, the researcher need not be concerned about the confounding effect of cognitive maturity on the participants' writing quality.

It was further hypothesized that since professional persuasive writing is a cognitively demanding task that requires formal training and practice, essays by beginning or intermediate writers would not make the best writing samples for the examination of cross-cultural variation in written persuasive discourse. It was thus determined that due to the nature of their age, educational level, major of study, and training, English native-speaking doctoral students majoring in English would provide

persuasive writing samples that are better representatives of typical professional English persuasive writing than other subject majors or undergraduate students who might be at an earlier stage of mastering their persuasive writing skills.

The same assumption is equally true for Arabic native-speaking doctoral students majoring in English. Besides, Arabic native-speaking doctoral students majoring in English would provide ESL persuasive writing samples that are not as negatively affected by lack of English language proficiency, if at all, as that of less advanced Arab ESL writers. This should reduce, if not eliminate, the possibility that lack of English language proficiency on the part of ESL participants might skew the results in favor of the native English speaker group. This, in turn, will allow the study to focus on the comparison of rhetorical performance at the macro discourse level rather than micro syntactic structure/sentence level.

Thus, comparing persuasive writing of advanced native English and Arabic mature speakers at the same educational level and from the same major of study should help meet the *tertium comparationis* condition required for valid conclusions about cross-cultural rhetorical variation (Connor, 1996; Connor & Moreno, 2005; Janicki, 1986; Moreno, 2008; Ouaouicha, 1986; Scollon, 1997), for it neutralizes the effect of such confounding variables as educational level, major of study, cognitive maturity, and language proficiency—among others.

Recruitment Procedure

The researcher started targeting NES and NAS doctoral students enrolled in doctoral English programs in the US for recruitment for the study. However, due to inability to enroll enough Arab students in the US for the study, the researcher enlisted

the help of one Jordanian and two Egyptian colleagues to recruit participants and administer the study in their respective countries. One of the three study administrators was an associate professor of English. The other two were assistant professors of English at their respective Arab universities. The three hold PhD degrees in linguistics from either the US or the UK and have extensive experience with empirical linguistic research themselves.

After they agreed to confidentiality, the three study administrators were provided with blank consent forms, language history questionnaires, writing prompts, and study administration scripts as well as detailed instructions on how to recruit participants, administer the study, and securely submit the signed consent forms, writing samples, and questionnaires to the researcher. Every effort was made to ensure that participant recruitment and data collection procedures were conducted in a consistent fashion and according to the requirements of the Institutional Review Board. Throughout the data collection stage, the researcher was available via video conferencing, phone, and email to answer the administrators' questions and follow up with them.

Potential participants were handed or emailed an informed consent form that provided them with information about the study to help them make informed decisions whether to participate in the study or not. The consent form stated that the purpose of the study was to investigate whether US and Arab writers use different rhetorical strategies in their persuasive writing. It emphasized that participation in the study was completely voluntary, that participants' information was to be held in confidentiality, that participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time, and that there would be no monetary compensation for participants. Because participants in the study were unpaid

volunteers and because they had the choice to withdraw from the study at any time, it was assumed that the essays that they produced for the study were reliable representative samples of their writing.

A total of 78 participants residing in 3 countries, namely, Egypt, Jordan, and USA volunteered to participate in this study. However, 18 participants were not included in the final analysis; fifteen participants did not meet the study requirements; some were not PhD students; others were non-English majors; some ESL participants provided only one writing sample of the two writing samples they had agreed to provide; one participant was not a native speaker of either Arabic or English. One Arab male and two US female participants who met the study requirements were randomly excluded from the study in order to maintain an equal number of males and females in each group and thus control for the gender variable. However, writing by those excluded from the study was used for rater training and calibration.

Only 30 NES and 30 NAS volunteer doctoral students were included in the final analysis. The NES participants were enrolled in a doctoral English program at a public university in the Northeast. The NAS participants (16 Egyptians, and 14 Jordanians) were enrolled in a doctoral English program in either, the US, Egypt, or Jordan. The participants were at various stages of their doctoral programs: some were at their first semester; others were about to defend their dissertation. Half of the students in the native Arabic speaking group and half of the native English speaking group were females; the other halves were males. The next chapter offers more descriptive details about the composition of both groups.

Data Collection

Participants who agreed to participate in the study signed a copy of the informed consent form. Later, they were contacted by the researcher, or the administrators in the case of participants in Egypt and Jordan, to schedule writing sessions. To encourage participation in the study and to accommodate the participants' busy schedules, writing sessions were held one on one or in small groups that ranged from 2 to 13 participants. Writing sessions were held in a class, a university computer lab, a public library, or a similar setting at the participants' convenience. Participants who decided to type their essays used their own computers, a class/lab computer, or a laptop provided by the study administrator. Participants who decided to handwrite were provided with plenty of writing paper, pencils, and erasers.

Writing Task

A set of in-class writing samples on a typical persuasive writing task were collected. In order to ensure adequate *tertium comparationis,* every possible effort was made to ensure that all writing samples were collected under the same conditions. All study participants were asked to write on a common persuasive task. Participants in Group One (i.e., native Arabic speakers) wrote on the same topic twice, once in English and once in Arabic with at least a two-week interval between the two essays to minimize practice effect on the participants' performance. Since participants in this group were asked to write on the same persuasive topic in both Arabic L1 and English L2, counterbalancing measures were taken to avoid confounding due to order effects. Students in Group One were randomly divided into two subgroups (Groups 1A and 1B). Students in Group 1A were asked to write on the topic in their native language, Arabic

L1, while students in Group 1B wrote in English. Two or more weeks later, students in Group 1A wrote in English while those assigned to Group 2B wrote in Arabic.

Participants in Group Two (i.e., native English speakers), whose writing performance was used as a basis for comparison to the writing performance of Group One on the same persuasive writing task, wrote on the topic only once in their native language, namely, English L1.

Writing Prompt

The English writing prompt shown in Table 3 is adopted from Connor and Lauer (1985). The prompt has been originally devised for the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) study (Purves & Takala, 1982). The IEA writing prompt was chosen for three main reasons. First, it has been widely used in contrastive rhetoric research ever since it was published (e.g., Connor, 1987, 1990, 1995; Connor & Lauer, 1985, 1988; Sáez, 2001). Second, using such a popular writing prompt in contrastive rhetoric research allows—to some extent—for the comparison of the results of the current study to those reported by previous studies that used the same writing prompt. Third, the researcher believed that the IEA writing prompt was suitable for the purpose of the current study of cross-cultural variation in persuasive writing.

Table 3

English Prompt

There are several things people can like or dislike in their life or the world around them. They might have noticed that people smoke in public places, that watching TV negatively affects children's behavior, that teachers do not receive adequate technological training, that certain places are not safe enough, that certain opportunities are missing, or that particular groups should get to understand each other better.

Please write a 2-3 page essay in which you explain what you think is an important problem in your community or in the life of the people around you and how it can be eliminated. You can use one of the examples described above or choose a problem of your own.

Imagine that you are writing to people who can solve this problem but are not familiar with it or do not realize how serious it is. Therefore, make sure you explain the problem clearly and describe your plan for improving the situation. Give enough details, facts, and examples to support your description and suggested solution. Your ultimate goal should be to convince your audience that the problem is an important one and persuade it to adopt your plan of action to solve the problem.

You should be able to complete this task in 60 minutes or less. Before you turn your composition in, please reread it in order to see:

- How clearly you have described the problem and your solution.
- How convincing you have been in presenting your arguments.

Your essay can be hand-written or you can use a word processor if you prefer. If you decide to handwrite your essay and would like to change or correct something, you may do so on your original; you do not have to recopy the whole essay. Either way, please mark your composition with the 4-digit code you have chosen for yourself. Please do not write your name or include any other potentially identifying information in your paper.

Note. Adapted from "Understanding Student Persuasive Essay Writing: Linguistic/Rhetorical Approach," by U. Connor & J. Lauer, 1985, *Text, 5*(4), pp. 322-323.

In order to solicit a persuasive writing sample from the participants, the writing prompt instructed participants to write a 2-3 page essay in which they explain an important problem in their community, convince their audience that the problem is a serious one, propose a solution for solving the problem, and persuade their audience to adopt their plan of action to solve the problem. Participants were given the choice to pick a problem of their own choice or to address one of a few examples of typical problems suggested such as smoking in public places, negative effect of TV on children's behavior, or inadequate technological training of teachers. It was hypothesized that by allowing the participants to choose their own topic, they would be encouraged to choose a topic that they were well-informed about, had a strong self-interest in, and would thus have stronger motivation to produce the best persuasive essay that they possibly could. In the meantime, if any of the participants had a hard time coming up with a topic of his or her own, the suggested topics would come to the rescue.

The writing prompt specified the audience as those "who can solve [the] problem but are not familiar with it or do not realize how serious it is." Therefore, it was emphasized that the participants "make sure [they] explain the problem clearly and describe [their] plan for improving the situation." It was assumed that such information about the audience combined with the participants' freedom to choose their own topic should help the students imagine real audience for their hand-picked essays other than the researcher or raters; therefore, they would be more familiar with the goals, attitudes, values, interests, knowledge, and potential counterarguments of their specified audience than with those of an externally-imposed audience that they might know little about. It was further assumed that by writing to a more familiar audience, the writers would be in

a better position to convince their audience that the problem is serious enough to merit action, persuade it that their proposed solution is good enough to adopt, and address their audience's potential counterarguments.

The decision to solicit writing samples for the examination of cross-cultural variation rather than analyze existing published essays was based on the assumption that the former allows for the control of more variables than the latter does. To start with, the authorship of published essays cannot be ascertained. Nowadays, more writers enlist the help of professional editors, proof readers, peer reviewers, mentors, and even ghost writers than ever. In the case of ESL writers, more often than not the help, if needed, is solicited from native English speakers. Therefore, without further investigation, one cannot indisputably affirm that the rhetorical decisions evident in a published essay have been solely made by its stated author and thus reflect his or her own rhetorical strategies. Thus, there is a possibility that the examination of existing published writing might disguise cross-cultural variation and therefore lead to invalid conclusions. Unlike existing published writing, authorship of texts written for the study in particular and produced under controlled conditions can be accurately pinpointed.

Besides, in-class writing samples solicited particularly for the purpose of the current study allowed the researcher to neutralize the effect of the writing task and context on the writing output of the participants since all the texts examined in the study were produced in response to the same writing prompt in similar, if not identical, writing contexts. In contrast, existing published essays might have been written in response to different writing stimuli and/or different writing contexts. For example, a letter to the editor protesting the negative portrayal of Muslims in the media might have been written

by a Muslim high-school senior during the lunch break as an angry response to a local paper editorial on an incident at the school involving the Muslim student. A deceivingly-similar letter to the editor by a political science professor that is also protesting the negative portrayal of Muslims in the media could have been carefully crafted over a weekend in response to an editorial in a national newspaper claiming that presidential candidate Obama is a "closet Muslim." Furthermore, the letter by the political scientist could have been reviewed by a couple of colleagues before it was revised and submitted. It could have also been informed by multiple cycles of input and feedback from a dozen Muslim community members during a lengthy discussion over the matter in a Muslim community mailing list. Comparing both letters without considering the totally different contexts in which they might have been produced would do injustice to the texts and misinform the most careful rhetorical examination. Thus, it was decided that soliciting persuasive writing from writers with comparable characteristics in similar contexts and in response to the same writing task allows for the control of such contextual factors in a way that the examination of existing published writing does not.

A third advantage that soliciting writing samples has over analyzing existing published writing is that the former helps eliminate researcher bias. Since the researcher has prior access to a huge corpus of published samples, he or she might unconsciously hand-pick the samples that best prove his or her hypothesis and fit his or her ontological stance, if any, on the issue under investigation. Fortunately, participant selection is not subject to researcher bias in the case of soliciting writing samples for the study. In the current study, requirements for participation in the study were made beforehand. Then, a public invitation to voluntarily participate in the study was announced. Only volunteers

who did not meet the participation requirements were not included in the study. When three participants, who met participation requirements, had to be excluded from the analysis in order to control for the effect of gender on the results of the study, those eliminated were randomly selected.

It should be noted here that the writing prompt used in the current study is different from its source, namely the IEA writing task (Purves & Takala, 1982), in that the current study allowed participants to choose between using a word processor or handwriting their essays. It was hypothesized that requiring all the participants to use a word processor would put those who were slow at typing at a disadvantage. It was equally hypothesized that requiring all participants to handwrite their essays would negatively affect the quality of those who were accustomed to using word processors rather than handwriting when composing. Therefore, it was decided that it would be better to allow each participant to use the writing medium he or she was most comfortable with.

In order to eliminate the potential effect of handwriting on the raters' scoring of the papers, handwritten essays were typed. However, no changes were made to the content of the essays; all misspellings, typos, and grammatical errors in the originals were preserved. Further, all samples were reformatted for the same look in order to control for effect of visual cues including text length on the raters' scores; all samples were double-spaced. Text was left-aligned. Font was reset to 12-point Times New Roman. Paragraphs were indented by half an inch. Pages were numbered with Arabic numerals. Page numbers were placed at the center of the page footers. Page margins were set to one inch each.

Another major difference between the IEA writing task (Purves & Takala, 1982) and the current writing task is that the time that the participants were allowed to complete the task in the current study was 60 minutes rather than 30. Due to the reported difficulty of the persuasive writing task (e.g., Connor & Lauer, 1988), it was hypothesized that giving participants more time should give them more opportunity to demonstrate their real writing competence.

Some might argue that the persuasive writing samples resulting from 60 minutes of writing without prior research or preparation cannot be thought of as final drafts, but rather as first drafts and, therefore, would not be as accurate predictors of writing quality as final drafts. The researcher concurs that the writing samples analyzed in the current study are merely first drafts. However, although careful study of first drafts, writing processes, and publishable/published essays is equally necessary for a comprehensive contrastive rhetoric theory, first drafts are better suited for the purpose of the current examination of cross-cultural variation for a number of reasons.

First, since Kaplan (1966) claimed that one's logic and rhetorical choices are unconsciously determined by one's native language and that writers make conscious decisions to improve their writing from one draft to the next (e.g., Kaplan, 1987), the study assumed that first drafts would reveal the authors' crude rhetorical preferences unaltered by conscious revision decisions. Thus, the contrasts in the quality of persuasion in the writing of English and Arabic native speakers, if any, would be more evident in the writers' first drafts than in their final essays. Furthermore, since the participants were given the opportunity to choose their own topic, it was hypothesized that they would choose a topic that they have enough information about to write an effective argument. In

addition, due to the nature of their major of study, the participants in the current study, namely doctoral students majoring in English, were presumably experienced writers accustomed to writing under time constraints and in controlled, in-class conditions. Therefore, it was assumed that one hour was more than enough for the study participants to write a persuasive writing essay. As a matter of fact, most participants finished their papers in less than one hour. After all, since participants in both groups wrote under the same conditions, one cannot reasonably argue that the analysis of first drafts gave an edge to one group over the other.

The Arabic prompt, shown in Table 4, is a translation of the English one. To align both versions, the English prompt was first translated into Arabic. Then, the resulting Arabic version was translated back into English by a team of two professional translators, who did not have access to the original English prompt. The back-translated English version was then compared to the original English version by two bilingual professors of English. Based on their feedback, modifications to both the English and Arabic versions were made to fix any discrepancies between the two. The process was repeated until the bilingual experts and the researcher became confident both versions were well aligned.

Table 4

Arabic Prompt

الزمن: 60 دقيقة

هناك العديد من الأمور التى تُرضِي الناس أو لا تُرضيهم فى حياتهم أو فى العالم من حولهم. فقد يلاحظ البعض أن الناس يدخنون فى الأماكن العامة أو أن كثرة مشاهدة التليفزيون تؤثر سلبيًا على سلوك الأطفال أو أن هناك قصورًا فى إعداد المعلم إعداد أ تكنولوجياً يتناسب الأماكن ليست آمنة بما فيه الكفاية أو أن هناك بعض الفرص الضائعة أو أن هناك سوء تفاهم بين بعض فئات بعض مع العصر أو أن المجتمع.

من فضلك أكتب مقالاً من صفحتين أو ثلاث تطرح فيه مشكلة هامة فى مجتمعك أو فى حياة الناس من حولك وتصورك لكيفية حل هذه المشكلة مستخدماً أحد الأمثلة المذكورة أعلاه أو مختاراً مشكلةً من عندك

تخيل أن قرائك هم هؤلاء الذين باستطاعتهم حل المشكلة المطروحة ولكنهم لايدرون عنها أو لايدركون أنها تمثل مشكلة هامة يجب حلها . ولذلك حاول أن تطرح المشكلة بوضوح ثم استعرض خطةً موضوعية لحل المشكلة معطياً تفاصيلاً وحقائقَ وأمثلةً كافية لتدعم بها وجهة نظرك، على أن يكون هدفك الأساسي أن تقنع قرائك بوجود المشكلة وأن تحملهم على تبني خطتك لحل المشكلة .

قبل أن تسلم مقالك برجاء مراجعته لتتأكد أنك:

1) طرحت المشكلة بوضوح وقدمت حلاً عملياً واضحاً لها
2) عرضت وجهة نظرك في المشكلة وكيفية حلها عرضاً وافياً ومنطقياً ومقنعاً لقرائك

ولك حرية كتابة مقالك بخط اليد أو طباعته على الكمبيوتر مباشرةً إن أردت، ولو قررت الكتابة بخط يدك ثم أردت أن تغير أو تصحح كتابة شئ ما يمكنك عمل ذلك فى مقالتك الأولى دون الحاجة لإعادة كتابة المقالة بالكامل. ولكن في جميع الأحوال برجاء الإكتفاء برقمك الكودي على الورقة مع عدم كتابة إسمك أو أي بيانات تدل على شخصيتك.

