

**A STUDY ON CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC IN ENGLISH WRITING AND THE
MYSIDE BIAS**

ATIYEH KAMYABI GOL

**FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR**

2012

**A STUDY ON CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC IN ENGLISH WRITING
AND THE MYSIDE BIAS**

ATIYEH KAMYABI GOL

**THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR**

2012

UNIVERSITI MALAYA

ORIGINAL LITERARY WORK DECLARATION

Name of Candidate: **Atiyeh Kamyabi Gol** (I.C/Passport No: L95235185)

Registration/Matric No: **THA090004**

Name of Degree: **Doctor of Philosophy**

Title of ~~Project Paper/Research Report/Dissertation~~/Thesis (“this Work”):

A Study on Contrastive Rhetoric in English Writing and the Myside Bias

Field of Study: **Applied Linguistics**

I do solemnly and sincerely declare that:

- (1) I am the sole author/writer of this Work;
- (2) This Work is original;
- (3) Any use of any work in which copyright exists was done by way of fair dealing and for permitted purposes and any excerpt or extract from, or reference to or reproduction of any copyright work has been disclosed expressly and sufficiently and the title of the Work and its authorship have been acknowledged in this Work;
- (4) I do not have any actual knowledge nor do I ought reasonably to know that the making of this work constitutes an infringement of any copyright work;
- (5) I hereby assign all and every rights in the copyright to this Work to the University of Malaya (“UM”), who henceforth shall be owner of the copyright in this Work and that any reproduction or use in any form or by any means whatsoever is prohibited without the written consent of UM having been first had and obtained;
- (6) I am fully aware that if in the course of making this Work I have infringed any copyright whether intentionally or otherwise, I may be subject to legal action or any other action as may be determined by UM.

Candidate’s Signature

Date: 11 July 2012

Subscribed and solemnly declared before,

Witness’s Signature

Date: 11 July 2012

Name: **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Karen Kow Yip Cheng**

Designation: **Supervisor**

ABSTRACT

One effective method for conveying one's thoughts and ideas is through writing. Having the ability to write effectively is important to both achieve and also to demonstrate academic success (Leki and Carson, 1994). Many scholars believe that cultural backgrounds play a vital role in how an individual writes. With the growing number of Iranian students studying overseas, it is necessary to see whether the Persian rhetorical culture does in fact influence students' English writing. In this study, the researcher aims to investigate the style differences between English and Persian writing and to determine whether participating Iranian EFL students transfer Persian writing cultural norms to their English argumentative writings. Also, both students' and teachers' perspectives on the most problematic areas of English writing will be studied. The presence of myside bias was also considered in the writings. Data for the study was collected through two argumentative essays (Persian and English). The results were triangulated through the use of a questionnaire and interview. The findings support the contrastive rhetoric theory in that the students' L1 does influence the way they write in L2. The results show that there is a great possibility of transfer from the participants' L1 into L2 in the areas of number of topic sentences per paragraph, and also figurative language usage. The findings also reveal the possibility of backward transfer in the area of position of thesis statement. The results also indicate a mismatch between the teachers and students' perception of the most problematic areas in English writing. Traces of myside bias were also found in both argumentative essays.

ABSTRAK

Salah satu metodologi yang berkesan di dalam mengemukakan pendapat ialah melalui penulisan. Kebolehan untuk menulis dengan berkesan adalah amat penting untuk menunjukkan pencapaian dan kejayaan seseorang dibidang akademik (Leki and Carson,1994). Kebanyakan ilmiawan berpendapat bahawa budaya memainkan peranan yang penting di dalam mempegaruhi cara penulisan seseorang. Memandangkan semakin banyak pelajar-pelajar Iran menimba ilmu di luar Negara, maka perlunya untuk menganalisa jika budaya Persia mempengaruhi cara pelajar-pelajar Persia menulis di dalam Bahasa Inggeris. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengupas dan meneliti jika terdapat perbezaan di dalam gaya penulisan antara Bahasa Inggeris dan Bahasa Persia. Selain daripada itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan jika pelajar-pelajar Iran yang mempelajari Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa asing menggunakan norma penulisan budaya Persia apabila menulis karangan yang berbentuk penghujahan. Perspektif pelajar-pelajar dan guru-guru keatas masaalah-masaalah yang dihadapi apabila menulis didalam Bahasa Inggeris juga akan di analisis. Di samping itu, kajian ini turut menganalisis ‘Myside bias’ didalam penulisan pelajar-pelajar. Sampel kajian diperolehi daripada dua karangan (Bahasa Persia dan Bahasa inggeris), borang soal-selidik dan wawancara. Hasil kajian menyokong teori ‘Contrastic Rhetoric’ bahawa bahasa pertama mempengaruhi cara penulisan pelajar-pelajar apabila menulis di dalam bahasa kedua. Dapatan kajian juga mendapati terdapat besar kemungkinan pemindahan dari bahasa pertama ke bahasa kedua dari segi bilangan ayat topic didalam satu perenggan dan juga penggunaan bahasa figuratif di dalam penulisan pelajar-pelajar. Kajian turut menunjukkan kemungkinan terdapat ‘Backward transfer’ di kedudukan ayat tesis. Selain daripada itu, hasil kajian menunjukkan persepsi yang berbeda diantara guru-guru and pelajar-pelajar mengenai masaalah yang di hadapi ketika menulis di

