

Chapter 1

1.0 Introduction

In the post modern world we are living in today, having the ability to express one's ideas is becoming increasingly important and this is most effectively achieved through writing. Effective written English is an essential tool for any academic and professional career (Liu and You, 2008). As Leki and Carson (1994) emphasize: "the ability to write well is necessary both to achieve academic success and to demonstrate that achievement" (p. 83). The concept of writing has a very rich history dating back in time. Writing began in ancient Greece and has always received a great deal of attention from scholars of all time (Villasenor, 2003).

According to Raimes (1983), achieving proficiency in writing can only be attained through successfully dealing with "content, audience, purpose, word choice, organization, mechanics, syntax and grammar" (p. 6). Mastering any one of these areas takes years of practice and a lot of hard work. Students persevere to achieve proficiency from elementary schools. This goal becomes even more daunting to achieve for students writing in a language that is not their mother tongue. As Shokrpour and Fallahzadeh (2007) assert: "writing is a complex activity, a social act which reflects the writer's communicative skills which is difficult to develop and learn, especially in an EFL context" (p. 148). Many scholars (Buckingham, 2008; Siepmann, 2006; Gosden, 1996; Jalilifar, 2008, Rooholamini, 1986; Victori, 1999; Schneider and Fujishima 1995; and Samiee, 2008) believe that writing is the most difficult skill to acquire and that culture and cultural backgrounds play a vital role in how an individual writes. Erasmus (1960) clearly states that the learners' writing style is influenced by the "interference of the stylistic and cultural literary expression patterns of his native language" (p. 60).

The interconnection between culture and language, between how a community of people view the world and the language they use to express their views, was best put forward by Benjamin Lee Whorf in 1956. In his theory of linguistic relativity, Whorf (1956) posits that: "There is no one metaphysical pool of universal human thought. Speakers of different languages see the cosmos differently; evaluate it differently, sometimes not by much, sometimes widely. Thinking is relative to the language learned" (p.X). Kaplan (1972) also maintains in the theory of linguistic relativity and he finds the traces of this theory in non native speakers' compositions when he states:

It is apparent but not obvious that, at least to a very large extent, the organization of a paragraph, written in any language by any individual who is not a native speaker of that language, will carry the dominant imprint of that individual's culturally-coded orientation to the phenomenological world in which he lives and which he is bound to interpret largely through the avenues available to him in his native language. This phenomenon is a natural and necessary correlate to the "Whorf-Sapir Hypothesis" (p.1).

Although students might have a logical orientation while writing, their writing might be considered illogical by the instructor due to the cultural differences between the two (Xing, Wang, Spencer, 2008). In fact, cultural difference is the main source of difficulty for English as second language writers, but as Fox (2003) puts it: "lack of understanding and lack of intelligence are not necessarily related" (p. 5). Connor (1996) asserts that "contrastive rhetoricians maintain that different reader expectations are the primary reason for cross-cultural differences in writing styles and that students should be made aware of these differences by their teachers" (p. 167). One important fact to keep in mind is that "although schools profess to teach writing to students, the types of writing emphasized are incomplete and dissimilar, even inside the same country" (Irmischer, 1979, P. 1). Leki (1991) points out that although schools are primarily in charge of teaching students to write, few schools succeed in fulfilling this responsibility.

The relationship between cultural thought patterns and rhetorical patterns was initially recognized by Kaplan in his article entitled "Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-Cultural Education" in 1966 (Brown & Attardo, 2005). Contrastive rhetoric is the study of differences between discourses of various languages and cultures (Xing et al., 2008). Connor (1996) defines contrastive rhetoric as

an area of research in second language acquisition that identifies problems in composition encountered by second language writers and, by referring to the rhetorical strategies of the first language, attempts to explain them (p. 5).

Kaplan (1966), the father of contrastive rhetoric, believes that language and writing are both cultural phenomena and that every language has its own special cultural conventions (Faghih & Rahimpour, 2009). Although Kaplan raised a practical question regarding international students' writing, his theory of contrastive rhetoric has gone through several changes since the 1960s.

In his study, Kaplan (1966) analyzed 600 international student compositions. Later on, he compared these compositions with descriptions regarding paragraph organization available in textbooks and stylistic manuals used in advanced level English classrooms of the time. It was this comparison that enabled Kaplan to identify some patterns which characterized the language groups being studied. He maintained that it was indeed these patterns that led to the non native speakers' compositions being labeled as 'problematic' in spite of sentence level correctness (Villasenor, 2003). According to Valero-Garce (1996), rhetoric is "the strategies the writer uses to convince readers of his/her claim and to increase the credibility of his/her research" (p. 281). Contrastive rhetoric simply endeavors to: "identify differences in compositions written by second language writers referring to the rhetorical strategies of their first language" (Phung, 2006, p.1). It was Kaplan (1966) who first realized that the errors in the non native speakers writing went

beyond surface errors such as grammar, vocabulary, and word order. Land and Whitley (1989) assert that "even with error removed from all essays, native speakers give higher scores to paper of native speakers than to those written by ESL students" (P. 286).

Different contrastive rhetoric researchers have considered various roles which the first language plays in contrastive rhetoric. The early contrastive rhetoric researchers maintained that the students' first language only interferes with the second language writing. They (Lado, 1957; Dulay and Burt, 1974; Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982) claimed this interference brought about a disruption in the students' second language writing.

Since that time, other theories regarding the role of the students' first language have come into limelight. Contrastive rhetoric has drawn upon various ideas from "applied linguistics, linguistic relativity, rhetoric, text linguistics, discourse types and genres, literacy, and translation" (Phung, 2006, P.1).

Wong (1992, P.1) enumerates various foundational principles which assist and lead contrastive rhetoric researchers. They include the following:

1. There are differences and similarities between various written languages in terms of how information is organized and presented.
2. The differences are manifested as rhetorical preferences inherent in a language so that while all forms of discourse organization are possible in any language which has written texts, each language by virtue of itself demonstrates clear preferences which identifies it as uniquely different from other languages.
3. Students who are learning to write in a second language (L2) may use discourse strategies and organizational patterns which reflect those of their first language (L1), thus producing a discourse in the second language which may strike the native (L2) reader/write/speaker as 'Strange' 'illogical' or 'incoherent'.

According to the new contrastive rhetoric introduced by Connor, Kaplan, and Purves, external factors such as education, culture, and media affect the rhetorical patterns writers use (Fox, 2003).

1.0.1 Statement of the Problem

In 1957, Lado pioneered a method called "Contrastive Analysis" in which he asserts that the learners' first language would bring about problems in learning a second language. He believes that the habits which are formed in the learner's first language would 'interfere' with the habits of second language learning. Also, whenever the learner would come across uncertain grammatical aspects (such as structure and vocabulary) of the second language which they could not make a certain decision on, they would apply the rules from their first language to second language setting and ultimately end up in making an error. In the 1960s language teachers became aware of this problem and adopted Contrastive Analysis to recognize that a great number of errors which second language learners made were in fact derived from the first language of these learners.

By considering the fact that writing in one's mother tongue is a very difficult task, it is understandable why writing in a foreign language becomes devastating for some students. Jalilifar (2008) states that "writing in a second language is further complicated by issues of proficiency in the target language, first language literacy, and differences in culture and rhetorical approach to the text" (p. 114). Bereiter and Scaramalia (1983) also comment on the complexity of essay writing when they assert that "writing a long essay is probably the most complex constructive act that human beings are ever expected to perform" (P. 20). Writing does not only include mastering the linguistic features and

rules, but it also demands a mastery of the social and cultural conventions related to the academic discourse.

If culture does in fact influence writing, then this might be a reason why non native speakers' writings are sometimes labeled as disorganized, digressive, drifting, waffling, vague, indirect, incoherent, irrelevant, and loosely structured (Lux, 1991; Ballard and Clanchy, 1991; Cortazzi and Jin 1997; Saneh, 2009). Crowley (1998) uses a metalingual approach to outlining what the nature of writing is. His outline includes the following objectives of writing: "Spell correctly, avoid grammar errors, punctuate conventionally, paragraph logically, string sentences intelligibly, string sentences effectively, write like an English teacher, write like a poet, write like a scientist, and write like a corporate executive" (p.232). However, despite the attempts made by non native writers in achieving such objectives we find as Hafernik (1990) tells us that "even after mastering the orthography and linguistic rules of English, non native speakers often write foreign-sounding and inappropriate prose" (p.1). For example, in Persian composition classes, students are always encouraged to use proverbs and quote many famous scholars in their writings; however, these are considered a cliché or lacking in originality (Wong, 1992; Robitaille and Connelly, 2007) in English writing and receive negative scoring from evaluators.

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 and how significant this transfer is to English writing. Research suggests that writers tend to use the rhetorical patterns of their first language when they are writing in a second language. Many studies have considered the transfer from various languages such as Chinese, Japanese, German, French, and Turkish to English (Hafernik, 1990;

Xing et al., 2008; Siepmann, 2006; Kobayashi, & Rinnert, 2008; Buckingham, 2008). However, the possibility and extent of transfer from Persian to English has not received its due attention (Izadi Agha, 2007).

There are two completely different sets of research being conducted in recent years. One set of research has concentrated on the notion that transfer -whether positive or negative- does in fact take place in EFL/ESL writing. However, the second group of researchers rejects the notion of transfer and asserts that other factors are at play. They believe these factors are irrespective of the native language and are vital to instructing writers (Kamel, 1989).

1.0.2 Significance of the Study

English is one of the most common languages spoken internationally. In fact according to The Summer Institute for Linguistics (SIL) Ethnologue Survey in 2009, over 328 million people speak English worldwide (Lewis, 2009). English as a key to a modern life, has a dominant position in science, technology, medicine and computer, it is the most widely used language in business, trade, aviation, diplomacy, international organizations and companies, in mass media and journalism, in sport and youth life, in music, in education systems and most importantly, in foreign language teaching. It is through all the means above that English has found its way into many cultures (Mugglestone, 2006).

In Iran, English is considered a foreign language which is taught from junior high school onward. Students have to achieve English language proficiency in junior high school, high school, college, and even university. Learning English as a foreign

language has become very popular during the past years. The increased number of English language institutes all over Iran along with the parents' elevated interest in enrolling their children in extra curricular English classes can be evidence to support this claim. Vaezi (2009) believes the main causes for this popularity are "the growth of international relations of Iran with other nations and the extended interest towards today's growing technology and science throughout the world" (p. 82). As Strain (1971) found out, over 90% of Iranian students prefer to elect English as their foreign language in university; which also shows the popularity of this language among students. Sadighi and Maghsudi (2000) and Vaezi (2009), found similar results among Iranian undergraduates. They found the Iranian students to be highly motivated to learn English. This was the case in both English major and non English major students studying at various universities in Iran.