Language History Questionnaire

Before writing one or two persuasive essays, each participant was asked to fill out a brief questionnaire (Appendix A) about their language history. It took participants 5 to 10 minutes to fill out the questionnaire. The questionnaire helped assign participants to one of the two groups in the study. It also helped eliminate participants whose past educational experience might have impacted their writing performance (e.g., English speakers who received Arabic language instruction, or Arabs whose first native language

was English). Furthermore, the questionnaire helped provide some basic demographic and language history information about the study participants. A detailed profile of the participants in both groups based on data gleaned from the questionnaire is provided in the next chapter.

Analytical Framework

More often than not, studies that attempted to examine writing by Arab writers from a contrastive rhetoric perspective (e.g., Bar-Lev, 1986; Kaplan, 1966, 1967, 1988; Koch, 1981, 1983a, 1983b, 1983c, 1986, 1990, 1991; Mohamed & Omer, 1999; Ostler, 1987a, 1987b; Reid, 1988, 1992) unduly focused on syntactic and intrasentential features of texts rather than their rhetorical features. As Chapter Three has demonstrated, the three studies that analyzed the rhetorical features of written discourse by Arab writers, namely Kamel (1989), Koch (1981), and Ouaouicha (1986) employed analytical models that suffered from serious validity and reliability issues. Using quantitative analytical tools that have been empirically proven to be valid and reliable, the current study focused on the cross-cultural rhetorical variation in the persuasive writing of US and Arab writers. To be more specific, this study compared and contrasted the rhetorical performance on select rhetorical dimensions of NES and NAS on the same persuasive writing task. The study also compared the overall writing quality of the two groups. The goal of the comparison was not to evaluate the performance of either group per se, but to test the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis by investigating how reliably and accurately performance on any of these dimensions or a combination thereof, if at all, would predict the authors' native language.

For the purposes of this study, overall writing quality was operationally defined as the average holistic score granted to each paper by two experienced composition raters based on a 0-5 point holistic scale. Rhetorical performance was operationally defined as performance on four rhetorical aspects of persuasion, namely argument superstructure, informal reasoning, persuasive appeals, and persuasive adaptiveness. The four persuasive aspects were measured using "theory-based, objective, and quantifiable analytical scales" developed by Connor (1990) and Connor and Lauer (1988). The validity and reliability of Connor and Lauer's measures of argumentation and persuasiveness have been empirically established (Connor, 1987, 1990; Connor & Lauer, 1985, 1998) and widely used in contrastive rhetoric studies to study cross-cultural rhetorical variation in argumentative and persuasive writing (e.g., Black, 1997; Durst, Laine, & Schultz, 1990; Ferris, 1989, 1994; Gilbert, 2004; Kamimura & Oi, 1998; Spicer-Eacalante, 2005; Wurr, 2001, 2002). The following two sections describe the analytical framework for the study. The first section discusses the variables of the study, describes the scales used to measure each variable, and reports existing information about the validity and reliability of each scale. The second section reports on the scoring procedures and interrater reliability in the present study.

Analytic and Holistic Measures of Persuasive Writing

The current study compared Arab and US writers' rhetorical performance on the same persuasive writing task. The comparison focused on the rhetorical performance of participants from both groups on four measures of four core persuasive dimensions, namely, argument superstructure, informal reasoning, persuasive appeals, and persuasive adaptiveness. Besides, participants' essays were also holistically rated as a gauge of

overall writing performance against which the four analytic scales could be checked for validity. Table 5 summarizes the holistic and analytic measures that were used in the study followed by a detailed description of each measure.

Table 5

Summary of Analytic and Holistic Measures

Type of Measure	Measure
Analytic	Argument superstructure (Situation, problem, solution, evaluation) Toulmin's analysis of informal reasoning (Data, claim, warrants, Added Toulmin) Persuasive appeals (Rational, credibility, affective) Persuasive adaptiveness (Levels I-III)
Holistic	Holistic score (0-5)

Argument superstructure. Persuasive writing by US and Arab writers were examined to determine whether the overall organizational structure of persuasive essays differs from one language to another. The analysis was performed in light of existing claims about the argument superstructure of texts produced by Arabic and English native speakers. On one hand, Kaplan claimed that Arabic texts have no "propositional structure;" rather, "the primary focus of writing in Arabic rests on the language of the text." (1988, p. 289). Koch believed that an Arabic text "proceeds horizontally rather than vertically, in which ideas of equal importance for an argument are chained together" (1990, p. 230). Shouby criticized Arabs' "repetitive overattention to minute details, but without reintegrating these details into a composite and well-organized whole" (p. 299). On the other hand, Kaplan claimed that English texts are characterized by linear

progression (1966) and asserted that "English is more linear than other languages"

(2001).

 To test how far the above claims are true at the macro discourse level, two

independent raters rated all the writing samples in the study by Arab and US writers for

the same writing assignment using Connor and Lauer's (1988) argument superstructure

measure (see Table 6). Connor and Lauer's measure is a four-point scale that they

devised to evaluate the macrostructure of argumentative/persuasive texts. Their scale was

based on Kummer's (1972) theory of the problem-solution structure, later empirically

proven by Tirkkonen-Condit (1985, 1986) to apply to argumentative texts.

Table 6

Argument Superstructure Measure

Score	Component	Description
1	Situation	Background material
1	Problem	Problem development
1	Solution	Steps to be taken to eliminate the problem
1	Evaluation	Evaluation of the outcome of the offered solution(s)
4	Total score	Argument superstructure score

Note. Adapted from "Cross-Cultural Variation in Persuasive Student Writing," by U. Connor & J. Lauer, 1988, in A. C. Purves (Ed.), *Writing Across Languages and Cultures* (pp. 142-143). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

 According to this theory, "the reader approaches argumentative texts as a

cognitive process of problem solving. The goal of the writer is to change an audience's

initial opposing position to the final position of the writer." (Connor & Lauer, 1988); an

argumentative/persuasive text is typically divided into four sequential structural slots,

namely situation, problem, solution, and evaluation. The first slot, the situation slot, "is

reserved for background material, that is, facts and views intended for orientation"
Connor (1990, p. 74). The next slot develops the problem and is therefore labeled the
problem slot. Then, the steps or actions suggested to solve the problem are expounded
upon in the solution slot. Finally, the evaluation slot contains an evaluation of the
outcome of the suggested solution(s). The argument superstructure of an essay is
quantified by assigning one point for each component, that is, an essay which contains
the four slots receives the highest score on a four-point scale. Two independent raters in
Connor and Lauer's (1988) study were able to identify components of the argument
superstructure and rate the essays according to the argument superstructure scale with
100% agreement.

Connor and Lauer detected no significant differences in the structuring of
argument among students from the same language background, namely US, British, and
New Zealand. However, the present study hypothesized that if students came from totally
different language background, analysis of the superstructure of argument might reveal
cross-cultural differences in argument structuring. The current study, therefore, employed
Connor and Lauer's scale to investigate whether Arab and US writers, who came from
totally different language and cultural backgrounds, would structure their arguments
differently on the macrostructure level.

Informal reasoning. Since the current study investigates cross-cultural variation
in persuasive rhetoric, an analysis of differences and similarities in the reasoning
strategies underlying the arguments of authors from different native language
backgrounds becomes inevitable. For the purpose of this study, reasoning strategies were
operationally defined as performance on Connor and Lauer's (1988) measure of informal

reasoning that was based on Toulmin's (1958) model of argument. This section puts forward reasons why Connor and Lauer's (1988) measure of informal reasoning was used instead of Kaplan's model which was based on syllogism. Then, Toulmin's model of argument and the scales used in the current study to measure will be described.

Kaplan's 1966 study as well as earlier analytical models of argument (e.g., Ostler, 1987a, 1987b) relied on syllogism to analyze arguments. Syllogism and formal logic—on which syllogism is based—assume humans reason in an orderly fashion that can be subjected to mathematical formulae (Delvin, 1998). Such assumptions make syllogism inadequate for the analysis of argument (Ouaouicha, 1986) since human reasoning is too complicated to be reduced to mathematical formulae (Delvin, 1998). Besides, formal logic has limited application in real-world argumentative discussions, where interlocutors rarely apply inferential syllogism to a set of premises to prove their arguments, but rather rely on informal reasoning, where they present an arguable claim and provide practical justifications for their claim (Toulmin, 1958).

Based on this observation, Toulmin (1958; see also Toulmin, Rieke & Janik, 1979) proposed a new model for the analysis of argument. According to Toulmin, an argument can consist of six main components, namely claim, data, warrant, backing, rebuttal, and qualifier. While the first three constituents are essential for practical arguments, the other three are optional depending on the nature and context of argument. Based on Toulmin's layout of argument, Connor and Lauer (1988) devised an analytical scale for the purpose of cross-cultural comparisons of informal reasoning in written discourse. Connor and Lauer's scale (See Table 7) was used in the current study to

investigate differences in the way Arab and US student writers construct their claims, justify them with data, and link the claims to their justifications with warrants.

Connor and Lauer's (1988) informal reasoning scale measures how writers effectively use the three essential components, that is, claim, data and warrant, in their arguments. Connor and Lauer omitted the analysis of rebuttals, qualifiers and backings from their scale since they are minimally represented in student writing (see also Ouaouicha, 1986) confirming Toulmin's view that these three components are optional in argumentation. The following is Connor and Lauer's (1988) description of the three components of argument in the informal reasoning scale, followed by an account of its validity and reliability.

Table 7

Toulmin's Informal Reasoning Scale

Claim:

1. No specific problem stated and/or no consistent point of view. May have one subclaim. No solution offered, or if offered nonfeasible, unoriginal, and inconsistent with claim.

2. Specific, explicitly stated problem. Somewhat consistent point of view. Relevant to the task. Has two or more subclaims that have been developed. Solution offered with some feasibility with major claim.

3. Specific, explicitly stated problem with consistent point of view. Several well-developed subclaims, explicitly tied to the major claim. Highly relevant to the task. Solution offered that is feasible, original, and consistent with major claim.

Data:

1. Minimal use of data. Data of the "everyone knows" type, with little reliance on personal experience or authority. Not directly related to major claim.

2. Some use of data with reliance on personal experience or authority. Some variety in use of data. Data generally related to major claim.

3. Extensive use of specific, well-developed data of a variety of types. Data explicitly connected to major claim.

Warrant:

1. Minimal use of warrants. Warrants only minimally reliable and relevant to the case. Warrants may include logical fallacies.

2. Some use of warrants. Though warrants allow the writer to make the bridge between data and claim, some distortion and informal fallacies are evident.

3. Extensive use of warrants. Reliable and trustworthy allowing rater to accept to bridge from data to claim. Slightly relevant. Evidence of some backing.

Note. Adopted from "Cross-Cultural Variation in Persuasive Student Writing," by U. Connor & J. Lauer, 1988, in A. C. Purves (Ed.), *Writing Across Languages and Cultures* (p. 145). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Claim. Claim is defined by Toulmin as "conclusions whose merits we are seeking to establish" and as "assertions put forward publicly for general acceptance" (Toulmin, 1958; quoted in Connor, 1990, p. 74). For the analysis, a claim was given a score from

one to thre depending on whether it is "relevant to the task, suggests a specific and clear problem and presents a consistent point of view" Connor (1990, p. 75).

Data. Data, which were also measured on a scale of three points (See Table 7), constitute:

… support for the claim in the form of experience, facts, statistics, or occurrences. The quantity as well as the quality of the pieces of data was considered. Good data needed to be based on specific facts or the writers' own experience; they also had to be directly related to the claim to be considered effective persuasion. (Connor, 1990, p. 75)

Warrants. Toulmin (1958) describes warrants as:

[r]ules, principles, inference licenses or what you will instead of additional items of information. Our task is no longer to strengthen the ground on which our argument is constituted, but is rather to show that, taking these data as a starting point, the step to the original claim or conclusion is an appropriate and legitimate one. At this point, therefore, what are needed are general, hypothetical statements which can act as bridges; and authorize the sort of step to which our particular argument commits us. (p. 98; quoted in Connor, 1990, p. 75)

Like claim and data, warrants were measured on a scale of three points (See Table 7).

Added Toulmin score. Individual claim, data, and warrant scores were tallied for an added Toulmin's informal reasoning score. The resulting added Toulmin score for each participant was a potential value of three to nine.

Reliability and validity of Toulmin's informal reasoning measure. Connor (1990; Connor & Lauer, 1988) reported that the informal reasoning measure is

adequately reliable for quantifying writers' use of claims, data, and warrants in argumentative discourse. When analyzing 30 persuasive essays by US, British, and New Zealand students in Connor and Lauer's (1988) study, two independent raters achieved interrater reliabilities of .76, .56, and .66 for the analysis of claims, data, and warrants respectively.

In a study by Connor (1990) to investigate the effect of six linguistic and rhetorical features on teachers' evaluations of persuasive texts, Connor reported students' scores on the informal reasoning scale played a major role in the raters' evaluations of the overall effectiveness of the students' arguments. To be more specific, participants' added Toulmin scores in Connor's study explained 48% of the variation in expert holistic evaluations of the overall quality of the students' persuasive essays. These results provide strong evidence that Connor and Lauer's (1988) scale is a valid measure of informal reasoning.

Connor and Lauer's informal reasoning measure has been repeatedly used in contrastive rhetoric studies. For example, Connor and Lauer (1988) used their informal reasoning scale to measure cross-cultural variation in informal reasoning by US, British, and New Zealand students. Connor and Lauer's analysis revealed while there were no significant difference in the claim subscale among the three groups, scores on the data and warrant subscales showed significant differences among the three groups in the use of data and warrants to justify claims.

Ferris (1994) adopted Connor and Lauer's informal reasoning measure among 33 linguistic and rhetorical variables to compare English L1 and ESL persuasive essays by basic and advanced college student writers. Among 15 rhetorical variables, the informal

reasoning score was one of the only two variables that predicted the writer's language of composing (i.e, English L1 or ESL)—Interestingly, it did not distinguish between basic and advanced writers.

In a study comparing the rhetorical features of argumentative writing by 155 ESL Spanish speaking and English monolingual students, Black (1997) employed the same Toulmin scale used in this study. Black reported that scores on the Toulmin scale were reliable predictors of writing quality. Connor and Lauer's (1988), Ferris' (1994), and Black's (1997) findings confirm that the informal reasoning scale is a valid and reliable measure for the quality of arguments in contrastive rhetoric studies.

Persuasive appeals. Although an analysis of reasoning that underlies arguments is necessary for the study of persuasive discourse, reasoning only represents one dimension of persuasive discourse. Aristotle has long argued that messages whose goal is to persuade their intended audience to abandon its point of view in favor of that of the writer or speaker and to take action accordingly does not necessarily rely solely on ration (*logos*); in addition to their reliance on logical argumentation, persuaders frequently build on their credibility (*ethos*) and appeal to their audience emotions (*pathos*) (Cooper, 1932). Effective use of the right combination of rational, credibility, and affective appeals plays a major role in helping writers and speakers achieve the goal of persuading their audience (Connor & Lauer, 1985; Durst, Laine, & Schultz, 1990).

Therefore, like the studies it replicates, the current study investigates cross-cultural variation in persuasive appeals employed by US and Arab speakers in their writing. Connor and Lauer's (1988) measure of persuasive appeals was used to measure participants' use and overall effectiveness of rational, credibility, and affective appeals.

This section first describes how the three types of persuasive appeals were defined in the current study. Then, it introduces the scale that was used to rate the participants' use of each type of appeal. Third, it shows how the scale was used in the current study.

For the purposes of the current study, rational appeals were defined as the writer's attempt to support his or her claim through the strategic use of evidence that appeals to the audience's sense of logic to get the audience to accept his or her evidence as sufficient proof that his or her point of view is valid and suggested plan of action is logically justified. Rational appeals are rhetorically manifested in written texts via the use of descriptive or narrative example, classification (including definition), comparison (including analogy), contrast, appeal to (expert) authority, cause and effect, model, stage in progress, means/end, consequence, ideal or principle and information (facts, statistics) (Connor & Lauer, 1985).

Effective use of rational appeals is indicated by the use of clearly stated claims, consistent point of view, compelling reasons for claims, extensive use of a variety of evidence that is specific to the claim, and valid warrants that directly link the evidence to the claim. Ineffective use of rational appeals is betrayed by over-generalized or inconsistent claims, inappropriate or irrelevant reasons for the claim, misuse of evidence including logical fallacies, or failure to explicitly state warrants when the link between the data and claim is not obvious enough.

Credibility appeals were defined as the author's attempts to present his or her character in a manner that positively impacts his or her audience and facilitates persuasion. Thus, persuaders attempt to project themselves as fair, thoughtful, open-minded, trustworthy, and knowledgeable about the subject matter through the use of

rhetorical strategies. Credibility appeals are rhetorically manifested in written texts via writer's incorporation of first-hand experience, respect for audience's interests and points of view, emphasis on those interests and points of view that might be shared between the writer and audience, and unexaggerated representation of the writer's qualifications, good character, and judgment (Connor & Lauer, 1985).