dalam Bahasa Inggris. Di samping itu, 'Myside bias' juga dikenal pasti di kedua-dua karangan yang berbentuk penghujahan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First, I Acknowledge God for giving me the strength through academic and personal trials. While I can not possibly thank everyone enough, I would like to express my utmost gratitude to all those whose support made the completion of this study possible.

My heartfelt thanks goes to Dr. Karen Kow Yip Cheng, who has been more than a supervisor to me during these years. She has been an inspiring and dedicated mentor from the onset of this study. It was her constructive criticisms, comments and suggestions that enabled me to improve the quality of my dissertation.

I would also like to acknowledge the experts (departments of Persian language and Literature, English Language, and Linguistics at the Ferdowsi University of Mashhad), my second rater, teachers and students who agreed to participate in this study and shared their insights with me. This study would not have been possible without their collaborative spirit. I hope this research report will not disappoint the experts who were looking forward to reading the results of the study.

I have to humbly include that I owe everything I have achieved in life to my beloved family. The love, support and patience of my parents and brother, their daily phone calls and emails have kept me going. I would like to especially thank my mom for all her prayers, encouragements and faith in my abilities.

To all the aforementioned individuals and to the many more unnamed individuals that have touched my life along the way, I am eternally grateful.

DEDICATION

To my parents who sacrificed a lot emotionally and financially to enable me to pursue this doctoral degree. To my mom for being the guiding pillar of support and perseverance and to my dad for his analytical perspective towards life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title	Page
ABSTRACT	III
ABSTRAK	IV
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	VI
DEDICATION	VII
TABLE OF CONTENTS	VIII
LIST OF TABLES	XII
LIST OF FIGURES.....	XIII
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
1.0.1 Statement of the Problem.....	5
1.0.2 Significance of the Study	7
1.0.3 Purpose of the Study	9
Research Questions.....	10
1.0.4 Writing Styles	11
1.0.5 Myside Bias.....	12
1.1 METHODOLOGY	12
1.1.1 Participants and Setting.....	12
1.1.2 Instrumentation	13
1.1.2.1 Consultation.....	13
1.1.2.2 Questionnaire	15
1.1.2.3 Argumentative Writing Task	16
1.1.2.4 Interview.....	16
1.2 PROCEDURE	17
1.2.1 Data Collection.....	17
1.2.2 Data Analysis	18
1.3 DEFINITION OF PERTINENT TERMS	18
1.4 OVERVIEW OF DISSERTATION	20
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	22
2.0 INTRODUCTION	22
2.1 KAPLAN AND CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC	22
2.2 CRITICISM ON KAPLAN AND CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC.....	24
2.3 EARLY CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC	29