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- "tendency to evaluate evidence, generate evidence, and test hypotheses in a manner biased toward one's own opinion" (Macpherson & Stanovich, 2007, p. 115) - will also be considered in the writings.

The results of this study can be used to inform EFL students, EFL teachers, researchers, and syllabus designers. It can help EFL students realize that their knowledge about their first language can affect the way they write in English; and it can aid them to write closer to the standards required by international conventions. This in turn can assist in lightening the load of correction for teachers and also encourage awareness raising

among the teachers and EFL students regarding the similarities and differences between Persian and English writing styles.

It can also help EFL teachers consider intercultural differences in writing while planning and assessing writing activities for their students. It can also aid them in implementing cultural awareness strategies to their teaching.

The results from the present study can also assist syllabus designers to generate some guidelines for EFL programs used for teaching Iranian students. Syllabus designers can use the results to make changes to the already existing syllabuses for English language textbooks taught at schools and language institutes. They can check to see what is missing in these textbooks and anticipate just what kind of information and pedagogical aspects to include in order to help students make the best of what resources they already have.

The results can also aid researchers by providing an understanding regarding some perceptions of writing which Iranian EFL students may bring to their EFL classrooms.

1.0.3 Purpose of the Study

The first objective of the present study is to analyze the argumentative essays of 40 Iranian EFL students written in both Persian and English. This study aims to:

- 1) Investigate the style differences in writing (according to the five contrastive features) between Persian and English.

- 2) Investigate to what extent Iranian EFL students transfer Persian writing cultural norms to their English argumentative writings.
- 3) Study the Iranian EFL teachers and students' perception regarding the most problematic areas in English writing.
- 4) Examine the Iranian EFL students' Persian and English argumentative writings for traces of Myside bias.

The rationalization behind conducting the present study between Persian and English is that Persian has not received its due attention in contrastive rhetoric studies.

Research Questions

In light of previous studies which have been carried out in contrastive rhetoric and my personal experiences as a bilingual, the following research questions were utilized in conducting the present study:

1. What are the style differences in writing (according to the five contrastive features) between Persian and English?
2. What contrastive features (according to the five contrastive features) do the Iranian EFL students transfer from Persian to English writing?
3. What are the most problematic areas in English writing according to Iranian EFL students and teachers?
4. Does the *myside bias* exist in the Persian or English argumentative writings of Iranian EFL students?

1.0.4 Writing Styles

Xing, et al. (2008) collected 5 contrastive features from previous studies. These studies include: Ballard and Clanchy (1991); Cho (1999); Connor (1996); Cortazzi and Jin (1997); Schneider and Fujishima (1995). Xing, et al. (2008) used the 5 contrastive features to compare British English and Chinese writing styles. Their 5 contrastive features include:

1. **Inductive vs. Deductive** (position of the thesis statement)
2. **Start-Sustain-Turn-Sum vs. Introduction-Body-Conclusion** (overall rhetorical style)
3. **Circular vs. Linear** (number of topic sentences per paragraph)
4. **Metaphorical vs. Straightforward** (use of figurative language)
5. **Explicit Discourse Markers** (number and type of discourse markers)

For the last contrastive feature, Xing, et al. had not mentioned any particular taxonomy used in their study. The present researcher suggested using Fraser's (1999) Taxonomy of Discourse Markers including:

1. **Contrastive markers** that signal "the explicit interpretation of the second sentence contrasts with an interpretation of the first sentence" e.g. although, but, despite,... (Jalilifar, 2008, p. 115).
2. **Elaborative markers** that signal "a quasi parallel relationship between the sentences" e.g. and, above all, also,... (Fraser, 1999, p. 948).
3. **Inferential markers** that signal "the following sentence is a conclusion derived from the preceding sentence" e.g. accordingly, so, then,... (Fraser, 1999, p. 948).

1.0.5 Myside Bias

Myside bias can be defined as the "failure to include any references to other-side arguments or positions in written essays" (Wolfe, Britt, & Butler, 2009, p. 187). It is generally believed that by including counterarguments in argumentations, the overall coherence of the writing will improve. Perkins and his colleagues (Perkins, 1985; Perkins, Farady, & Bushey, 1991) first identified the myside bias and this phenomenon has been studied for more than two decades (Wolfe et al., 2009).

1.1 Methodology

The methodology of the present study includes: participants and setting, instrumentation, and procedure.

1.1.1 Participants and Setting

Forty Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students (both males and females) and 20 EFL teachers (both males and females) were chosen (based on their availability) from a well known college in Mashhad, Iran. These students were chosen because they can speak and write English with a good variety of grammatical structures and adequate vocabulary. Out of the participants, 8 participants were selected (on a voluntary basis) to take part in an interview on writing techniques.

Also 30 Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students (both males and females) took part in the pilot study of the questionnaire.

1.1.2 Instrumentation

1.1.2.1 Consultation

The consultations can be divided into two main sections. In the first section, 3 experts from the department of Persian language and literature at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran were consulted on the Persian writing features and also whether the Five Contrastive Features Framework existed in Persian. To ensure the present framework had not been used before, 3 experts from the department of English language and literature were also consulted.

In the second section, in order to apply Fraser's Taxonomy of Discourse Markers to the Persian essays, the researcher had to translate Fraser's Taxonomy of Discourse Markers and in order to ensure no hindrance in the translation, 3 experts from the department of linguistics at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad were also consulted.

In the first section, the department of Persian language and literature at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad was selected as this department is the academic center of excellence in Iran which means they have the highest rank among universities regarding Persian language and literature background (<http://www.um.ac.ir/module-Faculty.html>). The basis for this consult was the five contrastive features provided by Xing, et al. (2008). Their comments and points of views were used to have a better idea of where Persian writing style stands as compared to English.

The researcher initially provided a copy of the Five Contrastive Features Framework to the 3 experts and arranged a future time to visit each expert to get his/her opinion. During the consult session, the researcher initially asked the experts whether a Persian

style of argumentative writing existed. The results from the consults reflected that the experts believed the Persian style of argumentative writing was similar to the English style. The researcher then went on to ask about whether the Five Contrastive Features Framework had been used to compare Persian and English. The experts all assured the researcher that such a framework had not been used to compare the two languages up to that time. The experts showed interest to find where Persian language would stand in the framework. Due to the present political unrest in Iran, the experts asked the researcher not to tape or video record their opinions. Thus, the researcher only took notes on the opinions provided. At the end of the consult, two of the experts mentioned that during the past 30 years, most Persian writing manuals used to teach writing to the Iranian students had been translated from English and this was the main reason for the similarity between Persian and English writing styles.

In order to ensure the selected framework had not been previously used to compare Persian and English, the researcher also approached 3 experts at the department of English language and literature at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad and provided them with a copy of the framework and asked whether the framework had previously been used in order to compare Persian and English. All 3 experts asserted that this framework had not been previously used to compare Persian and English argumentative styles of writing.

In the second section of the consult, despite the researcher's attempt to find a translated version of Fraser's (1999) taxonomy in Persian, one did not exist. Therefore, the researcher translated the markers into Persian and then she consulted 3 experts at the department of linguistics at the faculty of Literature and Humanities at the Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. The experts went over a copy of the translations that was

provided by the researcher and made some changes. Most changes were regarding the vocabulary choices made by the researcher. Their ideas were then implemented into the finalized translated version of the taxonomy (See Appendix 8).

1.1.2.2 Questionnaire

A questionnaire consisting of three different parts was used. The first part of the questionnaire includes demographics. In this section, the demographic information such as age, gender, field of study, mother tongue, number of years allocated for English learning,... was obtained. The questionnaire was answered in English and was given to each student. The researcher was present to make sure there was no ambiguity regarding the questionnaire items for the participants.

The second part of the questionnaire focused on the participants' perception of the most problematic areas of English writing. In this section, the participants were asked to express their perceptions regarding the six different problems in writing (vocabulary, grammar, spelling, style, punctuation, and handwriting) as mentioned by Jordan (1997) using a five point Likert scale.

In the third part of the questionnaire, participants were asked to comment on their writing techniques, styles, and Myside bias. A five point Likert scale was used to collect the participants' ideas on this section. The designed questionnaire was piloted before administration.

1.1.2.3 Argumentative Writing Task

A total of 40 Iranian Higher-intermediate EFL Students were asked to write a 300-350 word English argumentative essay. This number of words was selected because it represents the students' usual length for written homework. The students were asked to hand in their writings by the next week. In the next week's session the students were told to write another argumentative essay but this time in English (with the same topic). They had till next week time to hand in their essays. This task was a part of the class activity to ensure students' precision in writing.

There was no time restriction as this could hinder the true performance of students (Raimes, 1983; Ballard & Clanchy, 1991; Zia Houseini & Derakhshan, 2006; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2008). Argumentative essay was chosen for a number of reasons; first, since "it is common in the academic disciplines and it is sensitive to task, audience and community, and it is particularly difficult for non native speaker" (Johns, 1993, p. 76). Second, it demands more attention on the part of the writer with regards to the audience the composition is written for. In argumentative writing, the writer has to address and consider the views of the audience and so has to pay closer attention to what he/she writes (Connor, 1987; Rafoth, 1984). Finally, it allows writers to apply the rhetorical structure of argumentative writing -claims, warrants, and data- in their composition which in turn can prove to be a challenge.

1.1.2.4 Interview

Eight of the participants (on a voluntary basis) were asked to take part in a short interview. A set of questions were developed (based on Gosden, 1996; Victori, 1999; and Buckingham, 2008). The questions invited the respondents to reflect on their

composing processes and techniques they employed while writing. The interview was employed to aid the researcher in uncovering how the respondents plan and write in English and what they transfer from Persian writing styles. The interview assisted the researcher in getting an insider perspective of the Iranian EFL students regarding their essay writing and their writing background. The interview was recorded and transcribed.

1.2 Procedure

1.2.1 Data Collection

As a first step, a number of experts from the department of Persian language and literature at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran were consulted regarding the five different sections of the contrastive features mentioned by Xing, et al. (2008). After consultation with the experts and assurance that such a framework had not been previously used to compare Persian and English writing, the researcher went to a well renowned college. After getting their approval for cooperation on the present study, she addressed some EFL teachers and asked for their cooperation in this research. This was done to enable the researcher to use the teachers' authority in classes to make sure the students spend enough time and energy on the required sections. Participants were asked to write a Persian argumentative essay and bring it in into class for the next session, and then they wrote an English argumentative essay with the same topic. Afterwards, they were given 20 minutes to answer the questionnaire. To determine the teachers' point of view on students' problematic areas in English writing, the questionnaire was also given to 20 EFL teachers. To further probe into participants' writing techniques and myside bias, an interview was held with 8 EFL students from the participants (on a voluntary basis).