Effective use of credibility appeals also entails appropriate use of tone, sensitivity to audience values, control of the situation, sincerity and honesty, balanced representation of opposing points of view, and addressing the audience's possible concerns and counterarguments. Ineffective use of credibility appeals is revealed by insensitivity to audience's interest or disrespect for others points of view (including personal attacks, or scornful tone), lack of (self) control, distortion or misrepresentation of facts, biased presentation of controversial issues (including ignoring obvious counterarguments or negative evidence), intolerance of others' beliefs, obvious conflict of interest, appeals to authority.

Affective appeals were defined as the writer's use of language to get the audience emotionally involved in the issue under discussion in a manner that encourages the audience to produce the response favored by the writer. Affective appeals are rhetorically manifested in written texts via use of vivid picture, charged language, or metaphor to evoke the audience's emotion (Connor & Lauer, 1985).

Effective use of affective appeals is rhetorically manifested in the use of appropriate tone, diction, vivid picture, charged language, or metaphor to break the ice with the audience, lower the audience's affective filters, establish common grounds between the writer and audience, or create and sustain a bond between writer and

audience in a manner that facilitates persuasion. Ineffective use of affective appeals is rhetorically manifested in offensive or inappropriate tone, diction, stereotypes, or figurative language in a manner that inhibits persuasion. Other signs of inadequate emotional appeals include total absence of affective appeals, manipulative use of emotions for coercion rather than persuasion, overemphasis on language of the text at the expense of the message, or on emotions at the expense of reason.

It should be noted here that use of affective appeals for persuasion is a two-sided sword. The right amount of affective appeals reinforcing a solid logical argument can facilitate and expedite the persuasion process and have a long lasting effect on the audience. On the contrary, too much obvious reliance on affective appeals with inadequate use of logical appeals might lead the audience to suspect the writer's motive and thus reject his or her message.

In order to measure the participants' use of the three types of affective appeals, the current study used Connor and Lauer's (1988) persuasive appeals scale. Connor and Lauer's (1988) persuasive appeals scale was based on an earlier research endeavor by Connor and Lauer (1985) to identify rational, credibility, and affective appeals that contribute to the success of a persuasive essay to achieve its discourse aim. In their 1985 study, they had four independent raters apply a taxonomy of 23 persuasive appeals to the analysis of 50 persuasive essays by British high-school students. The essays were randomly selected from a large pool of student essays collected during the IEA research project (Purves & Takala, 1982). Scores by the four raters of the effective use of persuasive appeals in the essays were then correlated with holistic ratings of the essays.

The four raters achieved high reliability ranging from .71 to .94 for determining the total number of rational appeals (.94), dominance of rational appeals (.87), effectiveness of rational appeals (.77), total number of affective appeals (.84), dominance of affective appeals, (.87), and effectiveness of affective appeals (.71). When use and effectiveness of persuasive appeals were correlated to holistic ratings, ineffective use of the rational and credibility appeals turned out to be highly correlated with low holistic ratings. The high interrater reliabilities and strong correlations with holistic ratings establish the validity of Connor and Lauer's analytical model of persuasive appeals.

Based on Connor and Lauer's 1985 study, Connor and Lauer (1988) devised their persuasive appeals scale and used it to measure cross-cultural variation in the use of persuasive appeals in persuasive writing by US, British, and New Zealand students. Two raters rated 50 student essays from each language group on a scale of 0-3 for each of the three appeals. Interrater reliability between the two raters on the three sub-scales were high, namely .90, .73, and .72 for the rational, credibility, and affective appeals respectively.

Connor and Lauer reported writers' use of rational, credibility, and affective appeals significantly varied by language group. The New Zealand group, for example, used more effective rational, credibility, and affective appeals than the US and British groups did. Connor and Lauer also noted that students from all three language backgrounds, used less affective and credibility appeals than rational appeals. Affective appeals were the least used by all groups.

In her 1990 study, Connor reported that effective use of rational and credibility appeals played a significant role in determining the success of persuasive strategies by

US, British, and New Zealand students. However, Connor found out that use of affective appeals had no significant effect on persuasion. Considering that Arabs have been characterized in previous research as more emotional than Westerners (e.g., Koch, 1981; Shouby, 1951) and that students in Connor's study came from the same Western culture, use of affective appeals was incorporated in the current study to verify if use of affective appeals would be more dominant in texts by Arab writers than in those by their US counterparts.

Two raters independently read and rated all 90 essays according to Connor and Lauer's (1988) persuasive appeals scale (See Table 8). Each rater assigned each paper a score between zero and three for each type of the three persuasive appeals. On the rational appeals subscale, if the rater determined the author did not use any rational appeals, he assigned the paper a zero. Papers that used some rational appeals, but the rational appeals were inappropriate or minimally developed were assigned a score of one. Papers that used "a single rational appeal or a series of rational appeals with at least two points of development" were assigned a score of two. Papers that employed "exceptionally well developed and appropriate single extended rational appeal or a coherent set of rational appeals" commanded a score of three.

On the credibility appeals subscale, papers that did not use any credibility appeals were assigned a zero. Papers were assigned a score of one if they exhibited "no writer credibility but some awareness of audience's values or some writer credibility but no awareness of audience's values." Papers were assigned a score of two if they showed some signs of both writer credibility and awareness of audience's values. A score of three

on the credibility appeals subscale was reserved for papers that demonstrated "strong

writer credibility and sensitivity to audience's values."

Table 8

Persuasive Appeals Scale

Rational

    0   No use of the rational appeal*

    1   Use of some rational appeals*, minimally developed or use of some inappropriate (in terms of major point) rational appeals.

    2   Use of a single rational appeal* or a series of rational appeals* with at least two points of development.

    3   Exceptionally well developed and appropriate single extended rational appeal or a coherent set of rational appeals*

*Rational appeals were categorized as (quasi-logical, realistic structure, example, analogy).

Credibility

    0   No use of credibility appeals

    1   No writer credibility but some awareness of audience's values or some writer credibility (other than general knowledge) but no awareness of audience's values.

    2   Some writer credibility (other than general knowledge) and some awareness of audience's values.

    3   Strong writer credibility (personal experience) and sensitivity to audience's values (specific audience for the solution)

Affective

    0   No use of affective appeal.

    1   Minimal use of concreteness or charged language.

    2   Adequate use of either vivid picture, charged language, or metaphor to evoke emotion.

    3   Strong use of either vivid picture, charged language, or metaphor to evoke emotion.

Note. Adopted from "Linguistic/Rhetorical Measures for International Persuasive Student Writing," by U. Connor, 1990, *Research in the Teaching of English, 24(1),* p. 77.

On the affective appeals subscale, papers that did not use any affective appeals or used counterproductive ones scored a zero. Papers were assigned a score of one if they minimally used concrete or charged language. Papers were assigned a score of two if they displayed "adequate use of either vivid picture, charged language, or metaphor to evoke emotion." Papers secured a score of three if they demonstrated "strong use of either vivid picture, charged language, or metaphor to evoke emotion."

Persuasive adaptiveness. Any analysis of persuasion would be incomplete absent an analysis of audience adaptiveness strategies, since the aim of persuasion is to effect a desirable change in the audience's point of view (Kinneavy, 1969, 1971). Persuasive adaptiveness is the rhetorical measures that the writer takes to adapt his or her rhetoric to audience concerns (Connor, 1987). For persuasion to achieve its desired outcome, "the writer needs to recognize and adapt to the reader's perspective by dealing implicitly and explicitly with possible counterarguments, and by taking the target's perspective in articulating the advantages of the solution" (Connor, 1990, p. 76). To test how writers from US and Arab backgrounds adapt their writing to address their audience's potential concerns and counterarguments, this study adopted the Delia, Kline, and Burleson (1979) persuasive adaptiveness scale (Table 9) as quoted in Connor (1990, p. 78).

The persuasive adaptiveness scale was developed by Delia, Kline, and Burleson (1979) as a tool to investigate individual variation in the quality of persuasive strategies in speech by individuals at different age stages ranging from early childhood to adulthood. The validity and reliability of the persuasive adaptiveness measure have been proven in numerous empirical studies (Connor, 1990).

Table 9

Persuasive Adaptiveness Scale

Level I:	No Discernible Recognition of and Adaptation to the Target's Perspective.

    0   No statement of desire or request; no response given.

    1   Unelaborated request.

    2   Unelaborated statement of personal desire or need.

Level II: Implicit Recognition of and Adaptation to the Target's Perspective.

    3   Elaboration of necessity, desirability, or usefulness of the persuasive request.

    4   Elaboration of the persuader's or persuasive object's need plus minimal dealing with anticipated counter-arguments.

    5   Elaborated acknowledgment of and dealing with multiple anticipated counter-arguments.

Level III: Explicit Recognition of and Adaptation to the Target's Perspective.

    6   Truncated efforts to demonstrate relevant consequences to the target of accepting (or rejecting) the persuasive request.

    7   Elaboration of specific consequences of accepting (or rejecting) the persuasive request to one with characteristics of the target.

    8   Demonstrable attempts by the persuader to take the target's perspective in articulating an advantage or attempts to lead the target to assume the perspective of the persuader, another person, or the persuasive object.

Note. Adapted from "The Development of Persuasive Communication Strategies in Kindergarteners Through Twelfth-Graders," by J. G. Delia, S. L. Kline, & B. R. Burleson, 1979, *Communication Monographs, 46*, pp. 248-249.

Connor (1990) investigated whether the degree of persuasive adaptiveness affected the overall persuasiveness of English L1 written texts by US, British, and New Zealand high-school students. Although Connor reported that persuasive adaptiveness was not a significant predictor of overall writing quality in her study, the present study hypothesized that measuring the persuasive adaptiveness across languages might reveal different results since the writing samples analyzed in the current study were written by more advanced students from different language backgrounds. Therefore, the analysis of persuasive adaptiveness was included in the current study.

Two raters read all the writing samples collected for the study and rated each essay on a nine-point scale with scores ranging from zero to eight falling under three major levels of adaptiveness.

Overall writing quality. Two independent raters rated the overall writing quality of each essay in the study using a 0-5 point holistic scale (see Appendix C for a copy of the holistic scoring guide). Guidelines were given to raters so that they pay attention to how the students meet the task requirement, address the topic, and give solutions to the problem. Raters were also alerted not to let their agreement or disagreement with the writers' point of view to interfere with their objective evaluation of the quality of the essays.

Since the raters were to score both the holistic and analytic aspects of the essays, two steps had to be taken to minimize the possibility that training the raters on the analytic scoring of the rhetorical dimensions of the texts would not interfere with their rating of the overall quality of the essays. First, the raters rated the essays for overall writing quality before they started to train on using the analytic scales to analyze and

score the rhetorical dimensions of the texts. Second, there was a two-week interval between holistic scoring and analytic scoring.

      Conclusion. To conclude this section, the current study adopted analytical measures of persuasive writing devised by Connor (1990) and Connor and Lauer (1988) to analyze the English and Arabic persuasive writing by Arab and US graduate students for cross-cultural rhetorical variation. In this sense, the present study is a replication of Connor's (1990) and Connor and Lauer's (1988) studies. However, it is different from theirs in that in the current study (a) participants are advanced student writers rather than 16-year-old students; (b) they come from different language backgrounds rather than from the same language background, and (c) are allowed more time to fulfill the writing task. In addition, (d) both the English L2 and Arabic L1 writing of the same students were analyzed so that differences, if any, could be traced back to first language interference. The goal of the analysis was not to evaluate which group wrote better or poorer essays but to investigate whether NAS and NES writers face similar writing challenges.

      Table 10 shows a summary of participants and research design by native language, language of composing and major.

Table 10

Summary of Research Design

Variable	Group 1[a]		Group 2[a]
Native language	Arabic		English
Language of composing	ESL	Arabic L1	English L1
Argument superstructure	X	X	X
Informal reasoning	X	X	X
Persuasive appeals	X	X	X
Persuasive adaptiveness	X	X	X
Holistic score	X	X	X

Note. [a] $n = 30$

Scoring Procedures

Two independent, bilingual raters with extensive teaching and rating experience used the holistic and analytic measures described above to analyze and score the 90 English and Arabic writing samples in the study. Both raters hold a PhD in English from a US university. Both are experienced university instructors, who taught English L1, Arabic as a Foreign Language (AFL), ESL, EFL, and cross-cultural communication in the US and Arabia. One of the raters has worked for a leading international educational testing service as a scoring leader for their English writing testing program. He was instrumental in assisting with the training and calibration procedures. The other rater has trained Arab ESL learners on how to prepare for all the components of standardized ESL tests such as the TOEFL, TOEIC, and IELTS including the writing component of these tests for more than 15 years.

The raters met with the researcher for extensive training sessions on the analysis and scoring of the writing samples in the study. Writing samples that did not qualify for inclusion in the study along with other written samples freely available on the Internet were used for the training. First, the raters and researcher discussed the measures one by one and cross-examined their interpretation of each measure. Questions, concerns, and requests for clarification were immediately addressed. Second, each of the three read, analyzed, scored, and discussed the first five training writing samples collaboratively. Next, they read, analyzed, and scored the sixth training sample independently. Then, the three discussed the writing sample, compared their scores, and examined any discrepancies among the three resulting scores. Scoring discrepancies were ironed out by having the three discuss the rationale behind their scores. The cycle was repeated with each training writing sample until the three were confident that they have become familiar enough with the scoring measures and that their independent scores on each measure closely matched scores by the other two. Immediately after the training, the two raters blindly analyzed and scored the 90 writing samples in the study.

Interrater Reliability

Pearson's correlation coefficient statistic was calculated for the independent scores assigned by the two raters to evaluate the extent of the variation in interrater scoring and thus estimate the reliability of the study measures. All statistical analysis was performed via the use of PASW 17.0 for Windows (formerly SPSS; SPSS, 2009). Reliability estimates revealed that the laborious training did pay off. There was no single instance of discrepant interrater scoring variation, that is variation in the independent scores of the two raters on a given scale by more than one scale-point, on any of the

measures in the study. Adjacent agreement rate, that is the proportion of the independent

scores of the two raters on a given scale that were within one point of each other, was

100%. Exact agreement rate, defined as the percentage of absolute agreement between

the two raters, was also relatively high for all measures in the study; the exact agreement

rates for all measures in the study ranged from 68% for the warrant scores to 100% for

the background, problem, solution, and background scores. Table 11 summarizes exact

interrater agreement estimates for all measures in the study.

Table 11

Exact Interrater Agreement for all Measures

Measure	Pearson's r
Holistic	.86
Background	1.00
Problem	1.00
Solution	1.00
Evaluation	1.00
Claim	.85
Data	.79
Warrant	.68
Rational appeals	.87
Credibility appeals	.73
Affective appeals	.75
Persuasive adaptiveness	.71

The researcher identified all the papers which had less than 100% interrater

agreement on any of the scales. After all writing samples were scored, the two raters

revisited these papers to resolve the variation in their scores. To do so, they discussed the

essays and the rationale behind their scores until they reached an agreement about the

most appropriate score for each paper. The researcher acted as mediator for the discussion.

Thus, the scores used in the final analysis were the scores that the two independent raters had a 100% agreement on even if this involved the raters' revisiting some papers to resolve scoring variation on any of the study measures. Although the training and scoring procedures were time-consuming, the outcome of the process was well worth it; the researcher became confident that the scores used in the statistical analysis were reliable measures of the rhetorical performance of the participants.

Conclusion

This chapter described the research design of the study in light of guidelines extracted from existing literature. After research questions were reiterated, study hypotheses were formulated, data collection procedures were described, and analytical measures used in the study were discussed in detail. Finally, interrater reliability was addressed. The following chapter reports on and discusses the results of the study.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study examined the writing performance of US native speakers of English and Arab native speakers of Arabic for signs of cross-cultural rhetorical variation in select persuasive dimensions. Thirty ESL and 30 Arabic L1 writing samples by the same 30 Arab graduate students as well as 30 English L1 writing samples by 30 US graduate students on the same persuasive writing task were analyzed and mean group scores were compared for this purpose. The current study investigated whether results of these comparisons would provide empirical evidence for Kaplan's (1966) contrastive rhetoric hypothesis, which stipulates that the rhetorical problems in the writing of ESL students are caused by negative transfer of rhetorical strategies from first language. To be more specific, this study investigated whether some dimensions of persuasive writing were particularly problematic for Arab advanced ESL student writers when compared to that of their native English speaking counterparts and, if so, whether the Arab students' writing problems were due to first language interference.

The study hypothesized that if Kaplan's contrastive rhetoric claim was true, then Arab advanced ESL writers would produce writing that—when judged by Standard English criteria—would be less rhetorically persuasive than that produced by their native English speaking counterparts. This hypothesis was tested by comparing the writing performance of US and Arab advanced ESL writers on the same writing task. In the meantime, the ESL and AL1 writing by the same Arab ESL students was compared to examine whether the language of composing affected the writing quality of the Arab ESL writers. In both cases, writing performance was measured by use of both holistic and

analytic scales, namely overall writing quality and performance on argument superstructure scale, Toulmin's informal reasoning scale, persuasive appeals scale, and persuasive adaptiveness scale.

Chapter One has foregrounded the purpose, rationale, and research questions of the study. Chapter Two has provided a detailed account of Kaplan's hypothesis along with a discussion of ontological, epistemological, and axiological issues in the theoretical underpinnings of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis. Chapter Three has reviewed related contrastive rhetoric studies on Arabic in general and on Arabic argumentative/persuasive writing in particular. Chapter Four has laid out the research design, data collection procedures, and analytical framework for the current study. The current chapter reports on the results of the rhetorical and statistical analysis of data and discusses the significance of the findings in light of existing research on contrastive rhetoric. First, research questions and hypotheses are reiterated for the readers' convenience. Then, the next two sections address the questions of whether the data meet the assumptions of *tertium comparationis* and whether the rhetorical measures used in the study are reliable and valid. Third, results of the contrastive analysis of the participants' rhetorical performance are reported. The chapter concludes with a summary of main findings.