2.3.1 The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis	30
2.3.2 Contrastive Analysis	32
Transfer	33
2.3.3 Error Analysis	36
2.3.4 Interlanguage.....	37
2.3.5 Discourse Analysis.....	37
2.4 NEW CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC AND STUDIES SURROUNDING THE ISSUE	39
Persian in Contrastive Rhetoric Studies.....	53
2.5 LANGUAGE VS. CULTURE	55
2.5.1 Learners and Culture Pedagogy	60
2.5.2 The Three Circles of Kachru.....	60
2.6 NATIVE VS. NON NATIVE RHETORIC	61
2.7 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FIRST AND SECOND LANGUAGE LITERACY	64
2.8 SOME EXPLANATIONS FOR ESL/EFL STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN WRITING.....	70
2.9 A BRIEF HISTORY OF ESSAY.....	74
2.10 PERSIAN LANGUAGE AND RHETORIC HISTORY	76
2.11 MYSIDE BIAS	87
2.12 ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING	90
2.12.1 The Claim.....	91
2.12.2 The Data.....	92
2.12.3 The Warrant	92
2.13 THE FIVE CONTRASTIVE FEATURES FRAMEWORK	98
2.13.1 Inductive vs. Deductive.....	98
2.13.2 Start-Sustain-Turn-Sum vs. Introduction-Body-Conclusion	99
2.13.3 Circular vs. Linear.....	100
2.13.4 Metaphorical vs. Straightforward.....	100
2.13.5 Explicit Discourse Markers.....	101
2.14 DISCOURSE MARKERS AND FRASER'S TAXONOMY OF DISCOURSE MARKERS	101
Fraser's Taxonomy of Discourse Markers.....	102
2.15 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH.....	103
2.16 TRIANGULATION	104
2.17 QUESTIONNAIRE	105
2.18 INTERVIEW	108
2.19 CONCLUDING MARKS	111
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	112
3.0 INTRODUCTION	112
3.1 SAMPLING	112
3.1.1 Setting	112
3.1.2 Participants.....	113
3.1.2.1 Student Participants	113
3.1.2.2 Teacher Participants.....	116
3.1.2.3 Bilingual Raters.....	117

3.2 INSTRUMENTATION	119
3.2.1 Five Contrastive Features Framework	119
3.2.2 Fraser’s Taxonomy of Discourse Markers.....	122
3.2.3 Myside Bias.....	123
3.2.4 Consultation	123
3.2.5 Questionnaire, Pilot Study, and Inter Rater Reliability.....	124
3.2.5.1 Questionnaire	124
3.2.5.2 The Pilot Study (Reliability).....	125
3.2.5.3 Inter Rater Reliability.....	126
3.2.6 Argumentative Writing Task.....	128
3.2.7 Interview	132
3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN.....	133
3.3.1 Data Collection.....	133
3.3.2 Data Analysis	136
Scoring Procedure.....	137
3.4 CONCLUDING MARKS	138
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....	139
4.0 INTRODUCTION	139
4.1 ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING TASK	139
4.1.1 English Essays.....	140
4.1.1.1 Inductive vs. Deductive Feature.....	140
4.1.1.2 Start-Sustain-Turn-Sum vs. Introduction-Body-Conclusion Feature	141
4.1.1.3 Circular vs. Linear Feature	143
4.1.1.4 Metaphorical vs. Straightforward Feature	149
4.1.1.5 Explicit Discourse Markers Feature	153
4.1.1.6 Myside Bias Feature	155
4.1.2 Persian Essays	156
4.1.2.1 Inductive vs. Deductive Feature.....	156
4.1.2.2 Start-Sustain-Turn-Sum vs. Introduction-Body-Conclusion Feature	157
4.1.2.3 Circular vs. Linear Feature	159
4.1.2.4 Metaphorical vs. Straightforward Feature	165
4.1.2.5 Explicit Discourse Markers Feature	168
4.1.2.6 Myside Bias Feature	170
4.2 COMPARISON AND CONTRAST BETWEEN PARTICIPANTS’ ENGLISH AND PERSIAN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAYS.....	170
4.3 QUESTIONNAIRE.....	183
4.3.1 Phase 1: The Reliability of the Questionnaire.....	183
4.3.2 Phase 2: The Second Part of the Questionnaire	183
4.3.2.1 The Students	184
4.3.2.2 The Teachers	186
4.3.3 Phase 3: The Third Part of the Questionnaire	187
4.4 INTERVIEW	188
4.5 CONCLUDING MARKS	196
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS	197