1.2.2 Data Analysis

The argumentative writings were coded according to the framework provided by Xing, et al. (2008). This was done by two bilingual (English and Persian) raters to insure inter rater reliability. The SPSS software (version 11.5) was used for the statistical analyses of the questionnaire. The NVivo software was used for the last feature of the Five Contrastive Features Framework in order to find out the type and number of discourse markers used for each of the 80 essays.

1.3 Definition of Pertinent Terms

The following terms will frequently appear throughout the present study. These pertinent terms are: argumentation, contrastive rhetoric, discourse markers, EFL, essay, ESL, L1, L2, myside bias, native speaker, non native speaker, and rhetoric. In the following section, a brief definition of each of these pertinent terms is provided.

Argumentation: Argumentation is best defined as "the activity of making claims, challenging them, supporting them with reasons, criticizing those reasons, rebutting those criticisms, etc." (Toulmin, Reike, & Janik, 1979, P.14)

Contrastive Rhetoric: Contrastive rhetoric can be defined as the study of differences between discourses of various languages and cultures as observed in the writings of foreign students (Xing et al., 2008).

Discourse Markers: Fraser (1999) proposes that discourse markers are conjunctions, adverbs, and prepositional phrases that connect two sentences or clauses together.

EFL: English as a Foreign Language. Phakiti (2006, p. 20) defines EFL as a situation “in which English is neither generally used for communication, nor used as the medium of instruction”. He refers to China, Japan, Korea and Thailand as examples. Iran can also be added to these countries. This is also what Kachru (Kachru, Kachru, Nelson, 2006) refers to as “Expanding Circle” (See 2.5.2.).

Essay: Lux (1991) defines essay as "a kind of written discourse in which the writer analyzes or evaluates a real-world issue of current concern" (P.7).

ESL: English as a Second Language. Phakiti (2006, p. 20) explains that ESL is used to refer to a situation “in which English is an official language for communication.” He enlists United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and United States of America in this category. This also pertains to what Kachru (Kachru, Kachru, Nelson, 2006) calls “Outer Circle” (See 2.5.2.).

L1: First language.

L2: Second language or subsequent language.

Myside Bias: Myside bias can be simply defined as the "failure to include any references to other-side arguments or positions in written essays" (Wolfe, Britt, & Butler, 2009, p. 187).

Native/Non Native Speaker: A native speaker of a language is someone who has learned a language as a child and as a first or concurrent language while a non native

speaker is someone who had learned that language as a second or subsequent language. A non native speaker of a language is believed to show less proficiency than a native speaker (Lux, 1991).

Rhetoric: Rhetoric can be defined as " the art or the discipline that deals with the use of discourse, either spoken or written, to inform or persuade or move an audience, whether that audience is made up of a single person or a group of persons" (Corbett, 1971, P. 3).

1.4 Overview of Dissertation

The following chapters provide a detailed account of the present study, the results obtained, the implications it has on future research and ideas for further research.

Chapter one describes the theoretical foundations which spawned the present study. It also looks at the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, the purpose and objectives of the study, and the research questions. A brief look at the methodology and procedure is also described. A list of pertinent terms is given and the chapter ends with an overview of the different sections of the present dissertation.

Chapter two includes the review of the relevant literature for this study and it includes 18 sections. This chapter provides a background on contrastive rhetoric and a review of the literature related to contrastive rhetoric and other related matters of the present research.

Chapter three summarizes the methods employed for the present study. This chapter discusses the participants and instrumentation used, it identifies the variables studied, and explicates the process through which the present research was conducted.

Chapter four illustrates the results obtained from the analysis of the written essays along with the questionnaire and the interview.

Chapter five includes an analysis of the results supported by the data which is summarized in chapter four. In chapter five, the whole study is summed up and each research question is answered individually. The limitations and implications of the present study on ESL/EFL teaching and learning are mentioned and also, ideas for further research are presented. Each chapter ends with concluding remarks which is a summary of the chapter.

Chapter 2

2.0 Introduction

In order to gain a better understanding of the issues surrounding the present topics at hand, it is necessary to review the relevant literature. It is vital to start this review section with a more in depth look at the roots and developmental process of contrastive rhetoric as a field of study. In this chapter, I will discuss the literature related to the present study in detail.

The literature discussed here will be presented in 18 sections; these sections will include:

1) Kaplan and contrastive rhetoric, 2) Criticism on Kaplan and contrastive rhetoric 3) Early contrastive rhetoric, 4) New contrastive rhetoric and studies surrounding the issue, 5) Language and Culture, 6) Native vs. non native rhetoric, 7) The relationship between first and second language literacy, 8) Some explanations for ESL/EFL students' difficulties in writing, 9) A brief history of essay, 10) Persian language and rhetoric history, 11) Myside bias, 12) Argumentative writing 13) The Five Contrastive Features Framework, 14) Discourse markers and Fraser's Taxonomy of Discourse Markers, 15) Qualitative research, 16) Triangulation, 17) Questionnaire, 18) Interview.

2.1 Kaplan and Contrastive Rhetoric

Kaplan is known as the father of contrastive rhetoric. In his study of approximately 600 EFL student compositions, Kaplan (1966) was able to come up with a number of patterns that the language groups he was studying were applying. Kaplan analyzed the compositions of students with various language backgrounds including: Arabic, Chinese, French, Spanish, and Russian. In his work, Kaplan used psychological, philosophical, linguistic and anthropological insights to analyze the differences between English and

the language groups he had selected (Reid, 1988). These EFL students came from three basic language groups which included Semitic, Oriental, and Romance. After Kaplan's analysis of these EFL students' compositions, he found that these groups of writers preferred various strategies regarding paragraph development. Semitic writers favored 'parallelism', Orientals had a tendency toward 'Circular' and the Romance group used a 'Digressive' mode of paragraph organization. Later on, he compared these compositions with descriptions regarding paragraph organization available in textbooks and stylistic manuals available in his time for the advanced level English classrooms.

Kaplan (1966) found out that native speaker English compositions were more direct and linear as compared to these EFL compositions. It was their results that enabled Kaplan to conclude that non native English compositions are influenced by cultural factors. According to McDaniel (1994), before contrastive rhetoric emerged, learners' errors in writing were attributed to their limited knowledge of the second language they were writing in.

In 1966, Kaplan concluded that English paragraph organization is linear and it was at that time that he compared the English organization of paragraphs with other languages. Kaplan (in Kaplan and Ostler, 1982) goes on to define what he means by English thought pattern being linear:

Linear is defined as a discourse pattern in which the topic occurs at the beginning of the discourse unit and controls its content. Old material, that is the topic itself, is developed through various sorts of modification in the form of new material. The new material then becomes old material, forming a cohesive chain of ideas linked to one another through the old-new relationship. This modification generally takes the form of exemplification, illustration and restriction, but is not limited to these. Development is limited however, to the topic introduced at the beginning of the discourse. Linearity

might be described as a straight narrow band composed of links of ideas—old and new—directly linked to the topic (p. 2).

Kaplan believes that students from various cultural backgrounds write according to different rhetorical patterns. He divides these patterns into Oriental, Semitic, Romance, Russian, and English. In his article which was later known as ‘doodles’, Kaplan, showed the possible paths of movement by the following graphics (Figure 2.1):

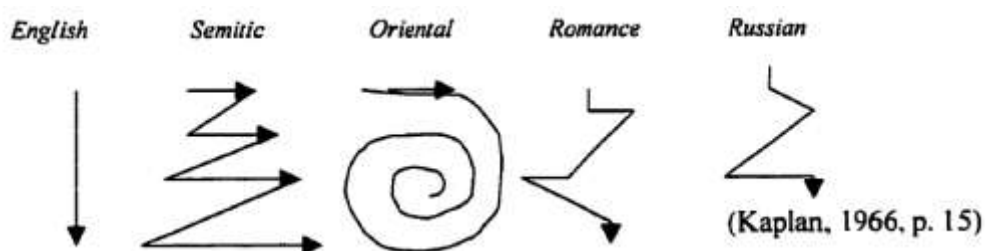


Figure 2.1: Kaplan’s graphics showing the possible paths of movement in writing (adopted from Kaplan, 1966, p. 15)

According to Kaplan (1966), it is necessary for ESL/EFL students to identify their native language shape of a paragraph and compare that with the ideal English version. Kaplan asserts “a student has to learn the form within which he may operate a form acceptable in this time and in this place” (p. 20). Also, that the students should have sufficient writing exercises before they are asked to write “in the same way that the American high school students or college freshman is asked to do” (Kaplan, 1967, p. 15).

2.2 Criticism on Kaplan and Contrastive Rhetoric

Although Kaplan’s work was revolutionary in the field of contrastive rhetoric, it should be mentioned that it did face numerous criticisms. Here are some important ones posed:

1. There is no indication of the exact topic of writing assignment and therefore it is not possible to compare the results with similar studies; and as Burtoff (1983, p. 28) asserts: “although expository writing is the subject of Kaplan’s investigation, it is never clearly defined”.
2. The language proficiency level of the EFL students was not taken into consideration. In addition, there is no reference to the effect, possibility and extent of previous instruction on the EFL students’ compositions. “In other words, do the members of the specific cultural group innately organize in the same fashion, or are they merely mimicking what they were taught to value as “good” in their culture?” (Burtoff, 1983, pp. 28-29).
3. One of the most important criticisms is related to the lack of a specific method of analysis in the study. No clear cut method of analysis has been mentioned by Kaplan.
4. Kachru (1988) also acknowledges the limitations in Kaplan’s theory when she mentions that “what is more evident across cultures than different cognitive styles or rigid thought patterns is different conventions for expressing thoughts appropriately” (p.46).
5. Hinds (1982) also criticizes Kaplan’s work. He believes that Kaplan overgeneralized the notion of ‘oriental’. Kaplan believes oriental languages would include Japanese, Chinese, Cambodian, Korean, Malaysian, Thai, Laotian, and Vietnamese. Hinds believes that although the countries who speak these languages are all in the Far East, however, they are very diverse in their typology and so they cannot be grouped as one.
6. Kaplan did not take into consideration that all English compositions do not follow the same linear pattern of introduction-description-conclusion. Not all professional writers follow the same style or pattern when writing (Lux, 1991).