Research Questions

This study sought answers to the following research questions:

1. Can performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task accurately predict the writers' overall writing performance?

2. Can performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task accurately predict the writers' language/cultural background?

3. Are there significant differences in the ESL and Arabic L1 writing performance of the same Arab advanced ESL writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task?

4. Are there significant differences in the performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same English persuasive writing task?

5. Are there significant differences in the performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same native language persuasive writing task?

6. Are select rhetorical dimensions of English persuasive writing particularly problematic for Arab advanced ESL writers?

7. Are the problems of Arab advanced ESL writers with select rhetorical dimensions, if any, due to first language transfer?

Hypotheses

The study hypothesized that if the analytic measures used in the study were valid measures of rhetorical performance on persuasive writing tasks, statistical analysis of data will uphold the following hypothesis:

1. Performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task can accurately predict the writers' overall writing performance.

The study also hypothesized that if Kaplan's (1966) contrastive rhetoric claims were true, statistical analysis of the study participants' performance on the rhetorical measures would uphold the following hypotheses:

2. Performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task can accurately predict the writers' language/cultural background.

3. There are no significant differences in the ESL and Arabic L1 writing performance of the same Arab advanced ESL writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task.

4. There are significant differences in the performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same English persuasive writing task.

5. There are significant differences in the performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same native language persuasive writing task.

6. Select rhetorical dimensions of English persuasive writing are particularly problematic for Arab advanced ESL writers.

7. The problems of Arab advanced ESL writers with select rhetorical dimensions are due to first language transfer.

Null Hypotheses

For the purpose of hypothesis testing, the following null hypotheses (NH) were formulated:

1. Performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task cannot accurately predict the writers' overall writing performance.

2. Performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task cannot accurately predict the writers' language/cultural background.

3. There are no significant differences in the ESL and Arabic L1 writing performance of the same Arab advanced ESL writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task.

4. There are no significant differences in the performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same English persuasive writing task.

5. There are no significant differences in the performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same native language persuasive writing task.

6. Select rhetorical dimensions of English persuasive writing are particularly problematic for Arab advanced ESL writers.

7. The problems of Arab advanced ESL writers with select rhetorical dimensions are due to first language transfer.

Before the results of hypothesis testing are reported and discussed, adequate *tertium comparationis* of the two participant groups involved in the study and the validity of the analytical measures need to be investigated. The next two sections are devoted to this purpose.

Assumptions of Adequate *Tertium Comparationis*

As mentioned in the previous chapter, only 30 US and 30 Arab volunteer doctoral students were included in the final analysis. All 60 study participants completed a language history questionnaire. This section makes use of the data tabulated from the completed questionnaires to extract a profile of the participants in each group. The goal is to explore the comparability of the two groups and thus ensure that adequate *tertium comparationis* (Connor, 1996; Connor & Moreno, 2005; Janicki, 1986; Moreno, 2008; Ouaouicha, 1986; Scollon, 1997) has been established before any between-group comparisons are held. Otherwise, the comparisons would be unfair and susceptible to ethnocentric bias. The variables covered will include gender, age, country of origin/citizenship, country of residence at the time of the study, prior living experience in an English speaking country, country where first degree was received, first degree major, foreign languages spoken, ESL learning experience, ESL language proficiency, frequency of writing in native language and ESL and, participants' perceptions about their writing ability in their native language and ESL.

Gender

Since gender was not a variable in the study, an equal number of males and females in each group was maintained in order to neutralize the confounding effect of gender on the results of the study. To be more specific, one half of the Arab participants, female ($n = 15$) and the other half were male ($n = 15$). The same gender distribution was true for the native English speaker group. Table 12 summarizes the distribution of gender in the two groups.

Table 12

Distribution of Gender Across the Two Language Groups

	Language group		
Gender	NESs	NASs	Total
Female			
Count	15	15	30
% within native language	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
% of total	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%
Male			
Count	15	15	30
% within native language	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
% of total	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%
Total			
Count	30	30	60
% within native language	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% of total	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%

Age

Even though no attempt was made to control for the age variable, the age demographic could not have been more uniformly distributed between the two groups. Each group had 20 participants (66.7%) between the age of 25 and 35 years, 9 participants (30%) between 35 and 44 years, and only one 48-year-old participant (3.3%). All the study participants were between the age of 25 and 48 ($MDN = 32$, $M = 32.97$, $SD = 5.93$) with the age of the Arab participants ranging from 25 to 48 years ($MDN = 30$, $M = 32.83$, $SD = 6.11$) and that of the US participants ranging from 25 to 48, too ($MDN = 33$, $M = 33.1$, $SD = 5.84$). Table 13 and Table 14 summarize the distribution of age in the two groups.

Table 13

Descriptive Statistics for the Age Variable (in Years)

Statistic	Language group		Total
	NESs	NASs	
Min. age	25.00	25.00	25.00
Max. age	48.00	48.00	48.00
Median	33.00	30.00	32.00
Mean	33.10	32.83	32.97
SD	5.84	6.11	5.93

Table 14

Distribution of Age Across the Two Language Groups

Age	Language group		Total
	NESs	NASs	
25 to 35 YRS			
Count	20	20	40
% within native language	66.7%	66.7%	66.7%
% of total	33.3%	33.3%	66.7%
35 to 44 YRS			
Count	9	9	18
% within native language	30.0%	30.0%	30.0%
% of total	15.0%	15.0%	30.0%
45 to 54 YRS			
Count	1	1	2
% within native language	3.3%	3.3%	3.3%
% of total	1.7%	1.7%	3.3%
Total			
Count	30	30	60
% within native language	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% of total	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%

Cultural and Educational Background

Since we live a world where immigration and intercultural contact are widespread, it becomes imperative not to take it for granted that one's citizenship reflects where one is originally from, where one was raised, what native language one speaks, or what intercultural influences have impacted one's rhetorical preferences. For example, a considerable number of US citizens are immigrants who were raised in other countries and speak English as a second language. In such cases, it would be unreasonable to assume that they better represent mainstream US cultural and rhetorical preferences. Likewise, the extent of the potential influence of the Western culture on Arab's rhetorical performance should be identified and accounted for. Such influencing factors on Arabs might include being raised in an English-speaking country, obtaining an undergraduate degree from an English-speaking university, or receiving education at a foreign language school (such as American or British international schools). Therefore, it becomes necessary to report on the cultural and educational background of the participants in such a study of cross-cultural comparison.

Country of Origin/Citizenship

Data from the language history questionnaire revealed that all American participants were US native English-speaking citizens. The Arab participants (16 Egyptian and 14 Jordanian; 53.3% and 46.7%) were all native speakers of Arabic. All participants in both groups reported that their country of origin was the same as their country of citizenship. Table 15 tabulates the country of origin for participants in each group.

Table 15

Distribution of Country of Origin Across the Two Language Groups

Country of origin	Language group		
	NESs	NASs	Total
USA			
Count	30	0	30
% within native language	100.0%	0.0%	50.0%
% of total	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%
Egypt			
Count	0	16	16
% within native language	0.0%	53.3%	26.7%
% of total	0.0%	26.7%	26.7%
Jordan			
Count	0	14	14
% within native language	0.0%	46.7%	23.3%
% of total	0.0%	23.3%	23.3%
Total			
Count	30	30	60
% within native language	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% of total	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%

Country of Residence

All US participants were enrolled in an English studies doctoral program in the US ($n = 30$). Arab participants were enrolled in an English studies doctoral program in the US ($n = 18$; 60% of Arab participants), Egypt ($n = 8$; 26.7% of Arabs), or Jordan ($n = 4$; 13.3% of Arabs). Table 16 tabulates the country of PhD study for participants in each group.

Table 16

Country Where Participants Lived and Studied for Their PhD

	Language group		
Country of PhD study	NESs	NASs	Total
USA			
Count	30	18	48
% within native language	100.0%	60.0%	80.0%
% of total	50.0%	30.0%	80.0%
Egypt			
Count	0	8	8
% within native Language	0.0%	26.7%	13.3%
% of total	0.0%	13.3%	13.3%
Jordan			
Count	0	4	4
% within native language	0.0%	13.3%	6.7%
% of total	0.0%	6.7%	6.7%
Total			
Count	30	30	60
% within native Language	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% of total	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%

Prior Living Experience in an English Speaking Country

Only 1 of the 12 non-US based participants had lived in an English speaking country in the past (two years in the US to be more specific). The rest of the non-US based participants ($n = 11$) never travelled to an English-speaking country. See Table 17 for a summary of the English speaking countries in which the Arab participants lived.

Table 17

Arab Participants Who Have Lived in an English Speaking Country

	Arab participants		
Country	US based	Non-US based	Total
USA			
Count	18	1	19
% within Arab participants	100.0%	8.3%	63.3%
% of total	60.0%	3.3%	63.3%
Other			
Count	0	0	0
% within Arab participants	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
% of total	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total			
Count	18	1	19
% within Arab participants	100.0%	8.3%	63.3%
% of total	60.0%	3.3%	63.3%

At the time of the study, the 18 US-based Arab participants had been living in the US for periods that ranged from six months to seven years with a median of 2 years and a mean of 2.42 years ($SD = 1.78$). None of the 18 US-based Arab participants visited any other English speaking country. Of the all Arab participants, 19 out of 30 participants had lived in an English speaking country (namely, the US) for an average of 2 years ($MDN = 2$; $n = 2.39$; $SD = 1.74$ for all Arab participants). Thus, only 23.3% of all Arab participants—had lived in an English speaking country more than two years at the time writing samples were collected. Also, each participant in the study was living in the country where he or she was studying. Table 18 and Table 19 summarize Arab participants' length of stay in the US.

Table 18

Arab Participants' Length of Stay in the US (in Years)

	Arab participants		
Stay in the US	US based (*n* = 18)	Non-US based (*n* = 12)	Total (*n* = 30)
Min. duration	0.50	0.00	0.00
Max. duration	7.00	2.00	7.00
Median	2.00	0.00	2.00
Mean	2.42	0.17	2.39
SD	1.78	0.58	1.74

Table 19

Arab Participants' Length of Stay in the US (in Years)

| | Arab participants | | |
| | US based | Non-US based | Total |
Stay in the US	(*n* = 18)	(*n* = 12)	(*n* = 30)
None			
Count	0	11	11
% within Arab participants	0.0%	91.7%	36.7%
% of total	0.0%	36.7%	36.7%
1/2 to 2 YRS			
Count	12	1	13
% within Arab participants	66.7%	8.3%	43.3%
% of total	40.0%	3.3%	43.3%
3 to 4 YRS			
Count	3	0	3
% within Arab participants	16.7%	0.0%	10.0%
% of total	10.0%	0.0%	10.0%
5 to 6 YRS			
Count	2	0	2
% within Arab participants	11.1%	0.0%	3.3%
% of total	6.7%	0.0%	6.7%
7 to 8 YRS			
Count	1	0	1
% within Arab participants	5.6%	0.0%	3.3%
% of total	3.3%	0.0%	3.3%
Total			
Count	18	12	30
% within Arab participants	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% of total	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%

First Degree Country

All US participants received their first degree from a US university. All Arab participants received their first degree from an Arab university; to be more specific, seventeen Arab participants (56.7%) received their first degree from Egypt; 12 (40%) from Jordan; and 1 (3.3%) from UAE. Table 20 tabulates the distribution of countries where participants obtained their first degree.

Table 20

Countries Where Participants Obtained Their First Degree

Country where first degree was obtained	Language group		
	NESs	NASs	Total
USA			
Count	30	0	30
% within native language	100.0%	0.0%	50.0%
% of total	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%
Egypt			
Count	0	17	17
% within native language	0.0%	56.7%	28.3%
% of total	0.0%	28.3%	28.3%
Jordan			
Count	0	12	12
% within native language	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%
% of total	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%
UAE			
Count	0	1	1
% within native language	0.0%	3.3%	1.7%
% of total	0.0%	1.7%	1.7%
Total			
Count	30	30	60
% within native language	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% of total	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%

First Degree Major

As for the first degree major, the US group had a more diverse first degree major distribution than the Arab group. Fifteen of the Arab participants (50%) reported that they majored in English during their undergrad study; 13 (43.3%) majored in English literature; one (3.3%) in psychology; and one in business (3.3%). On the other hand, 16

US participants (53.3%) majored in English; 2 in English literature (6.7%); 2 in English education (6.7%); 2 in creative writing (6.7%); 1 in English writing (3.3%); 1 in theoretical linguistics (3.3%); 2 in journalism (6.7%); 2 in music/theatre (6.7%); 1 in psychology (3.3%); and 1 in international studies (3.3%). All in All, 28 (93.3%) Arab and 24 (80%) US participants held an English-related first degree. One Arab participant held a first degree in business. The rest ($n = 7$; 1 Arab and 6 US participants) held a first degree in a humanities/social sciences field of study. Table 21 summarizes the distribution of first degree major for each group.

Table 21

First Degree Major of Study Across the Two Language Groups

First degree major of study	Language group		Total
	NESs	NASs	
English			
Count	16	15	31
% within native language	53.3%	50.0%	51.7%
% of total	26.7%	25.0%	51.7%
English literature			
Count	2	13	15
% within native language	6.7%	43.3%	25.0%
% of total	3.3%	21.7%	25.0%
English education			
Count	2	0	2
% within native language	6.7%	0.0%	3.3%
% of total	3.3%	0.0%	3.3%
Creative writing			
Count	2	0	2
% within native language	6.7%	0.0%	3.3%
% of total	3.3%	0.0%	3.3%
English writing			
Count	1	0	1
% within native language	3.3%	0.0%	1.7%
% of total	1.7%	0.0%	1.7%
Theoretical linguistics			
Count	1	0	1
% within native language	3.3%	0.0%	1.7%
% of total	1.7%	0.0%	1.7%
Journalism			
Count	2	0	2
% within native language	6.7%	0.0%	3.3%
% of total	3.3%	0.0%	3.3%

Table 21 (Continued)

First Degree Major of Study Across the Two Language Groups

First degree major of study	Language group		Total
	NESs	NASs	
Music/Theatre			
Count	2	0	2
% within native language	6.7%	0.0%	3.3%
% of total	3.3%	0.0%	3.3%
Psychology			
Count	1	1	2
% within native language	3.3%	3.3%	3.3%
% of total	1.7%	1.7%	3.3%
Business			
Count	0	1	1
% within native language	0.0%	3.3%	1.7%
% of total	0.0%	1.7%	1.7%
International studies			
Count	1	0	1
% within native language	3.3%	0.0%	1.7%
% of total	1.7%	0.0%	1.7%
Total			
Count	30	30	60
% within native language	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% of total	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%

Foreign Languages

Twenty nine out of the 30 US participants (96.7%) spoke at least one foreign

language (Spanish = 12 US participants; French = 9; German = 7; and Italian = 1).

Twenty of those (66.7% of all US participants) spoke at least a second foreign language

(German = 7 US participants; Spanish = 4; French 2; Italian, Korean, Latin, Madirin, Old

English, Russian, and Swahili were spoken by a different US participant each). Only 5 of

them (16.7% of all US participants) spoke a third foreign language (Spanish, French, German, Old English, or Japanese). Although the US participants spoke a combined total of 11 different foreign languages, none of them reported that they have spoken or studied Arabic. So, it can be safely assumed that Arabic had no impact on their rhetorical choices.

On the other hand, all the Arab participants reported that English was their first foreign/second language; twenty of them (66.7%) spoke French ($n = 18$) or German ($n = 2$) as a second foreign language. Only two Arabs (6.7% of all Arab participants) spoke a third foreign language, namely Spanish. Table 22, Table 23, and Table 24 summarize the foreign languages spoken by participants in each group.