5.0 INTRODUCTION	197
5.1 STYLE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PERSIAN AND ENGLISH WRITING ACCORDING TO FCFF (RESEARCH QUESTION 1).....	199
5.2 CONTRASTIVE FEATURES TRANSFERRED FROM PERSIAN TO ENGLISH WRITINGS (RESEARCH QUESTION 2).....	201
5.3 TEACHERS AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE MOST PROBLEMATIC AREAS IN ENGLISH WRITING (RESEARCH QUESTION 3).....	204
5.4 TRACES OF MYSIDE BIAS IN THE PERSIAN AND ENGLISH ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAYS (RESEARCH QUESTION 4).....	205
5.5 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS	206
5.5.1 Implications for Teachers.....	206
5.5.1.1 The Importance of Preparation.....	206
5.5.1.2 The Importance of Correction.....	207
5.5.1.3 The Importance of Explicit Teaching	208
5.5.1.4 The Importance of Listening.....	211
5.5.1.5 The Importance of Guided Class Activities.....	211
5.5.2 Implications for Students	213
5.5.3 Implications for Syllabus Designers	215
5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	216
5.7 FINAL REMARK.....	217
REFERENCES.....	218
APPENDICES	233
APPENDIX 1: STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE.....	233
APPENDIX 2: STUDENT CONSENT FORM	235
APPENDIX 3: TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE.....	236
APPENDIX 4: TEACHER CONSENT FORM	238
APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	239
APPENDIX 6: ENGLISH AND PERSIAN ESSAY SAMPLES	240
APPENDIX 7: E-MAIL REPLY FROM DR. XING	242
APPENDIX 8: FRASER'S TAXONOMY OF DISCOURSE MARKERS AND ITS PERSIAN TRANSLATION.....	243

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Numerous studies conducted using contrastive rhetoric.....	47
Table 2.2: Four domains of contrastive studies	52
Table 3.1: Kappa inter rater reliability result for inductive vs. deductive	127
Table 3.2: Kappa inter rater reliability result for start-sustain-turn-sum vs. introduction-body-conclusion	127
Table 3.3: Kappa inter rater reliability result for circular vs. linear	127
Table 3.4: Kappa inter rater reliability result for straightforward vs. metaphorical	127
Table 3.5: Kappa inter rater reliability result for myside bias	127
Table 3.6: Categorization of Kappa statistics results according to strength of agreement	128
Table 4.1: Frequency results for inductive vs. deductive feature (English essays)	141
Table 4.2: Frequency results for start-sustain-turn-sum vs. introduction-body-conclusion feature (English essays).....	142
Table 4.3: Frequency results for circular vs. linear feature (English essays)	143
Table 4.4: Frequency results for metaphorical vs. straightforward feature (English essays)	149
Table 4.5: Samples of figurative language in English essays	150
Table 4.6: Frequency results for myside bias feature (English essays)	155
Table 4.7: Frequency results for inductive vs. deductive feature (Persian essays).....	157
Table 4.8: Frequency results for start-sustain-turn-sum vs. introduction-body-conclusion feature (Persian essays).....	157
Table 4.9: Frequency results for circular vs. linear feature (Persian essays).....	159
Table 4.10: Frequency results for metaphorical vs. straightforward feature (Persian essays)....	165
Table 4.11: Samples of figurative language in Persian essays	166
Table 4.12: Frequency results for myside bias feature (Persian essays).....	170
Table 4.13: Sample of vocabulary items transferred from Persian to English.....	175
Table 4.14: Sample of preposition items transferred from Persian to English	177
Table 4.15: Sample of expression items transferred from Persian to English	178
Table 4.16: Students' perception of the most problematic areas in English writing	184
Table 4.17: Teachers' perception of the most problematic areas in English writing.....	186
Table 4.18: Students' responses (in %) to writing techniques, style, and myside bias.....	188

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Kaplan’s graphics showing the possible paths of movement in writing	24
Figure 2.2: Brøgger’s interconnection of culture, language, literature	57
Figure 2.3: Kachru’s three circles of English.....	61
Figure 3.1: Data collection timeline.....	136
Figure 4.1: Number and percentage of English markers.....	154
Figure 4.2: Number and percentage of Persian markers	169
Figure 4.3: Percentage of inductive vs. deductive in English and Persian	171
Figure 4.4: Percentage of SSTS vs. IBC in English and Persian	172
Figure 4.5: Percentage of circular vs. linear in English and Persian.....	172
Figure 4.6: Percentage of straightforward vs. metaphorical in English and Persian	174
Figure 4.7: Percentage of English myside bias vs. Persian myside bias.....	180
Figure 4.8: Number of English markers vs. Persian markers	181
Figure 4.9: Percentage of English markers vs. Persian markers	182