In his study, Braddock (1974) collected 25 essays from five well known American Journals including The Atlantic, Harper's, The Saturday Review, The Reporter, and The New Yorker. These essays were written by professional writers and he analyzed them. He found out that just 13% of these essays started with a topic sentence and only 3% ended with a topic sentence. Therefore, he concluded that various professional writers used topic sentences differently.

7. Kaplan analyzed the compositions of foreign students who were still at a developmental stage. This means that what he collected did not necessarily reflect those students' styles of writing when they would become experienced writers (Islam, 1994).

About two decades after his initial ideas on contrastive rhetoric, Kaplan (1987) admits to these problems regarding his study and asserts that:

All of the various rhetorical modes identified in the "doodles article" (Kaplan, 1966) are possible in any language i.e. in any language which has written text. 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 (p.10).

8. Severino (1993) also criticizes Kaplan's study. According to her, Kaplan made a mistake in selecting the organization of a single paragraph instead of the whole discourse. She further explains that:

Because the paragraph is often an arbitrary and artificial unit of discourse, not always intended by the writer as a unit of thought, it is less likely to reveal "cultural thought patterns" than are whole discourses (p. 46).

9. Also, Severino (1993) mentions that Kaplan did not take into account the notion of genre for the writings and made the diagrams based on only one type of genre; mainly expository.

- 10.** Kaplan failed to consider the writer's background "in terms of the demographic factors of age, gender, class, and educational background" (p. 46).
- 11.** Another criticism put forth regarding the early contrastive rhetoric is related to setting the U.S. rhetorical pattern as the standard for measurement (Kachru, 1995). According to Fox (2003) many scholars object to "Kaplan's classification of U.S. rhetoric as linear, arguing that it is too simplistic" (p. 20). Fox (2003) further believes that Kaplan has made some sweeping generalizations by only considering five categories to cover all language types.
- 12.** Yet another criticism is regarding the use of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis as the base of the contrastive rhetoric theory. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis suggests that the ESL/EFL students do not have the capability to master English writing because of the interrelationship of rhetorical patterns and cognitive ability. Kaplan (in Grabe and Kaplan, 1989) addresses this criticism when he says:

This conceptualization of writing variation across languages, while it may have been initially overstated, is readily applicable to writing research and L2 writing instruction. This set of notions does not implicate the deterministic view that speakers of other languages think differently or have differing cognitive frameworks. Rather, these notions assume that literacy skills (both reading and writing) are learned; that they are culturally (and perhaps linguistically) shaped; that they are at least in part, transmitted through the formal educational system; and that learners are, in principle, capable of learning writing conventions and strategies of various types (p. 264).

- 13.** Kubota and Lehner (2004) also criticize contrastive rhetoric on the grounds that it seems to be more a prescriptive approach. They write:

Overall, researchers supporting contrastive rhetoric hypotheses recommend making rhetorical differences explicit, raising students' awareness of such differences, and acculturating students through language exercises with concrete models that meet audience expectations. With an assumption of clear

cultural differences in rhetorical conventions, these pedagogical suggestions tend to be prescriptive (p.13).

Leki (1991) also maintains that the findings of contrastive rhetoric are prescriptive and that it seems like students have to imitate how English writing should be and so the creativity of each individual student is no longer visible in their writing. Spack (1997) also disagrees with labeling the foreign students according to their first language.

Rix (2006) believes that by using contrastive rhetoric models in classrooms “that ask students to engage in a comparative analysis of a paragraph as they would write it seeks ultimately to show students how we would write” (p.29). This would mean that teachers are just asking the students to assimilate into a dominant culture or language.

- 14.** Connor (1996) also believes that by “emphasizing on the Anglo-American patterns of writing, contrastive rhetoric may encourage students to look down upon their first language writing styles” (p. 25).

Leki and Carson (1997, cited in Sanneh, 2009, p. 21) also contend that:

The danger in accepting the traditional contrastive rhetoric explanations for writing differences or cross-cultural explanations for behavioral differences is that such explanations risk turning ESL students into cardboard characters whose behavior is simply determined by these cultural norms and who have no individual differences or subtleties obscured by these behaviors.

- 15.** Kobuta and Lehner (2004) assert that in the traditional sense of contrastive rhetoric, the main emphasis was on “awareness raising and explicit teaching of the rhetorical norm with prescriptive exercises” (p. 15). They criticize the traditional sense of contrastive rhetoric on the ground that there was always a touch of cultural determinism in it which results in some groups of learners being viewed as “innately deficient because of their cultural and linguistic background” (p. 15).

Several studies have tried to re-evaluate Kaplan's 1966 study. One such study is Bar-Lev's study in 1986, in which, he employed a text retelling technique. In this study, Bar-Lev used narrative and expository texts; these texts were translated into different languages (including Persian, Chinese, Arabic, and Vietnamese) and the students were to retell the texts after hearing them on tape. Bar-Lev asserted that this method of retelling "would reveal the rhetorical structure of the various languages" (p. 235). For his study, Bar-Lev considered four types of clause connectors. These four types of conjunctions included: subordinate, coordinate, adverbial, and zero (no conjunction). He found out that both Spanish and Persian participants used the greatest extent of subordinate conjunctions. The Spanish mostly used "That" and "Because" while the Persian used "For example"; and more surprising to him was that the Persians used "For example" even when no example followed the conjunction (p. 239). Bar-Lev concluded that a substantial revision was necessary regarding many of the analyses Kaplan had made in 1966.

2.3 Early Contrastive Rhetoric

Contrastive rhetoric traditionally lacked a specific theoretical framework and has drawn from various disciplines including, semiotics, anthropology, first and second language acquisition studies, psycholinguistics, and sociolinguistics. As Mauranen (2006) points out: "Contrastive rhetoric has not had any obvious theoretical foundation, nor has it arisen from a methodological problem to be solved" (p. 43). Grabe and Kaplan (1996) assert:

Contrastive rhetoric has its origins in notions of language structure, learning, and use which are not strongly autonomous, and its goal is to describe ways in which written texts operate in larger cultural contexts. It has sought to arrive at

some understanding of the ways in which written language operates and the ways in which written language diverges from spoken languages (p. 179).

Kobuta and Lehner (2004) enumerate two main hypotheses for contrastive rhetoric in the traditional sense. They summarize the two hypotheses as: “(1) each language or culture has rhetorical conventions that are unique to itself; and (2) the rhetorical conventions of students’ L1 interfere with their ESL writing” (p. 8).

The concept of contrastive rhetoric, which became popular in the 1960’s and 1970’s, was directly influenced by a number of theories. These theories generally included the Whorfian hypothesis of linguistic relativity, contrastive analysis, error analysis, interlanguage, and discourse analysis (Lin, 2007). I will discuss each of these theories in brief.

2.3.1 The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis

Grabe and Kaplan (1996) assert that “contrastive rhetoric frankly derives some, but not all, of its orientation from the weak version of the Whorf/Sapir Hypothesis” (P. 179).

Gumperz and Levinson (1996) have defined the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis as:

the semantic structures of different languages might be fundamentally incommensurable, with consequences for the way in which speakers of specific languages might think and act. On this view, language, thought, and culture are deeply interlocked, so that each language might be claimed to have associated with it a distinctive world-view (p.2).

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has two main parts: linguistic determinism and linguistic relativity. Linguistic determinism refers to the idea that the way one’s language is organized will determine how they perceive the world, which means by learning a language, a person’s way of thinking will change (Yule, 1996). Linguistic relativity

claims that the cognitive processes which are determined are different from one language to another. Therefore, speakers of different languages think differently. Whorf (1956) asserts “This new principle of relativity holds that all observers are not led by the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe, unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar” (p. 214). He further explains about his point of view regarding linguistic determinism and relativity when he says:

We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages. The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face; on the contrary, the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds-and this means largely by the linguistic systems in our minds. We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way- an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language. The agreement is, of course, an implicit and unstated one, but its terms are absolutely obligatory (pp. 212-213).

A much quoted example for the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is that Eskimos have four different expressions referring to the one English word ‘snow’. They use aput (snow on the ground), quana (falling snow), piqsirpoq (drifting snow) and finally quiumqsuq (snow drift). Whorf believes since the Eskimos’ language is different from English; their perception of the world is also different (Stern, 1983). The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has a strong and a weak version. The strong version indicates that language completely determines thought processes and possibilities, while the weak version claims that the specific concepts related to a language influence its speakers’ thought (Jourdan & Tuite, 2006).

However, the idea that language determines thought - the strong version of the hypothesis - may only be partially correct. It fails to take into account that “users of a language do not inherit a fixed set of patterns to use. They inherit the ability to manipulate and create with a language, in order to express their perceptions” (Yule, 1996, p. 248). This means that if a language does not have a word for ‘computer’, would it mean that its natives would not be able to think about one and learn how to use it? Pinker (1994) criticizes the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis; in this criticism, Pinker expresses his rejection of the idea in an example. He mentions a case where a serious explosion was caused by a worker who threw a cigarette into a drum full of gasoline vapor labeled ‘empty’. He states that according to Whorf, the source of this confusion was a semantic one in which the word ‘empty’ could mean either ‘drained’ or ‘inert’. However Pinker believes there is more to this story:

A drum with nothing but vapor in it looks just like a drum with nothing in it at all. Surely this walking catastrophe was fooled by his eyes, not by the English language Whorf’s assertions about Apache psychology are based entirely on Apache grammar – making his argument circular. Apaches speak differently, so they must think differently. How do we know that they think different? Just listen to the way they speak! (pp.60-61).

2.3.2 Contrastive Analysis

Contrastive rhetoric has generally evolved from a weak or narrow and in contrast, a strong or broad version. In the weak version it is believed that the key element in second language composition is the transfer of rhetorical structures from the writer’s first language. In the strong version, however, transfer from the first language is viewed as just one of many influencing factors in second language composition. Other effective

factors include: the author's intention, developmental and educational consideration, the author's understanding regarding his/her readers (Martin, 1992).

Contrastive Analysis Theory was originally developed by Fries in 1945. He maintains that the linguistic system of the first language directly influences second language acquisition. This theory has a strong and a weak version.

In the strong version, it is believed that the difficulties which the language learners experience in second language learning can be predicted by means of knowing the differences between the language learners' first and second languages (Connor, 1996).