Table 22

First Foreign Language Distribution Across the Two Groups

	Language group		
First foreign language	NESs	NASs	Total
English			
Count		30	30
% within native language		100.0%	50.0%
% of total		50.0%	50.0%
Arabic			
Count	0		0
% within native language	0.0%		0.0%
% of total	0.0%		0.0%
Spanish			
Count	12	0	12
% within native language	40.0%	0.0%	20.0%
% of total	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%
French			
Count	9	0	9
% within native language	30.0%	0.0%	15.0%
% of total	15.0%	0.0%	15.0%
German			
Count	7	0	7
% within native language	23.3%	0.0%	11.7%
% of total	11.7%	0.0%	11.7%
Italian			
Count	1	0	1
% within native language	3.3%	0.0%	1.7%
% of total	1.7%	0.0%	1.7%
None			
Count	1	0	1
% within native language	3.3%	0.0%	1.7%
% of total	1.7%	0.0%	1.7%
Total			
Count	30	30	60
% within native language	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% of total	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%

Table 23

Second Foreign Language Distribution Across the Two Groups

Second foreign language	Language group		
	NESs	NASs	Total
Arabic			
Count	0		0
% within native language	0.0%		0.0%
% of total	0.0%		0.0%
Spanish			
Count	4	0	4
% within native language	13.3%	0.0%	6.7%
% of total	6.7%	0.0%	6.7%
French			
Count	2	18	20
% within native language	6.7%	60.0%	33.3%
% of total	3.3%	30.0%	33.3%
German			
Count	0	2	2
% within native language	0.0%	6.7%	3.3%
% of total	0.0%	3.3%	3.3%
Russian			
Count	2	0	2
% within native language	6.7%	0.0%	3.3%
% of total	3.3%	0.0%	3.3%
Other[a]			
Count	6	0	6
% within native language	20.0%	0.0%	10.0%
% of total	10.0%	0.0%	10.0%
None			
Count	16	10	26
% within native language	53.3%	33.3%	43.3%
% of total	26.7%	16.7%	43.3%
Total			
Count	30	30	60
% within native language	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% of total	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%

Note. [a] Other = Italian, Korean, Latin, Madirin, Old English, or Swahili

Table 24

Third Foreign Language Distribution Across the Two Groups

	Language group		
Third foreign language	NESs	NASs	Total
Arabic			
Count	0		0
% within native language	0.0%		0.0%
% of total	0.0%		0.0%
Spanish			
Count	1	2	3
% within native language	3.3%	6.7%	5.0%
% of total	1.7%	3.3%	5.0%
French			
Count	1	0	1
% within native language	3.3%	0.0%	1.7%
% of total	1.7%	0.0%	1.7%
German			
Count	1	0	1
% within native language	3.3%	0.0%	1.7%
% of total	1.7%	0.0%	1.7%
Old English			
Count	1	0	1
% within native language	3.3%	0.0%	1.7%
% of total	1.7%	0.0%	1.7%
Japanese			
Count	1	0	1
% within native language	3.3%	0.0%	1.7%
% of total	1.7%	0.0%	1.7%
None			
Count	25	28	53
% within native language	83.3%	93.3%	88.3%
% of total	41.7%	46.7%	88.3%
Total			
Count	30	30	60
% within native language	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% of total	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%

ESL Learning Experience

The Arab participants' ESL learning experience ranged from 10 to 36 years with a median of 20 years and a mean of 21.63 years ($SD = 6.07$). Nevertheless, none of the Arab participants reported that they had ESL instruction beyond regular formal education, nor did anyone of them attend a pre-college English language school, where the medium of instruction was English. Table 25 summarizes the length of Arab participants' ESL learning experience.

Table 25

Length of Arab Participants' ESL Learning Experience

Statistic	Years
Min.	10.00
Max.	36.00
Median	20.00
Mean	21.63
SD	6.07

ESL Language Proficiency

Unfortunately, only 13 ESL participants reported their TOEFL scores. The reported scores ranged from 570 to 632 with a median score of 610 and a mean of 606.77 ($SD = 20.29$). When asked to self-evaluate their English language proficiency, 6 Arab participants (20%) believed that they spoke native-like English; twenty three Arabs (76.67%) said that their English was very good; and only one (3.33%) reported his English language proficiency as functional. Table 26 and Table 27 summarize Arab

participants' self-reported TOEFL scores and their perceptions about their English

language proficiency respectively.

Table 26

Arab Participants' TOEFL Scores

Statistic	Score
Min.	570.00
Max.	632.00
Median	610.00
Mean	606.77
SD	20.29

Note. n = 13; missing = 17; total n = 30

Table 27

Arab Participants' Perceptions About Their ESL Proficiency

Proficiency level	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Native- like	6	20.00%	20.00%
Very good	23	76.67%	96.67%
Functional	1	3.33%	100.00%
Fair	0	0.00%	100.00%
Poor	0	0.00%	100.00%
Total	30	100.0%	

Although no other English language proficiency information is available, it would

not be unreasonable to assume that most of the Arab participants had an advanced

language proficiency level equivalent to a TOEFL score of 550 or more given the fact

that 93.3% of them had an English or English literature first degree major, that they all

were doctoral students enrolled in an English studies program, and that their writing samples betrayed excellent command of English syntactic structure.

Frequency of Writing in ESL and Native Language

Perhaps the major difference between the two groups that responses to the language history questionnaire have revealed is the participants' frequency of writing. When asked how often they write in English, 14 Arab participants (46.67%) reported that they write in English daily; 3 (10%) write in ESL five times a week; 5 (16.67%) write twice a week; and 8 (26.67%) write once a week. In contrast, 26 US participants (86.67%) reported that they write in their native language daily; 2 (6.67%) write five times a week; 1 (3.33%) twice a week; and 1 (3.33%) once a week. Surprisingly, half of the Arab participants reported that they rarely write in their native language, Arabic. Only 4 (13.33%) Arab participants reported that they write in Arabic daily; 5 (16.67%) twice a week; and 6 (20%) once a week. Table 28 summarizes participants' frequency of writing.

Table 28

Participants' Frequency of Writing

	ESL			AL1			EL1		
Frequency	Count	Percent	Cumulative percent	Count	Percent	Cumulative percent	Count	Percent	Cumulative percent
Daily	14	46.67	46.67	4	13.33	13.33	26	86.67	86.67
Five times a week	3	10.00	56.67	0	0.00	13.33	2	6.67	93.34
Twice a week	5	16.67	73.34	5	16.67	30.00	1	3.33	96.67
Once a week	8	26.67	100.01	6	20.00	50.00	1	3.33	100.00
Rarely	0	0.00	100.01	15	50.00	100.00	0	0.00	100.00
Total	30	100.01		30	100.00		30	100.00	

Writing Ability in ESL and Native Language

When asked to rate their ESL writing ability, 4 Arab participants (13.33%) believed that their ESL writing skills were excellent; 22 (73.33%) self-reported very good ESL writing skills; and 4 (13.33%) believed their ESL writing was functional. As for their perception of their writing ability in Arabic, more than two thirds of the Arab participants self-described their Arabic writing skills as very good or better—even though half of the same Arab participants reported that they rarely write in their native language. To be more specific, 2 Arab participants (6.67%) thought of their Arabic writing skills as excellent; 19 (63.33%) reported they have very good Arabic writing skills; 6 (20%) reported functional Arabic writing; 2 (6.67%) reported fair writing skills and 1 (3.33%) thought of his Arabic writing skills as poor.

The majority of the US participants ($n = 28$) thought that their English writing skills were very good or better. To be more specific, 18 US participants (60%) said that their English writing skills were excellent; 10 (33.33%) reported very good English writing skills; and 2 (6.67%) believed that their English writing was functional. Table 29 summarizes the participants' frequency of writing and their perceptions of their writing ability.

Table 29

Participants' Perceptions About Their Writing Ability

	ESL			AL1			EL1		
Writing ability	Count	Percent	Cumulative percent	Count	Percent	Cumulative percent	Count	Percent	Cumulative percent
Excellent	4	13.33	13.33	2	6.67	6.67	18	60.00	60.00
Very good	22	73.33	86.66	19	63.33	70.00	10	33.33	93.33
Functional	4	13.33	99.99	6	20.00	90.00	2	6.67	100.00
Fair	0	0.00	99.99	2	6.67	96.67	0	0.00	100.00
Poor	0	0.00	99.99	1	3.33	100.00	0	0.00	100.00
Total	30	99.99		30	100.00		30	100.00	

To conclude this section, results of the data tabulated from the language history questionnaire about the participants indicate that the two groups in the study are of comparable characteristics in terms of number, gender, age, cultural and educational background, major of study, and educational level. The data also suggest that the US participants have had no exposure to the Arabic language and that poor English language proficiency was not an issue for the Arab participants. The researcher is fairly convinced that such comparable characteristics meet the *tertium comparationis* prerequisite (Connor, 1996; Connor & Moreno, 2005; Janicki, 1986; Moreno, 2008; Ouaouicha, 1986; Scollon, 1997). The only exception is that the Arab group wrote much less frequently in their native language than the US group did in their native language. This will be taken into consideration at the time of results interpretation. Now that the assumption of adequate *tertium comparationis* has been satisfied, let's turn our attention to the validity of the measures used in the study.

Validity of Analytic Measures: Can Rhetorical Performance Predict Overall

Writing Quality?

Chapter Four has shown that the analytic measures used in the study have already been empirically-validated by Connor (1999), Connor and Lauer (1985; 1988) and Ferris (1994) among others. In addition to the corroborating validity evidence that these previous studies provide, the current study incorporated its own statistical checks of the validity of the analytical measures in order to confirm that the analytic model used in the study was a valid measure of the participants' rhetorical performance in this particular study and thus could be confidently used as the basis for cross-cultural comparisons of persuasive writing produced by Arab and US advanced student writers.

To check the validity of the analytic measures, the study examined the relationship between the holistic and analytic scores used in the study. To be more specific, the study hypothesized that if the analytic measures were valid measures of rhetorical performance on persuasive writing tasks, statistical analysis of data will confirm that performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task can accurately predict the writers' overall writing performance. Therefore, a forward stepwise multiple regression analysis (MRA) was performed to test the null hypothesis that performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task cannot accurately predict the writers' overall writing performance (NH1).

Stepwise multiple regression analysis was selected because of its ability to calculate the independent as well as additive effects of the predictor variables in the

regression model on the criterion variable based on the statistical merit of the independent variables. Besides, the resulting multiple regression equation identifies the most parsimonious combination of predictors that are most effective in predicting the criterion variable taking into account all possible combinations of the individual predictor variables specified for the model.

Before the holistic scores were regressed on the analytic scores, a descriptive statistics report and a Pearson product moment correlation coefficient matrix were generated for the holistic and analytic variables in the study to provide an overall picture of the participants' performance as a group, assess the strength of the relationships among the variables, and rule out multicollinearity (i.e., existence of high correlation between two or more potential predictor variables). After descriptive statistics and results of the correlation analysis are presented, results of MRA will be reported and discussed.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 30 summarizes the means and standard deviation values for the holistic and analytic variables for all participants in the study as a group. The following subsections elaborate on these results.

Table 30

Means and SD for all Analytic Variables by Holistic Scores

| | Holistic scores (Range = 2-4; M = 2.89; SD = 0.644) | | | | | | | |
| | Holistic score = 2 (n = 24) | | Holistic score = 3 (n = 52) | | Holistic score = 4 (n = 14) | | Total (N = 90) | |
Variable	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*
Background	0.46	0.509	0.96	0.194	1.00	0.000	0.83	0.375
Problem	1.00	0.000	1.00	0.000	1.00	0.000	1.00	0.000
Solution	0.83	0.381	1.00	0.000	1.00	0.000	0.96	0.207
Evaluation	0.13	0.338	0.56	0.502	0.93	0.267	0.50	0.503
Argument superstructure	2.42	0.881	3.52	0.505	3.93	0.267	3.29	0.811
Claim	1.17	0.381	1.85	0.538	2.86	0.363	1.82	0.712
Data	1.04	0.204	1.83	0.513	2.64	0.497	1.74	0.680
Warrant	1.04	0.204	1.25	0.437	1.79	0.426	1.28	0.450
Added Toulmin	3.25	0.676	4.92	1.082	7.29	0.611	4.84	1.572
Rational appeals	1.08	0.408	1.81	0.487	2.71	0.469	1.76	0.692
Credibility appeals	0.92	0.504	1.25	0.519	1.71	0.469	1.23	0.562
Affective appeals	0.38	0.576	1.33	0.678	1.86	0.663	1.16	0.820
Persuasive adaptiveness	2.37	1.377	3.90	1.053	5.43	1.284	3.73	1.527

Overall writing performance. As is shown in Table 30, participants' holistic scores ranged from two to four. The fact that the lowest holistic score was 2 suggests that (a) all participants made an effort to address the writing task—therefore, no participant scored a zero—and that (b) no single writing sample suffered from major syntactic or rhetorical flaws—therefore, no participant scored 1—which is not surprising considering participants were all graduate students majoring in English. What is surprising is that the overall mean holistic score for all 90 participants was slightly below average (M = 2.89;

SD = 0.64); What is more surprising is that not a single student, US or Arab, scored a 5 on the holistic scale and that only 14 out of the 90 students (15.55%) scored a 4. The majority of the participants (57.78% to be exact) scored 3, while the rest (26.67% of all 90 participants) scored 2. Appendix C provides a variety of writing samples from the US and Arab groups at different performance levels.

A possible explanation of the relatively low holistic scores of the participants as a group—considering their educational background—is that the allotted time for the writing task might not have been enough for the intensive planning and research needed for creating highly-regarded persuasive essays. Such an explanation confirms the notion that persuasive writing is a complex and highly demanding cognitive task even for advanced writers. Another possible explanation is that participants did not exert enough effort to complete the task since they did not have a real-world incentive to show their best writing skills.

Argument superstructure. The participants' performance on the argument superstructure scale suggests that no participant had any trouble spelling out a problem for his or her essay or developing it. Only 4 out of the 90 participants (4.44%) failed to offer solutions for the problems they discussed. Only 15 participants (16.67%) failed to provide enough background information to orient their audience about the problem they discussed. Those participants who failed to provide background information and/or offer solutions for the problem scored no more than 2 on the holistic scale. When it comes to evaluating suggested solutions for the problem, only half of the participants did so. Out of the 24 participants who scored 2 on the holistic scale, only 3 provided evaluations for their suggested solutions. Out of the 52 participants who scored 3 on the holistic scale, 29

provided some evaluation for their suggested solutions. Thirteen out of the 14

participants who scored 4 on the holistic scale provided evaluations for their suggested

solutions.

As such, results of the participants' performance on the components of the

argument superstructure scale suggest that with the exception of the evaluation slot, most

participants at such an advanced level had no problem with structuring their arguments at

the macro level. Results also indicate that raters penalized a writer for his or her failure to

provide background information or solutions than they did for his or her failure to

provide evaluations for the suggested solutions.

On the overall argument superstructure scale, the mean scores for the participants

who scored 2, 3, and 4 on the holistic score were 2.42, 3.52, and 3.93 respectively out of

a possible score of 4. The mean overall argument superstructure score for all the

participants as a group was 3.29.

Informal reasoning. Average scores were calculated for the three components of

the Toulmin scale of informal reasoning, namely claim, data, and warrant scales, as well

as for the overall Added Toulmin scale for all the study participants as a group. Averages

for the above scores were also calculated for the different score bands of the holistic

scale. Overall averages for the claim, data, warrant, and added Toulmin scores were 1.82,

1.74, 1.28, and 4.84 respectively. For the 2, 3, and 4 holistic scores, claim averages were

1.17, 1.85, and 2.86 respectively; data averages were 1.04, 1.83, and 2.64 respectively;

warrant averages were 1.04, 1.25, and 1.79 respectively; Added Toulmin scores were

3.25, 4.92, and 7.29 respectively.

The claim, data, warrant, and added Toulmin average scores indicate that all participants—as a group—had more trouble spelling out warrants than they did with claims and data. Results also suggest that though explicitly stating warrants can improve the overall quality of persuasion, writers might not always do so; omission of explicit warrants from the reasoning layout might be due to the writers' assumption that their audience can see the link between the claim and data without explicit interference from them.

Persuasive appeals. Mean scores were also calculated for the study participants as a group for the three measures of persuasive appeals, namely rational, credibility, and affective appeals scales. Means for the persuasive appeals scores were also calculated for the different bands of the holistic scale. Overall averages for the rational, credibility, and affective appeals scores were 1.76, 1.23, and 1.16 respectively. For the 2, 3, and 4 holistic scores, the rational appeals mean scores were 1.08, 1.81, and 2.71 respectively; credibility appeals mean scores were 0.92, 1.25, and 1.71 respectively; affective appeals mean scores were 0.38, 1.33, and 1.86 respectively.

The below-average performance of the study participants from both language backgrounds on the credibility and affective appeals as compared to the above average performance on the rational appeals scale indicates that most of the participants focused more on the rational dimension of the persuasive task at the expense of credibility and affective dimensions. In other words, although participants were told both orally and in writing that they were expected to write a persuasive essay, more often than not they did produce argumentative compositions rather than persuasive ones.

One might be tempted to attribute the participants' failure to pay adequate attention to credibility and affective appeals in their essays to lack of training on persuasive writing or to writing incompetence. However, before we jump to such unsubstantiated conclusions, we need to see the participants' inadequate attention to credibility and affective appeals in light of two possible confounding factors, namely time constraints and the nature of the participants' major of study. First, due to their multidimensional nature, persuasive tasks are cognitively demanding tasks that require plenty of time for researching, planning, drafting, and revising. An hour of in-class writing might not have provided the participants with enough time to do so. Second, since all participants were enrolled in an English studies doctoral program, it is also possible that most of their academic writing at the time, whether for class or for publication, was purely argumentative in nature with little emphasis on credibility or persuasive appeals. Such a tendency might have led a substantial number of them to approach the writing task in this study in the same manner.

Persuasive adaptiveness. Mean scores on the persuasive adaptiveness scale were calculated for the study participants as a group as well as for the different bands of the holistic scale. The overall persuasive adaptiveness score mean was 3.73 out of a possible score of 8. For the 2, 3, and 4 holistic scores, persuasive adaptiveness score means were 2.37, 3.90, and 5.43 respectively.

The below-average performance of the participants on the persuasive adaptiveness scale suggests that despite the nature of their academic training, the participants—as a group—did not make conscious efforts to address audience concerns and refute its potential counterarguments. This observation corroborates earlier reports of

L1 writing of Anglo-American writers that indicated that counter-argumentation was rarely detected in English L1 student writing (e.g., Connor, 1987, Connor & Lauer, 1988; Ferris, 1994). However, failure to address audience concerns and refute its counterarguments in the current study as well as in the earlier studies may be due to the fact that rebuttals of counterarguments were not emphasized in the writing prompt.