In 1970, Wardhaugh came up with a weak version of contrastive analysis. In this version, it is believed that contrastive analysis could be used to explain only some of the difficulties experienced by second language learners.

Of course, some believe that another mode which is the moderate version also exists for contrastive analysis. Brown (1994) asserts that the moderate version which "centers on the nature of human learning, and not just on the contrast between the two languages, has more explanatory power" (p. 201).

Transfer

The idea of transfer in second language learning generally refers to the tendency of non native students transferring meaning and structures from their native to the target language (Lado, 1957; Edelsky, 1982; Odlin, 1989). Transfer is of two kinds- both positive and negative.

Positive transfer happens when non native students tend to apply their native language structures that are similar to the target language ones when they are using that target language.

Negative transfer, on the other hand, happens when non native students tend to apply their native language structures that are different from the target language in their target language use. Negative transfer is considered one source of poor performance for non native students.

Transfer takes place on three different levels: Phonological, sociolinguistic, and rhetorical. On the *phonological* level, for example, Broselow (1983) found out that Iraqi and Egyptian speakers of Arabic usually add a [i] before initial clusters due to their native language.

For the *sociolinguistic* level, Olshtain in 1983 concluded that speakers of Russian, English, and Hebrew tend to utilize apology expressions of their native language in the target language context.

As for the *rhetorical* level, in 1983, Bartlett analyzed some letters and essays written by natives of Navajo and Western Apache. He found out that at the discourse level, these writers transfer a rhetorical redundancy from their native language. This redundancy is “perceived by native English teachers to violate the rules of written English” (p. 297).

Numerous studies have investigated the effect of transfer on students’ compositions. For example, Zia Hosseini and Derakhshan (2006) analyzed a total of 120 English and Persian argumentative essays written by 60 Iranian university students. They rated the

essays according to three components which included content, style and organization. They concluded that there was a great difference in the Persian and English essays written and they attributed these differences to the transfer from Persian to English. They found that the students did less planning in Persian essay writing as compared to English and that the majority of the problems in the English essays were related to lexical, phrasal, and syntactic errors and that many students negatively transferred their knowledge from Persian to English. However, despite the present findings, the researchers were unable to find an overall strategy or pattern used by the students.

All in all, it should be taken into account that not all transfer is negative as Kubota (1998) found out. He studied two groups of Japanese students who wrote in both Japanese and in English. After analyzing their essays he found that there was a positive, rather than a negative, transfer in the students' first and second language writing ability. Also through an interview, Kubota reported that the reasons behind the low ESL scores were the students' "(1) lack of experience in English composition and (2) lack of English language skills" (p. 86).

Although it is generally believed that transfer occurs in ESL writers' compositions, there are studies that show otherwise. For example, Kamal (1989, cited in Lux, 1991) found "no evidence of transfer from Arabic to English at the stylistic, organizational, or persuasive levels" (p. 34). Also, after studying various research regarding the similarities and differences between English and Arabic, Lux (1991) came to realize "while sentence style differences between Arabic and English seem to be fairly well substantiated, it is less clear that differences in organizational style exist" (p. 34).

Contrastive analysis has been criticized on numerous occasions. Frith (1975) believes although the contrastive analysis theory may basically be correct, however, the demands it places on the linguistic theory are too heavy and cannot be met. According to Ouaouicha (1986) “There are not, as of yet, complete scientific descriptions of languages that contrastive analysis can use for comparison and contrast” (P. 60).

Another criticism is that the spotlight only seems to be placed on the structure of language while the idea of learning situation is a very broad area. Ouaouicha (1986) asserts:

In addition to the learner’s native language and its interference in his dealings with the target language, there are other factors at play; e.g., the learner himself, the target language as a system, and the way what is to be learnt is presented to the student (p. 61).

And finally, contrastive analysis has been criticized for not viewing “languages in dynamic ways, often assuming static relationships between languages and ignoring the cultural, religious, social, ethical, and political factors that could all have an effect on how transfer occurs” (Phung, 2006, p. 16).

2.3.3 Error Analysis

This approach was first introduced by Corder in 1967. In this type of analysis, it is generally believed that, the learners’ errors provide a valuable source of information regarding strategies and procedures these learners use in acquiring a language. Errors are of two kinds; the first is called *interlingual* errors; these errors made by learners can be traced back to their first language and this is done through the transfer of the linguistic patterns from the learners’ first language. The second type of error, known as *intralingual* errors, includes the learners’ overgeneralization of a specific rule from the

target language. For example, many students make this kind of error when applying the past “ed” to exception verbs (say-sayed).

Just like contrastive analysis, error analysis has had its share of criticisms. Phung (2006) mentions two criticisms. The first one being, “it is difficult, if not impossible, to pinpoint a singular cause of any one error” (p.17). The second criticism refers to the limitations of research findings; “by focusing on errors, the researcher is blinded by the right things that the L2 learner is doing, and thus, limits the findings of the research” (p.17).

2.3.4 Interlanguage

In 1972, Selinker coined a new term called ‘Interlanguage’. He believes that the learners’ L2 comes from three different sources: “(1) an accurate reflection of the second language system,(2) negative transfer from L1, and (3) the inaccurate result of creative construction, such as learners’ overgeneralization of L2 rules” (Lin, 2007, p. 15).

Interlanguage basically maps out the learning process of the target language. Ellis (1994) defines interlanguage as: “the system of implicit second language knowledge that the learner develops and systematically amends over time” (p. 354).

2.3.5 Discourse Analysis

Martin (1992) asserts that in recent years, there are two distinctive general characteristics in the field of contrastive rhetoric: 1. the idea that writing or reading texts is greatly influenced by discourse-level factors. 2. The idea that the culture of various discourse communities can play a vital role in expectations regarding written discourse.

Discourse analysis is concerned with analyzing structures beyond a sentence level in both spoken and written forms. Brown and Yule (1984) believe that a discourse analyst:

Must be capable of providing, not just an analysis of a piece of text, but an analysis of the mental representation of that text. That is, the discourse analyst may claim that the product of his analysis is not simply a good account of the facts, but can go on to claim that the product of his analysis is psychologically 'real'. It is what people have in their heads after they have read a text (p. 111).

One of the most renowned scholars in discourse analysis is Swales. In 1990, Swales, asserted that the aim or the communicative purpose behind a discourse should be the main criterion for discourse categorization. He labeled each set of discourse with a shared communicative purpose as a genre and maintained: "the purpose of a genre constitutes its rationale and the rationale shapes the structure, style, and content of the genre" (p. 58). He later goes on to conclude that "discourses belonging to the same genre not only share common communication purposes but also exhibit similarities in structure, content, and style, as well as in intended audience" (p. 58).

In English rhetoric, it is customary for the writer to provide sufficient transition statements to enable the reader to track the writers' logic in writing. However, this is not the case in many cultures such as that in Japanese, Chinese and Korean. In these cultures it is the readers' responsibility to understand the writer's intention (Swales, 1990; Kirkpatrick, 1995). Every language has its own special way of constructing discourse and although some parts might be shared, most parts are exclusive for that specific language (McDaniel, 1994). Matsuda (1997) generally believes that "each writing assignment needs to be placed in a real context of writing, involving a discourse community shared with real readers" (p.58).

2.4 New Contrastive Rhetoric and Studies Surrounding the Issue

Over the past two decades, Kaplan along with Connor and Purves has tried to clarify some confusing parts related to the earlier contrastive rhetoric theory; together, they tried to define a new contrastive rhetoric theory in the means. The main source of difference between the earlier and the new version of contrastive rhetoric theory lies in the fact that while the earlier version was based on linguistic deficiencies, the new version concentrates on cognitive deficiencies. So, there is a shift from a linguistic framework to a more sociocultural one. In the new version, the differences between cultures are taken into account more than before.

Leki (1991) believes there are two main approaches to modern contrastive rhetoric:

(a) to examine L1 texts from different cultures, often professional, published work, written for native speakers, and the rhetorical contexts in which these texts are inscribed; or (b) to establish textual criteria and search for those qualities in samples of successful and unsuccessful texts by students writing in their L1 (p. 126).

According to Casey (2001) in the more recent concept of contrastive rhetoric, writers are no longer considered “monolithic cultural groups with predictable characteristics” (p. 45). They are viewed as “individuals who make choices dependent on a wide number of social, linguistic, cultural, and historical variables, and it also incorporates the possibility of positive transfer from L1 to L2” (p. 45). Ventola and Mauranen (1991, as cited in Godsen, 1996, p. 109) affirm that:

Distinct differences between writing cultures can be found not only between cultures which appear very different on many accounts, like Oriental and

Anglo-American cultures . . . but also between cultures which appear relatively similar, such as German, French and Anglo-American cultures.

In 1991, Taylor and Chen looked into the rhetorical structures that were found in the physical science in both English and Chinese compositions. They studied the possible effects of the culture on organization. The results showed both similarities and differences and they concluded that there was no one specific Chinese way of writing to be compared with English. Mohan and Lo (1985) object to Kaplan's non linear portrayal of Chinese students' writing style. They do not believe that there is sufficient evidence to conclude that negative transfer plays a role in their writings:

Even if we were given a quantified error analysis of Chinese students' writing which showed a lack of linear development, this would not prove that negative transfer is operating. For one thing, we have shown that there is no evidence that Chinese paragraph development is in fact indirect. For another, there are a number of alternative explanations for errors at the organizational level in composition: A student's English may be inadequate for expressing complex ideas; a student who is unfamiliar with a topic may be unable to write a well-organized essay about it in any language; a student may feel the teacher values correct grammatical expression more than organizational form; and a student may not be familiar with the conventions of expository writing in the native language (just as there are many English-speaking students who are not skillful writers of expository prose) (p. 521).

Scollon (1997) believes research on contrastive rhetoric is too concerned with texts and does not take into account oral influences, and in doing so cannot consider the EFL situations fully. With these in mind, Matsuda (1997, 2001) came up with what he calls the revised version of contrastive rhetoric. This model is important because it amended several problems related to the early version of contrastive rhetoric.

Matsuda (2001) believes that a writer has to make some complex decisions in the process of producing textual organization and that their backgrounds will affect the way they write. He asserts that a writer's background does not only include their native culture and language, but also their participation in different types of first language and second language discourse, and their education can greatly influence their writing. Matsuda (2001) concludes that:

An L2 writer's broadly defined background may provide him/her with ample exposure to the discourse conventions of the target language. Consequently, the writer may exhibit the ability to compose discourse in the target language, at a similar level of proficiency as that of native speakers" (p. 249).

Hence, by maintaining a weak version of the early contrastive theory, Matsuda, manages to resolve some issues which were raised in the early version of the theory. He takes into account the idea of the writers' backgrounds as an influential factor in writing and also asserts that the writers' experience in second language writing can assist him/her to write similar to a native speaker.

Numerous studies have been conducted using the concept of contrastive rhetoric in order to explain the similarities and differences found in ESL/EFL learners' compositions. Bickner and Peyasantiwong (1988) analyzed about 90 essays of English and Thai written by native speakers of each language and they came to conclude that stylistically speaking, Thai essays were more formal and had more consistency in register as compared to the English essays. Also, the Thai writers focused more on explaining their motivation, defining the topics, and even giving suggestions in the conclusions.

In 1981, Chen-Yu collected and analyzed 200 Chinese speaker compositions related to the Michigan Placement Test. What she realized in the analysis is very interesting. She

concluded that contrary to the English style of writing, the Chinese students mentioned the main theme at the beginning and the main idea was left until the concluding paragraph. Moreover, the main idea was generally mentioned as the writer's personal opinion. She also discovered that Chinese writers were hesitant on taking a specific stance in their writings and always gave positive statements before mentioning negative ones. This last finding is believed to be related to the Chinese culture and rules of politeness. Center (2004) also approves this point when she says "in many non-American cultures, including Japan, it is considered inappropriate to get right to the point" (p. 299).

Kachru (1983, as cited in Noor, 2001, p. 260) studied paragraph arrangements in Hindi and English texts written by Hindi speakers and found that both texts shared a common characteristics which was the digression seen in both texts and the spiral style that was also taken up by the authors.

In 1987, Clyne analyzed the discourse pattern differences between German and English. His main focus was on linearity and symmetry. He analyzed some published academic articles in English and German. These articles were in the field of sociology and linguistics. He came to realize that most German articles were non linear and digressive and even more asymmetric. 'Asymmetric' was used to refer to the fact that various sections of the article were longer than other parts. Clyne relates the findings to the idea that while German focuses on paradigm analysis, English, on the other hand, favors data analysis and "this characteristic style of German has incruised digression in German academic discourse where it plays different functions such as providing theory, giving additional information, or challenging a different theoretical view" (p. 227).

In 1990, Hinds analyzed a number of texts written by some Asian groups including Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Thai. He focused on the place of the thesis statement (inductive vs. deductive) in the text. He found out that these participants' writings did not follow either the inductive or the deductive organization pattern. Therefore, Hinds believes these Asian groups writings are what he calls quasi inductive. He asserts:

We must recognize that the traditional distinction that English-speaking readers make between deductive and inductive writing styles is inappropriate to the writing of some nonnative authors. We may more appropriately characterize this writing (Chinese, Korean, Thai, Japanese) as quasi-inductive, recognizing that this technique has its purpose the task of getting readers to think for themselves, to consider the observations made, and to draw their own conclusions. The task of the writer then is not necessarily to convince, although it is clear that such authors have their opinions. Rather, the task is to stimulate the reader into contemplating an issue or issues that might not have been previously considered (pp. 99-100).

Therefore, Hinds (1990) believes that the thesis statement in these essays would be mentioned near the end and would be considered implied. So, it becomes the readers' responsibility to interpret what the writer was intending.

In 1995, Kirkpatrick studied the inductive/deductive preference of Chinese. He found that although the Chinese are capable of reasoning deductively, they still prefer inductive argument. He reports that the deductive style of reasoning is most often used for a special purpose, more often than not, for portraying directness. Kirkpatrick also point to the importance of hierarchical relationship at the family and political level. He then writes that argument and persuasion "has often been conducted by an inferior to a superior, or bottom up. This has encouraged the adoption of a method of expression and argument that is indirect" (p. 291). He believes it is for his reason that the Chinese preferred style of argument is inductive.

Lee and Johnson-Laird (2006) conducted an experiment in which they wanted to see whether East Asians and Westerners followed an inductive or deductive method of reasoning. It is generally believed that:

East Asians tend to reason on the basis of their knowledge, beliefs, and experience, whereas Westerners tend to reason logically. That is, East Asians should make inductions based on knowledge and Westerners should make deductions where a task allows both sorts of inference (p. 462).

With this aim in mind, they posited a problem which gives a premise and checked the students' responses. The problem was that if a pilot happens to fall out of an airplane without a parachute he/she will definitely die. However, this pilot did not. Why didn't he/she die? They posit that if the respondents relate their answers to the plane not being in the air would relate to an inductive method of thinking while any indication of the pilot having a parachute would be related to a deductive method of thinking. They asked 30 Chinese students and 21 American students to answer this question and they found out that both the east Asians (Chinese) and the Westerners (Americans) referred to the deductive method of thinking which shows that both East Asians and Westerners can think alike in a common situations and that culture does not play a role in some mental strategies utilized by man. This idea is further supported by Norenzayan, Smith, Kim, and Nisbett (2002) when they assert: "People in all cultures are likely to possess both holistic and analytical reasoning systems" (p. 654).

One influential factor in second language writing involves the students' writing experience and also the instructions they have received in both L1 and L2. Hirose (2003) analyzed the organizational patterns of texts written by 15 Japanese students studying at a Japanese university. These students majored in British and American studies. The students were asked to write two essays, one in English and another in Japanese. Hirose

found that in the organization patterns used by the students, more deductive method was used as compared to the Japanese essays. In addition, it was realized that the students' English essays were more organized and developed which would show how these students were affected by their second language writing instructions they had received.

Fakhri (2004) studied some Arabic research articles and found that although Arabic is generally a reader responsible type of writing, it is not always the case and that there are always some exceptions to this. He also found that some articles show a high degree of directness while some articles do not.

Connor (1996) also points out that Finnish is more reader responsible in that much of the meaning is not mentioned directly and is therefore left to the reader to infer.

In 2007, Zarei and Mansoori compared English and Persian research articles and found that while English represents a more writer oriented style, Persian -like many Asian languages such as Chinese and Japanese- is reader responsible and so the reader has to play an active role in understanding what the writer has meant to say.

Gosden (1996) interviewed a group of 16 Japanese novice researchers who were all PhD candidates in the fields of applied physics, chemistry, and cell biology at the Tokyo Institute of Technology. The interview questions aimed at finding answers to how they wrote research papers and whether they translated from L1 to L2 or not. He found out through the participants' comments, that these students "had developed insights about the many standardized conventions of the written research article through their reading" (p. 120). He also found out that 9 out of 13 participants reported that they translated

from Japanese to English while writing in English and Gosden relates this phenomenon to the prevailing focus on grammar translation methods used in Japanese instruction.

Valero-Garces (1996) studied the differences between Spanish and English economic research articles. Valero-Garces found that while Spanish writers used longer paragraphs (about 31 lines), the English writers used relatively shorter texts (12 lines). It was also realized that the Spanish writers tend to write in a more impersonal style in comparison to the native speaker writers.

Zhang (2005, as cited in Kobayashi and Rinnert, 2008) found that students with different cultural backgrounds tend to understand assignments differently sometimes and this could lead to a complete misinterpretation of the task at hand by these students. Zhang found that just 2 out of 6 advanced level students with different cultural backgrounds understood and met the specific expectation of the instructor.

In Liu and You's study (2008), they found that the rhetorical traditions of both the American and Taiwanese students influenced the way they wrote in English. The Taiwanese students emphasized on showing their knowledge in their research writing while the Americans sought to bring in evidence for their ideas by means of direct quotes.

Yang and Cahill (2008) have found that the Chinese students (like U.S. students) prefer to use directness in their texts; however, they also found that the U.S. students were more direct in comparison to the Chinese students in their writings.

Donahue (2008) studied the differences between French students' essays written in English and American students' essays and found that while French students tended to use pronouns such as 'one' or 'we', the Americans used 'I'. She also found that while in 84% of the American essays, the thesis was established from the start the French essays did not follow the same style.

Shen (1989) found similar results in China. The Chinese tend to use 'we' as in the people together, rather than the 'I' that the Western countries use to show individuality.

Here is a list (Table 2.1) of a number of studies conducted using contrastive rhetoric cited in Oi (1984, pp. 59-62). This list represents a range of various languages which have been studied and it displays the specific discourse features that add to our present day understanding of these languages:

Table 2.1: Numerous studies conducted using contrastive rhetoric (adopted from Oi, 1984, pp. 59-62)

Author (year)	Native Language of Subjects	Impressionistic Description	Discourse Features
Kaplan (1966)	Arabic (Semitic Languages)	series of parallel constructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive use of conjunctions and sentence connectors • Sentences begin with coordinating elements (And, So, But) • Minimum to subordination
Kaplan (1966)	Oriental	Approach by indirection, "turning and turning in widening gyre"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The construction circles back, returning to the subject and showing it from a variety of tangential views, but never attacks it directly. Ideas are developed in terms of what they are not, rather than what they are. • Lacks the facility of abstraction sufficient for extended definition.

Kaplan (1966)	French	“digression”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “...I wonder why...”, leading to a digression that does not contribute specifically to the basic thought of the paragraph.
Kaplan (1966)	Russian	“rhetorical difficulty”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short sentences mingled with extremely long sentences.
Santana-Seda (1974)	Spanish		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer sentences, fewer sentences per visual paragraph. • Digressive propositions occur with notably greater frequency than among native writers of English. • Greater frequency of coordinate structure in Spanish paragraph. • A greater frequency of subordinate structure in English paragraph.
Berman (n.d.)	Hebrew	seems “clumsy and childish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of coordination where native speakers of English would use various subordinating structures, such as relative clauses.
Ishiki (1981)	Japanese	“extreme abbreviation”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural ellipsis (as in Haiku) occurs.
Loveday (1980)	Japanese	(1) under-differentiation (2) over-differentiation (3) socio-linguistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy of speech, extreme abbreviation, objective analysis. • Concern for status within social hierarchy and avoidance of terms of self reference and self address, heavy emphasis on rigid politeness formulas. • Reluctance to make negative decisions or firm assertions.
Ostler (n.d.)	English	Latinate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “English rhetorical style developed in a fashion following the Latinate works of Remus and Bacon, into an efficient, pragmatic linear style.”