Results of Correlation Analysis

Examination of the correlation analysis results, summarized in Table 31, revealed that there was evidence of multicollinearity among five independent variables indicating that these variables might be measuring the same rhetorical feature; strong positive correlations were detected among the individual scores of Toulmin's informal reasoning components, namely claim, data, and warrant. To be more specific, there was a strong positive correlation between claim scores on one hand and data (74.1% correlation) and warrant (60.9%) scores on the other hand. Besides, the data scores were highly correlated with the rational appeals (76.6%) and argument superstructure (60.4%) scores; there was also a 75.9% positive correlation between claim scores and rational appeals scores.

Table 31

Correlations of all Variables in the Study

Variable	Holistic (criterion variable)	Argument superstructure	Claim	Data	Warrant	Added Toulmin	Rational appeals	Credibility appeals	Affective appeals
Argument superstructure	.643	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Claim	.740	.499	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Data	.756	.604	.741	—	—	—	—	—	—
Warrant	.604	.355	.609	.538	—	—	—	—	—
Added Toulmin	.813	.572	.921	.896	.778	—	—	—	—
Rational appeals	.796	.517	.759	.766	.590	.821	—	—	—
Credibility appeals	.564	.400	.501	.466	.591	.583	.562	—	—
Affective appeals	.608	.439	.452	.556	.402	.545	.433	.380	—
Persuasive adaptiveness	.644	.444	.503	.551	.418	.570	.477	.376	.473

Note. All correlations are significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

The strong positive correlations reported above mirror the fact that the five intercorrelated variables were conceptually related. Theoretically, writers who exert more effort in carving out their claims are more likely to support their claims with better evidence in the form of more relevant data and more substantiative warrants than those who do not. Likewise, a thought-out and balanced claim-data-warrant informal reasoning structure is more likely to appeal to reason—and thus score higher on the rational appeals scale—than one that is imbalanced or less thought out.

Although absence of multicollinearity among predictor variables is not a requirement of multiple regression analysis, multicollinearity of independent variables could skew the regression model estimates of the coefficients and inflate their standard

errors resulting in an overfitted regression model. In order to avoid such an outcome, the rational appeals variable had to be dropped from the regression analysis. Besides, an added Toulmin score was entered in the multiple regression analysis instead of the three data, claim, and warrant subscores. The added Toulmin scores strongly correlated with the scores of the removed claim (92.1% correlation), data (89.6%), warrant (77.8%), and rational appeals (82.1%) variables. These strong positive correlations indicate that the decision to use the added Toulmin score variable in the regression analysis instead of the data, claim, warrant, and rational appeals scores was a sound one.

As a result, the criterion variable, namely holistic score, was regressed against only five independent variables, namely argument superstructure, added Toulmin, credibility appeals, affective appeals, and persuasive adaptiveness. Table 32, which summarizes the correlations among the dependent and independent variables used in the regression model, indicates that collinearity has been eliminated. To be more specific, all the independent variables specified in the model had mostly moderate positive relationships among themselves with correlations ranging from 37.6% to 58.3%.

In addition to isolating intercorrelated variables, the Pearson correlation matrix of the dependent and independent variables clearly indicated that there was a positive linear relationship between the criterion variable and the predictor variables, which is an assumption of multiple regression analysis. As is shown in Table 32, all five independent variables, with the exception of the credibility appeals, had strong positive linear relationships that ranged from 60.5 % to 81.3% with the dependent variable. The credibility appeals variable had a less strong, but still acceptable, relationship with the dependent variable, namely a 56.4% positive linear correlation.

Table 32

Correlations of Variables in the Multiple Regression Analysis

Variable	Holistic (criterion variable)	Argument superstructure	Added Toulmin	Credibility appeals	Affective appeals
Argument superstructure	.643	—	—	—	—
Added Toulmin	.813	.572	—	—	—
Credibility appeals	.564	.400	.583	—	—
Affective appeals	.608	.439	.545	.380	—
Persuasive adaptiveness	.644	.444	.570	.376	.473

Note. All correlations are significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

Results of Multiple Regression Analysis

The validity of the analytic scales used in the study was checked by examining how accurately participants' rhetorical performance (analytic scores) could predict the overall writing quality of their essays (holistic scores). Thus, the criterion variable in the regression model was specified as holistic scores; the predictor variables were argument superstructure, added Toulmin, credibility appeals, affective appeals, and persuasive adaptiveness scores. Table 33 shows the results of the stepwise multiple regression analysis; Table 34 shows the significance results for the different regression models resulting from the regression analysis.

Results of multiple regression analysis indicated that four of the five rhetorical variables were good predictors of overall writing quality. To be more specific, the scores of informal reasoning, persuasive adaptiveness, and argument superstructure, together predicted 75.7% of the variance in the holistic scores. The informal reasoning variable turned out as the best single predictor of overall writing quality. Alone, informal reasoning scores significantly predicted 66.1% of the variance in the holistic scores. This

indicates that the overall writing quality of a persuasive essay is largely contingent upon the writer's ability to spell out his or her claim, substantiate such a claim with well-developed data that are varied and relevant to the claim, and provide readers with a set of warrants that leads them to see the connection between the data and claim and thus accept data as substantiative of the claim.

Table 33

Stepwise Regression Model Summary

Model[a]	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. error of the estimate	Change statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R^2 change	F change	*df*1	*df*2	Sig. F change	
1	.813[b]	.661	.657	.377	.661	171.248	1	88	.000	
2	.842[c]	.709	.702	.351	.048	14.417	1	87	.000	
3	.861[d]	.742	.733	.333	.033	11.026	1	86	.001	
4	.870[e]	.757	.746	.325	.015	5.312	1	85	.024	1.978

Note. [a] Dependent variable: Holistic scores. [b] Predictors: (Constant), added Toulmin score. [c] Predictors: (Constant), added Toulmin score, persuasive adaptiveness. [d] Predictors: (Constant), added Toulmin score, persuasive adaptiveness, argument superstructure. [e] Predictors: (Constant), added Toulmin score, persuasive adaptiveness, argument superstructure, affective appeals.

Scores on the persuasive adaptiveness scale were the second best indicator of overall writing quality. When added to the added Toulmin variable, persuasive adaptiveness contributed a significant 4.8% to the regression model. Such a contribution indicates that the greater the effort that the participants exerted in their essays to adapt their rhetoric to their audience concerns and address its counterarguments, the greater the overall quality of their writing was perceived by the raters.

Table 34

ANOVA Summary Table for Multiple Regression Models

Model[a]	Statistic	Sum of squares	*df*	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	24.367	1	24.367	171.248	.000[b]
	Residual	12.522	88	0.142		
	Total	36.889	89			
2	Regression	26.147	2	13.074	105.887	.000[c]
	Residual	10.742	87	0.123		
	Total	36.889	89			
3	Regression	27.368	3	9.123	82.401	.000[d]
	Residual	9.521	86	0.111		
	Total	36.889	89			
4	Regression	27.928	4	6.982	66.228	.000[e]
	Residual	8.961	85	0.105		
	Total	36.889	89			

Note. [a] Dependent variable: Holistic scores. [b] Predictors: (Constant), added Toulmin score. [c] Predictors: (Constant), added Toulmin score, persuasive adaptiveness. [d] Predictors: (Constant), added Toulmin score, persuasive adaptiveness, argument superstructure. [e] Predictors: (Constant), added Toulmin score, persuasive adaptiveness, argument superstructure, affective appeals.

The argument superstructure variable further increased the ability of the regression model to predict the individual holistic scores by a smaller, but still significant, percentage (3.3% to be exact). When we take into consideration that the average scores of all 90 samples for three of the four components that make up the argument superstructure scale, namely, the background, problem, and solution variables were very high (0.83, 1.00, and 0.96, respectively), it becomes evident that in the rare event when a writer failed to orient his or her readers about the problem, propose at least

one solution for the problem, or attempt to evaluate the outcome of the offered

solution(s), his or her holistic score took a hit.

Performance on the affective appeals scale added a very modest, but significant,

1.5% to the regression model's ability to predict individual holistic scores. Such a result

suggests that although writers could get by with a plain style, those who effectively used

affective appeals in their persuasive essays had a significant chance of being rewarded

with a slightly higher holistic score.

Performance on the credibility appeals scale was the only rhetorical variable that

did not add any significant difference ($p = .174$) to the prediction power of the other four

variables. Therefore, it was excluded from the final regression model. The failure of the

credibility appeals variable to make it in the regression model suggests that use of

credibility appeals did not significantly affect the raters' judgment of the overall quality

of the writing samples. Combined with the relatively low mean score of the overall group

on the credibility appeals scale (1.23, to be more exact; See Table 30), this finding

underscores the fact that although credibility can be established via textual means, more

often than not it is encoded in messages outside the written text such as the title of the

author or an editorial note about him or her.

It should be noted here that the omission of the credibility appeals variable from

the regression model indicates that statistically-significant cross-cultural variation of the

use of credibility appeals in this study, if any, is of no practical significance since the

credibility appeals scores did not significantly impact or correlate strongly enough with

the raters' judgment of overall writing quality in the current study.

Assumptions of Multiple Regression Analysis

The ability of the regression model reported above to accurately predict individual scores is contingent upon no serious deviations from the assumptions of regression analysis. These assumptions are linearity, absence of multicollinearity, normality of error of prediction (residuals), and independence of error of prediction. It has already been established that there is a linear relationship between the criterion variable and the predictor variables. This section addresses the question of whether the data meet the other three assumptions.

Absence of multicollinearity. Early examination of the correlations among the independent variables suggested that multicollinearity was not an issue of concern. Inspection of the tolerance, variance inflation factor (VIF), and multicollinearity diagnostics results of the regression model (as reported in Table 35 and Table 36) confirmed this conclusion. The tolerance value of the excluded credibility appeals variable in the prediction model indicated that a high percentage (64.9% to be exact) of the variance in the holistic scores could be predicted by variables other than the credibility appeals scores. Besides, the fact that all VIF, eigenvalue, and condition indices were within acceptable norms corroborates evidence that no variables were excluded from the regression model due to intercorrelation with other independent variables.

Table 35

Excluded Variables

Model[a]	Excluded variable	Beta in	t	*Sig.*	Partial correlation	Collinearity statistics		Min. tolerance
						Tolerance	VIF	
1	Argument superstructure	.265[b]	3.754	.000	.373	.673	1.487	.673
	Credibility appeals	.137[b]	1.810	.074	.191	.660	1.515	.660
	Affective appeals	.235[b]	3.345	.001	.338	.703	1.423	.703
	Persuasive adaptiveness	.267[b]	3.797	.000	.377	.675	1.481	.675
2	Argument superstructure	.225[c]	3.320	.001	.337	.652	1.534	.548
	Credibility appeals	.120[c]	1.694	.094	.180	.657	1.521	.517
	Affective appeals	.183[c]	2.666	.009	.276	.664	1.506	.577
3	Credibility appeals	.100[d]	1.487	.141	.159	.652	1.533	.452
	Affective appeals	.153[d]	2.305	.024	.243	.649	1.541	.500
4	Credibility appeals	.090[e]	1.371	.174	.148	.649	1.540	.425

Note. [a] Dependent variable: Holistic scores. [b] Predictors: (Constant), added Toulmin score. [c] Predictors: (Constant), added Toulmin score, persuasive adaptiveness. [d] Predictors: (Constant), added Toulmin score, persuasive adaptiveness, argument superstructure. [e] Predictors: (Constant), added Toulmin score, persuasive adaptiveness, argument superstructure, affective appeals.

Table 36

Collinearity Diagnostics

Model[a]	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition index	Variance proportions				
				Constant	Added Toulmin	Persuasive adaptiveness	Argument superstructure	Affective appeals
1	1	1.949	1.000	.03	.03			
	2	0.051	6.190	.97	.97			
2	1	2.882	1.000	.01	.01	.01		
	2	0.074	6.250	.59	.00	.68		
	3	0.045	8.028	.40	.99	.30		
3	1	3.849	1.000	.00	.00	.01	.00	
	2	0.081	6.887	.19	.00	.71	.04	
	3	0.045	9.277	.26	.79	.29	.00	
	4	0.025	12.372	.55	.20	.00	.95	
4	1	4.644	1.000	.00	.00	.00	.00	.01
	2	0.215	4.648	.04	.00	.00	.01	.77
	3	0.075	7.871	.10	.00	.87	.04	.09
	4	0.041	10.656	.25	.88	.12	.00	.11
	5	0.025	13.701	.61	.12	.00	.95	.02

Note. [a] Dependent variable: Holistic scores.

Normality of error of prediction. Multiple regression analysis assumes that residuals of the criterion variable (i.e., differences between the observed holistic scores and those predicted by the regression equation) are normally distributed. A post-MRA examination of the holistic score residuals for normal distribution confirmed that normal distribution of data should be of no concern. To be more specific, the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality results of the holistic score residuals were not significant ($p = .69$; see Table 37) confirming that there was no evidence of substantial departure from normality. Since PASW did not report that any cases were excluded from the analysis, there were no outliers in the regression model. Thus, careful examination of the multiple regression

analysis output has shown that data did not suffer from any serious deviations from normal distribution as evidenced by the results of Shapiro-Wilk test of normality and absence of outlier cases.

Table 37

Tests of Normality

| | Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a] | | | Shapiro-Wilk | | |
Residual	Statistic	*df*	*Sig.*	Statistic	*df*	*Sig.*
Unstandardized	.068	90	.200[*]	.989	90	.690

Note. [a] Lilliefors significance correction. * This is a lower bound of the true significance.

Independence of error of prediction. MRA assumes independence of error of prediction. The assumption of independence of error is met when individual observation errors are not influenced by or correlated to errors in prior observations, but are rather randomly distributed and independent of the values of the observations. Data were checked for independence of error via the use of the Durbin-Watson statistical analysis (Table 33), which yielded a statistic of 1.98 confirming that data meet the independence of error assumption.

To conclude, multiple regression analysis of the predictive power of the rhetorical variables has shown that performance of US and Arab advanced writers on four measures of rhetorical dimensions, namely informal reasoning, persuasive adaptiveness, argument superstructure, and affective appeals, can predict the writers' overall writing performance with 75.7% accuracy. Therefore, it can be safely concluded that these four rhetorical measures are valid measures of writing quality and can thus be used as the basis for

investigating cross-cultural variation in the persuasive writing of Arab and US writers in the current study. Multiple regression analysis has also shown that participants' performance on the credibility appeals measure did not add any significant value to the prediction power of the regression model. Therefore, although it would be interesting from a research point of view to examine cross-cultural variation in the use of Arab and use writers of credibility appeals in their writing, observed variation, if any, would be of little practical significance.

Now that it has been established that the assumption of adequate *tertium comparationis* has been met and that the validity of the analytical measures has been addressed, the rest of this chapter will focus on reporting and discussing the results of multiple discriminant analysis (MDA) and analysis of variance (ANOVA), which were used to test Hypotheses Two thru Five.

Testing the Contrastive Rhetoric Hypothesis

The study hypothesized that if Kaplan's (1966) contrastive rhetoric claims were true, statistical analysis of the study participants' performance on the rhetorical measures would confirm the hypotheses that (a) performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task can accurately predict the writers' language/cultural background; and that while (b) there are no significant differences in the ESL and Arabic L1 writing performance of the same Arab advanced ESL writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task, (c) there are significant differences in the performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of the same rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task regardless of the language of composing. A multiple discriminant

analysis and ANOVA were performed to test these hypotheses. Multiple discriminant analysis was performed to identify which individual analytic variables or combination of variables, if any, can best classify the writing samples into the three respective data sets they belonged to, namely ESL, AL1, and EL1, based on the statistical merit of the analytical variables and how accurate such classification is. ANOVA was conducted to explore the effect of group membership (NASs writing in ESL, NASs writing in Arabic, and NESs writing in English) on the writers' performance on the holistic and analytic measures. The next two sections report and discuss MDA and ANOVA results.

Can Writers' Rhetorical Performance Predict Their First Language?

A computerized multiple discriminant analysis (MDA) was conducted to test the null hypothesis that performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task cannot accurately predict the writers' language/cultural background (NH2). The MDA employed a Wilks' Lambda stepwise procedure to examine which of the four significant rhetorical predictors of overall persuasive writing quality—whether individually or in combinations of two or more—could accurately discriminate among individual writing samples from the three data sets, namely ESL, AL1, and EL1. Thus, the independent variables in the MDA were scores on the informal reasoning, persuasive adaptiveness, argument superstructure, and affective appeals scales. The dependent variable in the MDA was data sets with three categories, namely ESL writing samples by native Arabic speakers, AL1 writing samples by the same native Arabic speakers, and EL1 writing samples by native English speakers. Significance criteria of Wilks' Lambda were set so that new independent variables were entered in the model only if they lowered the overall Wilks' Lambda F-value of the

model at a significance level of .05 or less and were removed only if at a later step they seized to lower the overall Wilks' Lambda F-value of the model by a significance level of .1 or less.

Out of 20 possible variable combinations, PASW failed to generate any model of one or more independent variables that could significantly discriminate among at least two of the three categories of the dependent variable with a reasonable degree of accuracy. As a matter of fact, not a single variable of the four independent variables that were specified in the model qualified to be entered in the MDA model because each of the four individual variables failed to meet the pre-specified .05 significance threshold level for entry in the model. Table 38 summarizes the mean and standard deviation values for the different holistic and analytic measures categorized by data set. Table 39 summarizes the significance of F-values for each analytic variable specified for, but not entered in, the MDA.

Table 38

Means and SD for all Variables by Data Set

Variable	ESL (*n* = 30)		AL1 (*n* = 30)		EL1 (*n* = 30)		Total (N = 90)	
	Mean	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*
Holistic	2.90	0.607	2.80	0.664	2.97	0.669	2.89	0.644
Background	0.80	0.407	0.83	0.379	0.87	0.346	0.83	0.375
Problem	1.00	0.000	1.00	0.000	1.00	0.000	1.00	0.000
Solution	0.97	0.183	1.00	0.000	0.90	0.305	0.96	0.207
Evaluation	0.47	0.507	0.43	0.504	0.60	0.498	0.50	0.503
Argument superstructure	3.23	0.817	3.27	0.740	3.37	0.890	3.29	0.811
Claim	1.80	0.664	1.77	0.728	1.90	0.759	1.82	0.712
Data	1.73	0.640	1.63	0.615	1.87	0.776	1.74	0.680
Warrant	1.30	0.466	1.27	0.450	1.27	0.450	1.28	0.450
Added Toulmin	4.83	1.464	4.46	1.516	5.03	1.752	4.84	1.572
Rational appeals	1.73	0.583	1.60	0.675	1.93	0.785	1.76	0.692
Credibility appeals	1.17	0.592	1.20	0.484	1.33	0.606	1.23	0.562
Affective appeals	1.03	0.850	1.10	0.845	1.33	0.758	1.16	0.820
Persuasive adaptiveness	4.00	1.414	3.67	1.446	3.53	1.717	3.73	1.527

Table 39

Variables not in the Multiple Discriminant Analysis

Step	Excluded variable	*Sig*. of F to enter	Wilks' Lambda
0	Argument superstructure	.806	.995
	Added Toulmin score	.687	.991
	Affective appeals	.334	.975
	Persuasive adaptiveness	.481	.983

In order to eliminate the possibility that other discriminating variables were

inadvertently excluded by the researcher from the model specification, an MDA of the

data was repeated with all the non-dichotomous holistic and analytical variables in the study specified as independent variables, namely holistic, argument superstructure, claim, data, warrant, added Toulmin, rational appeals, credibility appeals, affective appeals, and persuasive adaptiveness scores.

Even with the broader model specification, PASW again failed to produce any model of one or more independent variables that could significantly discriminate among at least two of the three categories of the dependent variable with an acceptable degree of accuracy. As is the case with the initial MDA, none of the nine independent variables specified in the model qualified to be entered in the model because none of the nine individual variables was able to meet the pre-specified .05 significance threshold level (see Table 40).

Table 40

Variables not in the Multiple Discriminant Analysis

Step	Excluded variable	*Sig.* of F to enter	Wilks' Lambda
0	Holistic scores	.606	.989
	Argument superstructure	.806	.995
	Claim scores	.756	.994
	Data scores	.415	.980
	Warrant scores	.951	.999
	Added Toulmin score	.687	.991
	Rational appeals	.485	.983
	Credibility appeals	.596	.988
	Affective appeals	.334	.975
	Persuasive adaptiveness	.481	.983

Failure of any combination of variables in the MDA model to accurately discriminate among the ESL writing of NASs, the Arabic L1 writing of the same NASs,

and/or the English L1 writing of NESs on the same persuasive writing task indicates that Null Hypothesis Two could not be rejected. In other words, there was no statistical evidence that performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task can accurately predict their first language/cultural background.

The failure of the MDA to produce at least a single model that could discriminate among writers from different language backgrounds based on their rhetorical performance calls into question the validity and thus generalizability of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis. This is especially true since at least four of the analytic variables were able to accurately predict the overall quality of the compositions regardless of the language/culture background of the writers. Results of ANOVA, reported and discussed in the following section, provide corroborating negative evidence of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis.

Are There Significant Differences in the Rhetorical Quality of NASs and NESs Writing?

Results of MDA did not only reject NH2, but they also implied that NH3, NH4, and NH5 could not be rejected since none of the nine individual independent variables specified in the MDA model was able to differentiate among the different groups in the study with the pre-specified 95% confidence level. ANOVA of data was performed to confirm this implication beyond doubt.

ANOVA was conducted with group membership as the independent variable and holistic and analytic measures as the dependent variables. To be more specific, ANOVA was conducted to explore the effect of group membership (i.e., NASs writing in ESL,

NASs writing in Arabic, and NESs writing in English) on the writers' performance on holistic and analytic measures (i.e., holistic, argument superstructure, claim, data, warrant, Toulmin's informal reasoning, rational appeals, credibility appeals, affective appeals, and persuasive adaptiveness).

Results of ANOVA, summarized in Table 41 and Table 42, show that contrary to what the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis would suggest, the mean square error (i.e., within group variance ranging from 0.22 to 2.68) turned out to be more than the mean square effect (i.e., between-group variance ranging from 0.01 to 1.73) for all dependent variables (F ranged from 0.05 to 1.11; significance of F ranged from .33 to .81). Since the between-group variance in the individual holistic and analytic scores was not significantly bigger than the within-group variance, the following null hypotheses could not be rejected:

1. There are no significant differences in the ESL and Arabic L1 writing performance of the same Arab advanced ESL writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same persuasive writing task (NH3).

2. There are no significant differences in the performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same English persuasive writing task (NH4).

3. There are no significant differences in the performance of US and Arab advanced writers on measures of select rhetorical dimensions on the same native language persuasive writing task (NH5).

Table 41

ANOVA for Analytic Scores

Variable	*df*	Mean square	F	*Sig.*
Argument superstructure				
Between groups	2	0.144	0.216	.806
Within groups	87	0.669		
Total	89			
Claim				
Between groups	2	0.144	0.280	.756
Within groups	87	0.516		
Total	89			
Data				
Between groups	2	0.411	0.888	.415
Within groups	87	0.463		
Total	89			
Warrant				
Between groups	2	0.011	0.050	.951
Within groups	87	0.221		
Total	89			
Added Toulmin				
Between groups	2	1.011	0.377	.687
Within groups	87	2.685		
Total	89			
Rational appeals				
Between groups	2	0.411	0.730	.485
Within groups	87	0.563		
Total	89			
Credibility appeals				
Between groups	2	0.178	0.521	.596
Within groups	87	0.341		
Total	89			
Affective appeals				
Between groups	2	0.744	1.110	.334
Within groups	87	0.670		
Total	89			
Persuasive adaptiveness				
Between groups	2	1.733	0.739	.481
Within groups	87	2.346		
Total	89			

Table 42

ANOVA for Holistic Score

Variable	*df*	Mean square	F	*Sig.*
Holistic scores				
Between groups	2	0.211	0.504	.606
Within groups	87	0.419		
Total	89			

Is ESL Persuasive Writing Particularly Problematic for NASs?

Since NH4 (that there are no significant differences in the performance of US and Arab advanced writers) was not rejected, Hypothesis Six (that select rhetorical dimensions of English persuasive writing are particularly problematic for Arab advanced ESL writers) cannot be confirmed. It is true that some rhetorical dimensions of persuasive writing turned out to be problematic—as evidenced by below-average score means—for the NAS group considering their advanced ESL proficiency level and educational background. However, the same holds true for their NES counterparts. Since the variance between the NAS and NES groups in the overall and rhetorical performance was not statistically significant, claiming that the rhetorical dimensions measured in the study were particularly problematic for advanced Arab ESL writers would be baseless. Results of ANOVA have shown that these rhetorical problems are not unique to the ESL. Rather, this study confirms the view held by some (e.g., Raimes, 1985, 1987; and Zamel 1976) that both NES and ESL writers have similar writing problems regardless of their first language/cultural background. Results of the current study further suggest that this view does not only apply to basic writers but to advanced writers as well.

Are ESL Persuasive Writing Problems of NASs due to First Language Transfer?

So far, it has been established that the ESL writing samples analyzed in the study exhibited some problems with ESL persuasive writing, but how valid is the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis that these problems are due to first language transfer? In order for negative first language transfer to be accepted as a valid explanation of the ESL writing problems of NASs, contrastive rhetorical analysis of ESL, AL1, and EL1 writing samples from NAS and NES of comparable characteristics has to confirm the following underlying assumptions:

1. When judged by Standard English rhetoric criteria, the EL1 persuasive writing of NESs would be of significantly better quality than the ESL persuasive writing of NASs.

2. Some rhetorical dimensions of English persuasive writing would be significantly more problematic for the NAS group than for the NES group regardless of the language of composing of the NAS.

3. The rhetorical performance of US and Arab advanced writers can accurately predict the writers' language/cultural background.

Contrary to the above assumptions, MRA, MDA and ANOVA of the rhetorical performance of the NAS and NES writers in the study have indicated that

1. When judged by Standard English rhetoric criteria, the EL1 persuasive writing of NESs was not of significantly better quality than the ESL persuasive writing of NASs.

2. The rhetorical dimensions of English persuasive writing investigated in the study were not significantly more problematic for the NAS group than for the NES group regardless of the language of composing of the NAS.

3. The rhetorical performance of US and Arab advanced writers could not accurately predict the writers' language/cultural background while in the meantime if could predict the writers' holistic scores with a 75.7% degree of accuracy.

Since statistical analysis of the study data failed to confirm any of the assumptions of contrastive rhetoric, it can be safely concluded that results of this study do not support the contrastive rhetoric claim that NAS rhetorical problems with persuasive writing are due to first language transfer.

Summary of Main Findings

After the assumptions of adequate *tertium comparationis* and the validity of the analytic measures of rhetorical performance were investigated, ESL and AL1 persuasive writing of NASs as well as the EL1 writing of NESs was compared to test the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis. Results indicated the following:

1. The two groups in the study, namely NASs and NESs, were of comparable characteristics. Therefore, it was concluded that the assumption of adequate tertium comparationis has been satisfied.

2. The written performance of US and Arab advanced writers on four measures of rhetorical dimensions, namely informal reasoning, persuasive adaptiveness, argument superstructure, and affective appeals, could predict the writers' overall writing performance with 75.7% accuracy. Therefore, it was confirmed that the analytic measures used in the study were valid measures of rhetorical performance and thus

could be used as a basis for the cross-cultural comparisons needed for testing the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis.

3. Comparisons of the ESL and AL1 writing of the same NAS writers confirmed the assumption of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis that the NASs exhibited similar rhetorical problems in their ESL and AL1 persuasive writing.

4. However, cross-cultural comparisons of the rhetorical performance of the two groups failed to confirm all the other assumptions of contrastive rhetoric. To be more specific, it turned out that:

   4.1. The rhetorical performance of US and Arab advanced writers could not accurately predict the writers' language/cultural background.

   4.2. There were no significant differences in the rhetorical performance of US and Arab advanced writers regardless of the language of composing of the Arab participants.

   4.3. On the contrary, there was much greater within-group variation than between-group variation in the rhetorical performance of the participants.

Based on the results of the cross-cultural comparisons, it was concluded that (a) some rhetorical dimensions of persuasive writing are problematic for Arab advanced ESL writers, and (b) these problematic areas of persuasive writing are not unique to Arab advanced ESL students. Rather, (c) the same rhetorical dimensions of persuasive writing were equally challenging for advanced NESs. In other words, when judged by Standard English rhetoric criteria, the ESL and AL1 persuasive writing of NASs was not of significantly less quality than the EL1 persuasive writing of NESs. Combined, these conclusions have resulted in the rejection of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis that Arab

advanced ESL students' rhetorical problems with persuasive writing are due to first language transfer.

Discussion

A number of conclusions can be extracted from the study's failure to provide positive empirical evidence of the validity of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis, its counter-indicative finding that there were more similarities than differences in the writing of ESL and NES writers of comparable characteristics, and the fact that Kaplan's claims were based on a questionable research design and has yet to be supported by conclusive empirical evidence.

To start with, the study calls into question the validity of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis that implicates first language transfer as the etiology of the writing problems of ESL students. In particular, this study does challenge Kaplan's most fundamental ontological claim that rhetoric and its underlying "logic" (Kaplan, 1966, p. 2) are not universal, but predetermined. On the contrary, the fact that the rhetorical performance of the NASs and NESs and their writing problems were similarly distributed from a statistical point of view lends empirical support to Whorf's original conclusion that "thought does not depend on grammar but on laws of logic or reason which are supposed to be the same for all observers of the universe" (1956, p. 208).

Similarly, the study findings suggest that Kaplan's (1966, 2001) stereotypical insistence that English is more linear than other languages and the implied suggestion that English is superior to other languages should be discounted not only because they are value-laden, culturally-biased, ethnocentric, and counterproductive (e.g., Kubota, 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2001; Saville-Troike & Johnson, 1994; Spack, 1997; and Zamel,

1997), but also because they are based on flawed research designs and/or lack substantiative empirical evidence.

The same is true of the similarly-biased and unsubstantiated claims by Reid (1984) that "Most American academic prose is dominantly linear, utterly straightforward, and very specific in its presentation of material" while "Most international students will have quite different writing backgrounds" (Reid, p. 449) from that of native English speakers or that "Just as few nations prize efficiency as highly as the United States, so few peoples present written material in such a direct and unelaborated manner as Americans. Arabic, for example, is an immensely poetic language, filled with coordinate clauses and a tendency toward generality and analogy; use of detail or supporting data is not essential" (1984, p. 449). It is true that from a prescriptive perspective the ESL and AL1 persuasive writing of Arab advanced doctoral students exhibited significant deviations from the rhetorical norms of Standard English persuasive writing. However, on a more realistic descriptive level, results of the current study indicated that their NES counterparts exhibited equally similar deviations.

The finding of the study that there were more similarities than differences in the writing of ESL and NES writers of comparable characteristics is in line with findings by Braddock (1974), Benson, Deming, Denzer, and Valeri-Gold (1992), Raimes (1985, 1987), Zamel (1983), and Ouaouicha (1986). Braddock (1974) has shown that the linear English paragraph fashion taken for granted by Kaplan (1966) and Reid (1984) among others is not an all-inclusive rhetorical pattern. The former has demonstrated that professional native-speaking English writers do not always conform to the idealistic view of rhetorical norms of English. Rather, they do sometimes employ other rhetorical

structures that sometimes deviate sharply from that pattern. Benson, Deming, Denzer, and Valeri-Gold (1992) reported that both ESL and NESs basic writers exhibited similarities in their topic choices, topic sentence use, and topic development. They also concluded that low rated essay writing across cultures tends to have more similarities than differences; Similarly, Raimes (1985, 1987) and Zamel (1983) concluded that most English L1 students face the same challenges ESL students face as they master the complex writing skills. Ouaouicha (1986) reported that use of linear and non linear modes of reasoning was evident in the writing of both Moroccan and US students.

From a research methodology point of view, failure of the study to lend positive empirical evidence for the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis from the comparative analysis of writing samples by two groups of adequate *tertium comparationis* suggests that, on one hand, chances of observing statistically significant cross-cultural rhetorical variation diminish when adequate research design measures are implemented; on the other hand, contrastive rhetoric studies that violate the assumption of *tertium comparationis,* are based on intuition rather than empirical evidence, or do not employ empirically-sound research designs tend to falsely characterize or at least unrealistically magnify cross-cultural rhetorical differences and, in the meantime, to inexplicably overlook obvious similarities. Serious research design flaws in previous contrastive rhetoric studies included examining the writing of novice rather than advanced ESL learners, comparing ESL student writing to idealistic or professional NES writing rather than to NES student writing, excluding the native language performance of ESL learners from the comparison, using intuitive rather than valid and reliable analytic models, and/or overextending the results to include other languages and populations.

Failure of the study to implicate first language transfer as the cause of the rhetorical problems of ESL writers as well as the finding that the within-group variance in rhetorical performance was much bigger than the between-group variance suggests that other individual, situational, and/or contextual factors might play a far more significant role than first language does in explaining the writing problems of ESL students. ESL writing research will better inform ESL pedagogy if it directed its energy to the investigation of the potential interaction effect of such factors rather than preoccupying itself with the contrastive rhetoric's reductionist and counterproductive approach to the etiology of the writing problems of ESL learners. Since both advanced ESL and NES writers exhibited similar writing problems, ESL pedagogy and research could also benefit from the research findings of English L1 composition research.

Conclusion

This chapter established that the two groups participating in the study were of adequate *tertium comparationis* and that the analytic tools were valid measures of rhetorical performance. The rest of the chapter reported and discussed the results of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis testing. The next chapter concludes the study by recapitulating the study main findings, discussing research and pedagogical implications of the findings, noting the study limitations, and offering suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter concludes the dissertation by first presenting a recapitulation of the study and its main findings followed by some research and pedagogical implications of the findings. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the study limitations and suggestions for further research based on the study findings.

Summary of the Study Design

This study investigated the relationship between the rhetorical problems of Arab advanced ESL writers and their native language background from a contrastive rhetoric perspective. To be more specific, the study sought to investigate whether negative transfer of rhetorical preferences from the mother tongue could be implicated as the source of the ESL persuasive writing problems of Arab advanced ESL students.

The study was mainly motivated by the controversy over Kaplan's (1966) contrastive rhetoric hypothesis. On one hand, Kaplan and his proponents asserted that the writing problems of ESL students are due to negative transfer of rhetorical strategies from their native language. On the other hand, ESL educators raised serious ontological, epistemological, and axiological concerns about the theoretical underpinnings of contrastive rhetoric. Consequently, some have adopted a modified version of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis that explains the writing problems of ESL learners in light of a significant influence of the cultural background of the ESL learners, among other factors. Others rejected the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis altogether in favor of a developmental hypothesis that argued that the rhetorical variation Kaplan observed in the English writing of ESL students is not necessarily due to first language interference or

even a broader cultural influence, but could be attributed to the developmental stages that ESL students go through in their progress towards mastery of second language writing.