Ostler (n.d.)	Spanish	Greek rhetoric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Spanish adheres to the conventions of Greek rhetoric. The cultural orientation of the native Spanish speaker requires that he express his personal point of view in a flexible, artistic manner.”
Koch (n.d.)	Arabic	“a balance, a rhythm, a repetitiousness that produces an archaic feeling.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “repetitiousness is part of the rhetorical structure of Modern Standard Arabic, at least in terms of written persuasive argument. Repetition served not only as a text building device, but also as an important strategy, creating rhetorical presence which the Arabic speaker deems necessary for effective persuasion. The repetition occurs in lexical roots, morphological patterns, the use of conjoined pairs of synonymous terms, syntactic parallelism, and paraphrase.”
Ostler (1980)	Arabic		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English essays by Saudi Arabian students were analyzed using two quantitative measures: Kellogg Hunt’s T-unit and Kaplan’s Discourse Bloc. • It was found that English writers used significantly more subordination; the Arabic writers used significantly more coordination. Further, in the Arabic corpus, the dependent clauses in coordinate structures are embellished with adverbial and adjectival modification.
Dehghanpesheh (1972)	Farsi		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Farsi writers prefer to develop paragraphs using a topic followed by restatement, metaphor, simile or proverb as illustrative devices, in the Arab manner.”
Chen (1981)	Chinese		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study encompassed 200 texts written by native speakers of Chinese taking the

	<p>Michigan placement test at the college level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twenty percent of the writers did not take an academic stance but became personally involved with their texts. • Thirty percent of the essays examined concluded with some type of proverb or formula in statement on virtue- a phenomenon ascribed to the Chinese cultural assumption that all prose should have moral content. • The contrary topic was developed and subsequently, a second topic was introduced, usually near the end of the essay, in which was revealed the actual opinion of the writer. • This reluctance resulted in a characteristic phenomenon: the writer would first say something positive about a topic before making any critical statement- sixty percent of the texts employed this pattern to some degree.
<p>Harder (1979) Japanese</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The isshindenshin- the notion that people can intuitively understand each other's thoughts- produces several anomalies in English; the lack of syntactic and semantic parallelism in a string of ideas, the use of complex phrasing which (to the English reader) seems unnecessarily prolix, the occurrence of sentence fragments and of ungrammatical topicalizations. Furthermore, the English linear pattern of organization, with its emphasis on objectivity, on clarity, on logical sequencing and with its insistence that only ideas centrally relevant to the topic be included, is

			antithetical to the Japanese pattern of dealing with loosely defined topics in the discussion of which the writer's personality dominates and the organization is expected to reflect the writer's process of thinking as it actually occurred.
Nishimura (n.d.)	Japanese	lack of single central idea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no single central idea, nut, rather parts of ideas are scattered throughout the paragraph (Japanese). It is up to the reader to "follow sensitively and intuitively the delicate and significant trend of thinking throughout the whole discourse."
<i>Nishimura (n.d.)</i>	Japanese	frequent use of paragraph openers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Japanese writers also retain the native cultural preferences for starting paragraphs with formulaic openers. Nishimura compared 157 paragraphs taken from a book by a native English speaking writer with 155 paragraphs taken from a book by a native Japanese speaking writer, writing in English. She found that nine percent of the English writer's paragraphs started with paragraph openers, while in the Japanese-English corpus thirty one percent of the paragraphs started with such openers.

As can be seen in the above table, only one study considers Persian (Farsi) as the native language of the subjects. This emphasizes the scarcity of sufficient studies regarding Persian in contrastive rhetoric studies. Connor (2002, p. 498) divides contrastive studies into four domains of investigation. The following table (Table 2.2) is what Connor presents:

Table 2.2: Four domains of contrastive studies (adopted from Connor, 2002, p. 498)

Domain	Purpose	Examples
Contrastive text linguistic studies	Examine, compare, and contrast how texts are formed and interpreted in different languages and cultures using methods of written discourse analysis	Clyne (1987); Connor & Kaplan (1987); Eggington (1987); Hinds (1983, 1987, 1990)
Studies of writing as cultural and educational activity	Investigate literacy development on L1 language and culture and examine effects on the development of L2 literacy	Carson (1992); Purves (1988)
Classroom-based contrastive studies	Examine cross-cultural patterns in process writing, collaborative revisions, and student-teacher conferences	Allaei & Connor (1990); Goldstein & Conrad (1990); Hull, Rose, Fraser, & Castellano (1991); Nelson & Murphy (1992)
<i>Genre-specific investigations</i>	Are applied to academic and professional writing	Bhatia (1993); Connor, Davis, & De Rycker (1995); Jenkins & Hinds (1987); Mauranen (1993); Swales (1990); Tirkkonen-Condit (1996); Ventola & Mauranen (1991)

According to the above table, the present study can be placed under the ‘contrastive text linguistics studies’. The researcher hopes to analyze and compare the texts written by participants in order to interpret the differences and similarities between Persian and English rhetoric.

It should be taken into account that, generally speaking, there have been some weaknesses in the previous studies on contrastive rhetoric. These weaknesses are mostly related to the methodology employed by the researchers. Kim (2008) refers to some of these weaknesses:

A small number of writing samples, an inadequate description of research participants and writing tasks, lack of interrater reliability checks, and an inappropriate application of statistics. Another weakness is that some studies

relied solely on the researcher' intuition, which is subjective and might be biased (p. 21).

Connor (1996) asserts that analyzing a small number of samples is a "criticism directed at most qualitative research" (p. 162) and is not a specific criticism directed at contrastive rhetoric studies. However, she mentions the "validity, quality, and generalizing potential" (p. 162) of contrastive rhetoric studies being under question.

All in all, despite all the criticisms and controversies, contrastive rhetoric has remained a viable theory for research in the field of writing. This might be due to the theory's "strong explanatory power and significant implications for practice" (Saneh, 2009, p. 26). The present study also aims at using contrastive rhetoric to find out whether there are similarities or differences between Persian and English essay writing by Iranian students.

Persian in Contrastive Rhetoric Studies

Although various languages have received a great deal of attention when it comes to contrastive rhetoric, Persian is among the languages that has not received its share in the limelight. There seems to be a dearth of research when Persian is involved. The following are some studies that have been done on Persian.

In 1974, Manuchehri studied the linguistic differences between Persian and English and she found that the verb forms function differently in the two languages. She also realized that Persian does not distinguish between some tenses which are essential in English writing.

Dehghanpisheh (1979) analyzed some English and Persian paragraphs written by Iranian students and found out Persian writers tend to favor using metaphors, simile, or proverb in their compositions. They do not follow the linear progression used in English academic writing.

In 1997, Riazi conducted a longitudinal study on four Iranian doctoral students of education in their second year of residency in Canada. He used a naturalistic approach in his study and in doing so he shadowed these students for a period of five months. He used interviews, questionnaires, process logs, and the written papers of the students. He realized that the students' unfamiliarity with the English writing conventions impeded their true performance and that this fact overshadowed the students' English language proficiency. He also acknowledges some of the strategies used by these Iranian students in their writings. These strategies included "note making, inferencing, use of mother tongue, revising, and editing" (p. 123).

Baleghizadeh and pashaii (2010) conducted a contrastive study on the rhetorical organization of essays written by native English and Iranian students. They studied 25 Persian and 25 English essays for the frequency of T-units, discourse blocs, and coordinating conjunctions. The results of their quantitative study showed that the Iranian students used all three features more than their English counterparts. Baleghizadeh and pashaii (2010) asserted that this was the result of the differences in the thought patterns of Iranian and English writers.

Abdollahzadeh (2010) interviewed some freshman and senior Iranian students and asked them about the various strategies they used while writing in English. He found out that the two groups used different cognitive strategies. The main difference between the two

groups was that while the less advanced freshman used translation as the main cognitive strategy, the more advanced students utilized outlining and planning for their writings.

2.5 Language vs. Culture

Teaching a language takes place in first, second and foreign situations. It is essential to explore the relationship between culture and language since "that relationship is the rationale for the ESL/EFL instructional materials developed in the manuals" (Rooholamini, 1986, p. 15).

The question that rises to the surface at this point is, if a language is being taught in a foreign environment, in which non natives of that language are going to communicate with each other, why then should that language's culture be taught at all? Some scholars such as Alptekin and Alptekin (1984) have suggested that teachers should not teach English with reference to English speaking countries' cultures and that English should be taught in a way to encompass the international attitudes and cultures. Although the idea that they put forth seems to be very reasonable, there is a factor that should be taken into account. In the past, culture and language were two separate entities, but nowadays, many scholars believe that they have become integrated. Brooks (as cited in Risager, 2007, p. 34) propounds the view that:

Language is the most typical, the most representative, and the most central element in any culture. Language and culture are not separable; it is better to see the special characteristics of a language as cultural entities and to recognize that language enters into the learning and use of nearly all other cultural elements. The detailed facts of culture cannot properly be evaluated in isolation but must be seen as integrated parts of the total way of life in which they appear.

Bennett (1993) believes learning a language without its culture is a recipe for becoming a 'fluent fool'. A fluent fool is someone who speaks a foreign language well, but does not understand the social or philosophical content of that language. Tang (1999) argues that culture is language and language is culture. He suggests that in order to speak a language well one would need to be able to manifest his/her thoughts in that language.

Byram (1989, p. 42) uses a metaphor to show that language and culture are interwoven but not identical: "Although the warp of language can be teased out from the weft of culture, the learner needs to see the web of the whole". Cakir (2006) also argues that "the relationship of language and culture is widely recognized; communicative behavior and cultural systems are interrelated" (p. 156).

Risager (2007) believes a prerequisite for breaking from the traditional paradigm and moving toward a transactional one in which language teaching has a global context is "to break with the traditional view that 'language' and 'culture' constitute an inseparable whole, and that language teaching must therefore work with maximum integration between teaching the target language and teaching in the target language culture" (pp. 1-2). She goes on to mention that "language subjects must work on the theory that the relation between language and culture is complex and multidimensional" (p. 2).

Brown (2000) also believes that "A language is part of a culture and culture is part of language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture" (p. 177). Brøgger (as cited in Risager, 2007, p. 132) believes language and culture are interwoven. Brøgger refers to this idea when he says "Culture, it repeatedly turns out, is language, and language is culture" and also in another part he asserts "culture and language are inextricably

interrelated and interdependent". Brøgger describes this interrelationship between language and culture in his model in Figure 2.2.