Instead of resolving the controversy, empirical studies investigating the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis fueled it because they offered contradictory empirical evidence; some confirmed the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis, while others rejected it. What further complicated the contrastive rhetoric scene is that a considerable number of those studies suffered from serious research design flaws and/or limitations.

Contrastive rhetoric research on the writing of Arab native speakers is a case in point. Most contrastive rhetoric studies of writing by native speakers of Arabic have concentrated on sentence-level constructions. Despite their valued contribution to the field, the very few studies that investigated argumentation in Arabic (namely, Kamel, 1989; Koch, 1981; Ouaouicha, 1986) provided unexplained conflicting conclusions and suffered from serious research flaws that undermine the validity of their findings.

Sensing the need for a more conclusive empirical investigation of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis in general and of the etiology of the writing problems of Arab ESL learners in particular, this study aimed to contribute to the existing body of knowledge about the validity and generalizability of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis by investigating claims of cross-cultural variation in the writing of Arab and US writers. In more specific terms, the study examined and compared the ESL and AL1 writing of 30 Arab NASs and the EL1 writing of 30 US NESs on the same persuasive writing task. Rhetorical performance of each participant was quantified by use of established, valid, and reliable measures of select rhetorical dimensions of persuasive writing developed by Connor (1999) and Connor and Lauer (1985; 1988). The rhetorical dimensions

investigated were argument superstructure, Toulmin's informal reasoning, rational, credibility and affective appeals, and persuasive adaptiveness. Participants also filled out a language history questionnaire; data tallied from the questionnaire provided some demographic information about the participants and their educational background.

In order to determine whether native language background was the source of the writing problems of the Arab ESL writers, the comparisons investigated whether the Arab writers had similar or different writing challenges when they composed in ESL and in their native language and whether these writing challenges were unique to the Arab writers or were similar to those experienced by their NES counterparts.

In order to avoid the major design flaws of previous contrastive rhetoric studies, the design of the study was informed by available literature on the ontological, epistemological, and axiological underpinnings of the contrastive rhetoric enterprise. For example, the study examined both the ESL and AL1 writing of advanced rather than that of novice ESL students to rule out the possibility that lack of English language proficiency was the cause of the writing problems of the Arab participants and to reduce the possibility that intellectual development played a role in the participants' rhetorical performance.

By comparing the AL1 and ESL writing samples of NASs to the EL1 writing samples produced by their NES counterparts on the same persuasive task, the study took a descriptive rather than a prescriptive approach to the examination of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis. In doing so, the study was able to reveal that both advanced NASs and NESs face similar writing challenges, contrary to the assumptions of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis. The direct descriptive approach that the study undertook cast serious

doubts on the validity of claims of cross-cultural variation that were based on comparing the rhetorical performance of ESL learners to that of professional NESs or prescriptive formulae of English persuasive writing. In addition, the research design ensured that the two groups in the study were of comparable characteristics such as age, gender, educational level, and major of study, in order to satisfy the assumption of adequate *tertium comparationis*. Besides, every effort was made to ensure that participant recruitment and data collection procedures were conducted in a consistent fashion.

Based on the issues raised about the theoretical assumptions of contrastive rhetoric, the study hypothesized that if the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis was valid, the comparison of the persuasive writing samples provided by the NES and NAS participants would reveal three observations. First, the rhetorical performance of the Arab participants would not vary regardless of their language of composing. Second, the rhetorical performance of writers would vary based on their first language background. Third, the variance will be significant enough to allow rhetorical performance to accurately and reliably predict the writer's native language. It was also hypothesized that results would only be valid if the two participant groups were of comparable characteristics and the analytic measures were valid indicators of overall writing quality and thus valid criteria for the cross-cultural and cross-linguistic rhetorical comparisons.

Summary of Main Findings

Crosstabulation of data from the language history questionnaire demonstrated that the two participant groups were of adequate *tertium comparationis.* Multiple regression analysis of the participants' scores on the analytic measures of rhetorical performance against their holistic scores confirmed the validity of the analytic measures. MDA and

ANOVA of the ESL and AL1 persuasive writing of NASs as well as the EL1 writing of NESs resulted in the following findings:

1. Comparisons of the ESL and AL1 writing of the same NAS writers confirmed the assumption of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis that the NASs exhibited similar rhetorical problems in their ESL and AL1 persuasive writing.

2. However, cross-cultural comparisons of the rhetorical performance of the two groups failed to confirm all the other assumptions of contrastive rhetoric. To be more specific, it turned out that:

   2.1. The rhetorical performance of US and Arab advanced writers could not accurately predict the writers' language/cultural background.

   2.2. There were no significant differences in the rhetorical performance of US and Arab advanced writers regardless of the language of composing of the Arab participants.

   2.3. On the contrary, there was much greater within-group variation than between-group variation in the rhetorical performance of the participants.

Study Conclusion

Based on the results of the cross-cultural comparisons, it was concluded that (a) some rhetorical dimensions of persuasive writing are problematic for Arab advanced ESL writers, and (b) these problematic areas of persuasive writing are not unique to Arab advanced ESL students. Rather, (c) the same rhetorical dimensions of persuasive writing were equally challenging for advanced NESs. In other words, when judged by Standard English rhetoric criteria, the ESL and AL1 persuasive writing of NASs was not of significantly less quality than the EL1 persuasive writing of NESs. Combined, these

conclusions have resulted in the rejection of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis that Arab advanced ESL students' rhetorical problems with persuasive writing are due to first language transfer.

Research Implications

Perhaps the most important contribution of the study to the discipline of ESL writing is that it called into question the validity of claims implicating language transfer as the cause of the writing problems of ESL learners especially if these claims were based on studies that compared groups of inadequate *tertium comparationis* or did not use valid analytic measures. Researchers have long warned of the potential of flawed research designs to incorrectly magnify findings of cross-cultural rhetorical variation and thus lead to false positive evidence of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis (e.g., Cahill, 2003; Guest, 2006; Kachru, 1985; Kubota, 1998a, 1998b; McCagg, 1996; Mohan & Lo, 1985; Ouaouicha, 1986; Scollon, 1997; and Severino, 1993a, 1993b). Examples of the research design flaws they have warned of included comparing ESL writing to English L1 writing, comparing student writing to idealistic/professional writing, comparing beginner ESL writing to advanced English L1 writing, using invalid analytic measures, and/or unduly overgeneralizing results. Results of the current study have shown that when these research flaws have been eliminated, the analysis and comparison of the rhetorical performance of NASs and NESs revealed that they had more similar than different writing problems. Thus, this study lends support to the voices that call for more rigorous contrastive rhetoric research and reporting.

The observation that the rhetorical performance of both NESs and NASs as a group was surprisingly lower than expected considering that the participants were highly

advanced doctoral students of English and that the writing task was a common freshman writing task is worthy of contemplation from a research perspective. One cannot but wonder if first drafts yield the best samples for the investigation of the ontology of cross-cultural rhetorical variation. The study initially assumed so; it hypothesized that since first drafts would reveal the authors' crude rhetorical preferences unaltered by conscious revision decisions, the contrasts in the quality of persuasion in the writing of English and Arabic native speakers, if any, would be more evident in the writers' first drafts than in their final essays.

However, this assumption ignored the fact that persuasive writing is a cognitively demanding task that requires a lot of planning, drafting, and revising before it is ready for its intended audience. Results of this study suggest that if participants were given more time to plan, draft, and revise their writing, they might have shown better persuasive writing performance. The implication of this argument is that research of ESL and English L1 writing needs to consider not only unplanned but also planned writing samples. It is true that one cannot dispute that sound comparisons of first drafts by NNESs and NESs of adequate *tertium comparationis* should reach valid conclusions about the ontology of cross-cultural rhetorical variation since the writing samples were collected under the same conditions. However, as Severino (1993a) advocates, the same cannot be said of contrastive rhetoric studies—including Kaplan's most celebrated study of 1966—that compared ESL writers' first drafts to idealistic, professional, or planned writing.

Pedagogical Implications

If, in fact, unplanned writing negatively impacts the performance of highly advanced students, most of whom are experienced composition teachers themselves, then it would be unfair to rely on in-class timed assignments as the sole assessment tool of either ESL or NES students in composition classes. Instructors who do so need to reconsider their assessment approach. A fairer approach would rely on a variety of in-class and out-of-class, planned and unplanned assignments, activities, and projects.

In addition, the rhetorical performance of the data revealed that both the NES and ESL groups did better on the argumentative aspects of the task than they did on its persuasive aspects. Both groups preformed relatively lower on the credibility and affective appeals and persuasive adaptiveness measures than they did on the argument superstructure, Toulmin's analysis of informal reasoning, and rational appeals scales. This suggests that composition courses need to offer more training on persuasive writing, especially on the effective use of credibility and affective appeals, and audience adaptation strategy.

Finally, this study has ruled out native language background as the root cause of the writing problems of Arab ESL Writers. The study has also concluded that NAS and NES writers have similar rather than different rhetorical challenges. Therefore, any counterproductive reductionist approaches to the writing problems of ESL learners as a byproduct of negative first language transfer that cannot be remedied should be replaced with a more productive approach that views learning ESL writing as a dynamic process (Matsuda, 1997) in which the ESL learners are not imprisoned by constraints imposed by their first language, but rather as active learners whose emerging rhetoric is an outcome

of the interaction of a complex variety of cognitive, cultural, and contextual experiences including but not limited to exposure to multiple cultures and rhetorical situations. As such emphasis in the ESL writing classroom should shun away from stereotyping or marginalizing the students' native rhetoric. A better alternative would be to train ESL learners on how to evaluate the rhetorical context in which each writing task takes place and how to adapt their rhetorical strategies to meet the requirements of the rhetorical context and the expectations of its audience within a specific discourse community.

Study Limitations

Although every possible effort was made to avoid research design flaws of previous research studies, this study cannot claim to be totally from limitations. This section foregrounds a few of these limitations.

Small Sample Size

Although group sample size of 30 participants in each group was adequate for the purpose of the statistical analysis of data, admittedly the small sample size places limitations on the generalizability of data to other groups of comparable characteristics. While the 16:1 ratio of the writing samples to the criterion variables in the MRA and MDA far exceeded the minimum sample size requirements for these tests, a ratio of 50 or more to 1 is preferred for more robust and generalizable results.

Convenience Sampling

Another limitation that further constrains the generalizability of the results of this study is convenience sampling. In order for results to apply to the larger advanced Arab ESL population, random sampling of NES and NAS participants is required. Unfortunately, the researcher was not able to draw random samples of advanced Arab

ESL or US EL1 writers that more accurately represent the target populations due to logistic hurdles.

Furthermore, while the study claimed to be investigating the writing problems of Arab writers from a contrastive rhetoric perspective, it was able to sample writing from nationals of only two Arab countries, namely Egypt and Jordan. There is no guarantee that findings of the study will extend to nationals of other Arab countries. The study did not attempt to examine between-subgroup rhetorical variance due to the small number-- that is variation between the Jordanian and Egyptian subgroups. Thus, the study has not been able to rule out that rhetorical variation between the two subgroups. Therefore, while findings of the current study do apply to its participants, caution should be exercised before they are applied to other NES or NAS writers until study with more appropriate sampling procedures confirm the results of the study.

Lack of Genuine Rhetorical Context

Perhaps, the most serious limitation of this study is the absence of a real rhetorical context for the writing task. Rather, the writing task was an engineered one in which the participants volunteered to participate in the study. The participants were well aware of the fact that there were no consequences for their performance on the writing task. Therefore, genuine motivation for them to show their best writing skills was lacking. Consequently, it is not clear how far the participants' performance was impacted as a result of the lack of real-world incentive to show their best writing skills. To get more representative writing samples of the study participants, future research studies should strive to analyze writing that is produced for genuine rhetorical contexts.

Influence of Task Prompt

The study assumed that the task prompt had no effect on the participants' performance on the different rhetorical measures. Hamp-Lyons and Mathias (1994) and Kuiken and Vedder (2008) have argued that task complexity and task type do interfere with writing performance. Cheng (2003) has reported that writing prompts that provided Chinese ESL students with more "rhetorical specification" about the purpose of the composition, intended audience, and expected structure triggered better ESL writing performance. The noticeable lower performance of both groups on the warrant, credibility and affective appeals, and the persuasive adaptiveness scales might have been due to the fact that the writing prompt did not emphasize these persuasive aspects.

Effect of Training

The study assumed that by recruiting advanced student writers, it would eliminate the possibility that lack of English language proficiency on the part of less advanced ESL writers might interfere with their performance. However, by analyzing the writing of advanced ESL doctoral students only, the study overlooked the possibility that the ESL training of these advanced students might have positively affected their rhetorical performance. Future research should compare the writing of ESL writers at different language proficiency levels to their NES counterparts to rule out the potential effect of training as confounding factor. An alternative approach would be to compare the Arab L1 persuasive writing of Arab graduate students majoring in Arabic with no or limited English language proficiency to the English L1 persuasive writing of NES graduate students majoring in English to eliminate the confounding effect of both ESL language proficiency and ESL training on the research results.

Rhetorical Tradition

It is true that the study did not find any significant differences in the rhetorical performance of NAS and NES writers. However, one should not overlook the fact that both English and Arabic rhetoric can be traced back to the same Greco-Roman heritage. It is not clear if the comparative analysis of language pairs that do not share the same rhetorical heritage would yield similar conclusions. Therefore, the study conclusions about Arab ESL writers should not be extended to other non-Arab ESL writers until cross-cultural variation in the writing of these NNESs and NESs is investigated.

Researcher and Rater Bias

Initially, the researcher intended to recruit a NES and a NAS rater to eliminate rater bias. Unfortunately, this was not logistically possible. Since the researcher was not able to recruit a NES with enough proficiency in Arabic within a reasonable amount of time, he had no choice but to recruit two NAS raters. Besides, the researcher himself was a native speaker of Arabic.

Although, every attempt was made to disguise the identity of the participants, some of the topics that the participants chose (such as the declining quality of higher education in Jordan or the short supply of bread in Egypt) and other textual cultural clues (such as references to Islamic concepts) suggested some of the writers' group membership. However, the researcher and both raters were experienced professional ESL educators and researchers; they made every possible conscious effort to be objective and neutralize their bias. Besides, rater training incorporated training on how to suspend one's point of view and rate each writing sample based on its qualitative merits.

Suggestions for Further Research

It should be noted here that although empirical evidence obtained from this study has rejected the ontological stance that the etiology of the writing problems of ESL students should be seen within a predeterministic linguistic relativity and negative transfer framework, more research will be needed to evaluate the more reserved ontological stance that cultural background, among other factors, plays a role in ESL students' rhetorical preferences (e.g., Connor, 1996; Liebman, 1988, 1992; Raimes, 1991); since the current study only focused on the written rhetorical performance of advanced students, it remains to be seen whether novice ESL writers who did not have similar exposure to and training on English persuasive discourse as this study participants did will have similar or more serious rhetorical problems than their NESs counterparts. It also remains to be investigated whether potential native and or foreign cultural influences contributed to the variation in the rhetorical performance of the individual Arab participants. Such an investigation will be crucial to our understanding of the etiology of Arab student writers' strengths and writing problems.

In order to reach more generalizable conclusions about the ontology of cross-cultural rhetorical variation, more research is needed to cover other languages, cultures, genres, rhetorical dimensions, language proficiency levels, majors of study, and writing tasks. If possible, future contrastive rhetoric studies should strive for bigger samples, random sampling of participants, and more genuine rhetorical contexts.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Language History Questionnaire

LANGUAGE HISTORY QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge.

Part A (All Participants)

1. Native language (circle one):
   English   Arabic   Other, Please specify _____

2. Sex (circle one):
   Male   Female

3. Age: _____

4. Nationality:_____

5. Country of origin: _____

6. Country where you received your first degree: _____

7. First degree major: _____, minor: _____

8. Foreign/second language(s):

Language (please specify)	Proficiency Level (circle one)				
_____	Poor	Fair	Functional	Very Good	Native-like
_____	Poor	Fair	Functional	Very Good	Native-like
_____	Poor	Fair	Functional	Very Good	Native-like

9. How long have you been writing in English? _____

10. How often do you write in English? _____

_____

11. How do you rate your writing ability in English? (Circle one)
    Poor   Fair   Functional   Very Good   Excellent

12. Four-digit code of your choice*: ___ ___ ___ ___

> * In order to maintain confidentiality, no names or any other identifying information will be collected. However, if your later decide to withdraw from the study and request your information be destroyed or returned to you, we will need a way to identify your data. Besides, if you will be providing two writing samples, we will need to pair your two writing samples for the statistical analysis. For this reason, please choose a 4-digit code and use it on this questionnaire and your essays. Please always use the same code. Your code could be the last four digits of your social security number or any 4-digit combination that is easy for you to remember.

Part B (Native Speakers of Arabic Only)

13. How long have you been studying English? _____

14. Have you studied English beyond formal education? (circle one)   Yes   No

    If yes, please explain: _____

    _____

15. Have you studied English in a language school? (circle one)   Yes   No

    If yes, please explain: _____

16. How long have you been in the US? _____

17. Have you lived in any other country where English is a first language?   Yes

    No

18. If yes, Where? _____ For how long? _____

19. What is your latest TOEFL score (if available)? _____ Date: _____

20. How long have you been writing in Arabic? _____

21. How often do you write in Arabic?_____

    _____

22. How do you rate your writing ability in Arabic? (circle one)

    Poor   Fair   Functional   Very Good   Excellent

Thank you for your cooperation