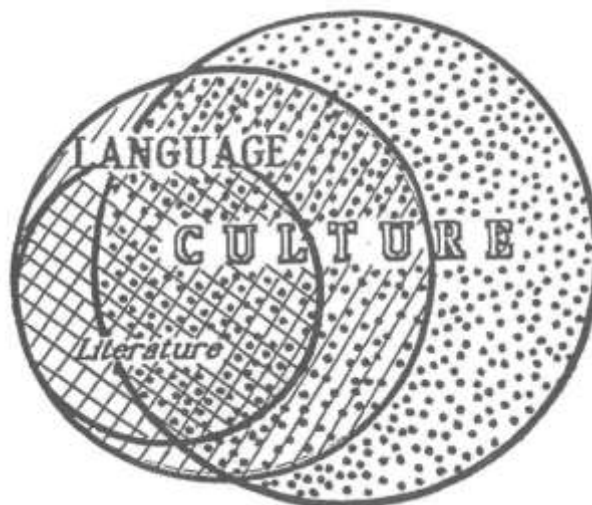


Figure 2.2: Brøgger's interconnection of culture, language, literature (adopted from Risager, 2007, p. 134)

Brøgger believes that there are some aspects of culture which are non linguistic and these would include "gestures, clothing, rituals and objects (artefacts)" (as cited in Risager, 2007, p. 133) and that, in his opinion, "they ought to be included in the teaching of culture even if the main purpose of this is to develop communicative, i.e. linguistic competence" (as cited in Risager, 2007, p. 133). Galisson (as cited in Risager, 2007) asserts that separating language from culture is artificial. He believes we are dealing with a symbiosis:

It is as a social practice and socio-historical product that language is permeated by culture. The game of symbiosis in which language and culture function means that they are the reciprocal and compulsory reflection of each other. Didactologists / didacticians clearly ought to take account of this commensalism, making sure they do not dissociate the study of culture - the study of language, and vice-versa. (p. 88)

Jourdan and Tuite (2006) also feel that " culture is a part of language just as language is a part of culture and the two partly overlapping realities can intersect in many ways" (p. 219). Of course it should be mentioned that the hypothesis regarding the relationship between language and culture has a radical and moderate form (Risager, 2007). The **radical** form claims language and culture are the same and that 'language is culture' and vice versa. The **moderate** hypothesis claims there is a close relationship and "an interdependence and a complex relationship between language and culture" (Risager, 2007, p. 163). It is generally acknowledged that teaching a foreign language is vital to enhance the communication level between individuals, if that is the case, it is also crucial that the students be taught to appreciate the cultural aspects of the foreign language, so that the communication would not be impaired. Doyé (as cited in Risager, 2007, p. 11) asserts that:

The very nature of language forbids the separation of language from culture. If language is considered as a system of signs, and signs re-characterized by the fact that they are units of form and meaning, it is impossible to learn a language by simply acquiring the forms without their content. And as the content of a language is always culture bound, any reasonable foreign-language teaching cannot but include the study of a culture from which the language stems.

He further writes that the subject of language teaching is twofold: 1) the foreign language 2) the culture which is expressed through language. Doyé (as cited in Risager, 2007) believes that it is impossible to study a language without studying its culture and that any foreign language teaching, reasonably conducted, will inevitably convey knowledge about the other country and the people who speak the language.

Also it should be taken into account that most learners of English prefer to know more about the English culture as well. According to a survey given by Baker to 80 students at a university level in Thailand, 77 of the participants revealed their desire to learn more and more about the English culture (Baker, 2003). Also, Canagarajah (1993) found that the foreign students felt alienated from the target language and culture because they felt that the cultural contexts were not explicitly discussed in class and they felt this disconnected them from the target language and culture.

It should be noted that although learners feel so strongly about learning the target culture and the important role they believe this plays in their development as language learners, teachers do not share the same feeling. Cooper (1985) found that culture learning ranked only eighth place among the respondents' top ten priorities. Testing, promoting interest in foreign language, language learning theory, and developing the oral proficiency of students all ranked higher. Also Wolf and Riordan (1991) found a similar pattern in the prioritizing of needs by U.S. language teachers; with the difference that culture teaching did not even make it to the ten top priorities.

According to a survey carried out by Önalán (2005) at four universities in Ankara (Turkey), it was discovered that the English language professors perceived that their students mostly had positive attitudes towards the target language culture and wanted to learn more about it. The students were particularly interested in analyzing the target culture and comparing it to their native culture.

2.5.1 Learners and Culture Pedagogy

Cohen (1979) compares language learners to cultural tourists. He believes language learners, just like tourists, are on a journey in which they have to follow an unfamiliar path and go onwards until they reach comfort in another culture. For many foreign language educators, an important reason for bringing culture into the classroom has been the hope that the study of culture will increase student motivation and improve attitudes toward language learning. It is easy to understand why motivation is so important in language learning. With reference to Dörnyei (2005) "It provides the primary impetus to initiate L2 learning and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process" (p. 65). Without sufficient motivation even the most talented learners will give up the path to learning a new language.

2.5.2 The Three Circles of Kachru

In 1985, Kachru described the use of English language around the world according to the three circles he generated. He (as cited in Kachru, Kachru, & Nelson, 2006, p. 293) believes his three circles represent "the types of spread, the patterns of acquisition and the functional domains in which English is used across cultures and languages". According to his model shown in Figure 2.3, the English language used around the world can be divided into three circles: the 'Inner', 'Outer', and 'Expanding' Circles. The inner circle comprises those countries in which English is used as a primary language; countries such as the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The outer circle consists of those countries in which English is a secondary language. Generally speaking "English is only one of the community languages in what are clearly multilingual societies; and English in such societies usually achieves some degree of

official recognition as an official, co-official, legal, or educational language" (p. 292). Countries such as Nigeria, the Philippines, Zambia, India, and Singapore. The expanding circle refers to those countries in which English is used as an international language. Countries such as China, Greece, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Korea, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, and the USSR.

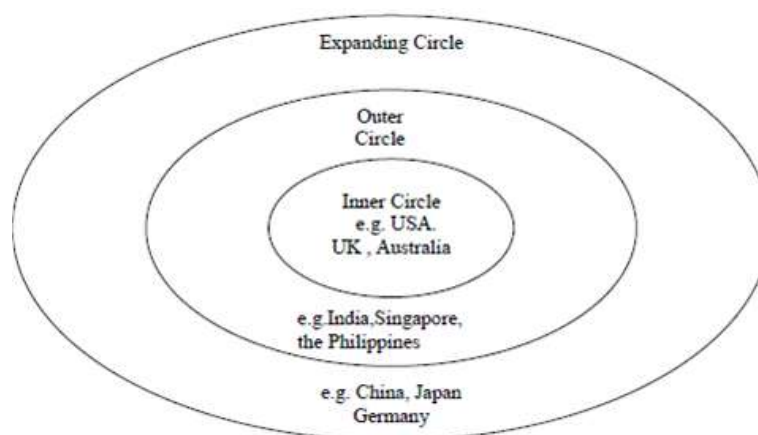


Figure 2.3: Kachru's three circles of English (adopted from Zhang, 2005, p. 56)

Iran is one of the countries that are placed in the expanding circle. This means that English is a foreign language to the Iranians and the only interaction the students have with English is within the classroom. The students are not exposed to English outside the classrooms and this is one reason for the barriers the students feel in English acquisition.

2.6 Native vs. Non Native Rhetoric

The first language one encounters in life as a baby will be their native language. Stern (1983) lists some features related to a native speaker; such as subconscious use of the rules and creativity of language use and he believes that a non native speaker can acquire some of these components, but not necessarily all. Davies (2004) also propounds the view that it is difficult for an adult non native speaker to become a native

speaker of a second language because a native speaker needs to acquire the language at an early age and this is not the case in non native speakers. Davies (2005) believes that it is "through education they (native speakers) gain access to the standard language and it is their control of that standard language which normally defines them as native speakers of a particular language such as English" (P.101).

Many scholars support the 'native speaker' notion; as such, Perren (as cited in Rajagopalan, 2005, p. 16) who studied teaching English in Kenya and East Africa. In one part of his article he complains that "most of the faults of spoken English [used by East African learners of English] have their origin in the pupils' mother-tongue habits. There is of course a carry over of these habits into English". According to Rajagopalan (2005), Perren's quote means that the author is suggesting the only way to get rid of these habits is for the East Africans to forget their mother tongue. "The two languages cannot inhabit the same space. It is either one or the other" (Rajagopalan, 2005, p. 16). Rhetoric has been defined differently by various scholars. Noor (2001) gives a specific definition of rhetoric which considers it as:

A matter of choice with respect to the uses of language, which children learn in schools or through other forms of instruction. They learn this according to certain conventions, many of which have to do with the cultural heritage of a society rather than the structure of the language (p. 255).

The process of academic writing is a very complex and complicated procedure for everyone and this task becomes even more daunting for ESL/EFL writers:

Compared to students writing in their native language (L1), however, students writing in their L2 have to also acquire proficiency in the use of the language as well as writing strategies, techniques and skills. They might also have to deal with instructors and later, faculty members, who may or may not get

beyond their language problems when evaluating their work (Myles, 2002, P.1).

It should be kept in mind that the writer's first language plays a significant role in how that individual writes in a second or foreign language (Myles, 2002). According to Widdowson (1990) when non native students are under pressure in ESL writing, they may call upon their first language resources in order to relieve some of the pressure and this can bring about a lot of problems in their writing.

Buckingham (2008) anticipates the growing interest in research on non native rhetoric is due to two important factors. The first one is due to the recent (last decade) presence of non native students studying at various Anglophone tertiary institutions, and the overall demand in writing English theses and dissertations. The second factor is the non natives' publications in Anglophone journals and the fact that many journals, which used to publish in other languages, now have an English only language policy.

In the field of native vs. non native writing, two important studies stand out- namely, Scarcella (1984) and Zamel (1983). The reason why these two studies are of great importance is that "their results apply to all ESL learners regardless of their nationality" (Kamel, 1989, p. 24). The first study was done by Scarcella in 1984. She analyzed 110 essays written by native and non native writers. The languages she studied included English, Japanese, Taiwanese, Korean, and also Romance languages. She had many hypotheses which she numerates:

1. Native English writers do not write longer orientations than non native writers.
2. Highly proficient native English speaking writers do not write longer orientations than less proficient English speaking writers.

3. Advanced second language learners do not write longer orientations than beginning second language learners.
4. Orientation length does not vary as a function of the non native English speaker's first language background (p.672).

Scarcella discovered that while non native English writers tend to use lengthy orientations in their essays, and had limited capabilities in utilizing linguistic attracting devices for the reader in their essays; native writers were very successful in attracting the readers' attention by the use of various linguistic devices (Lux, 1991).

In 1983, Zamel gave a more discrete insight regarding the English composing process by non native students. Zamel asserts that "ESL students, like their counterparts, understood that composing involves the constant interplay of thinking, writing, and rewriting" (p. 172). She also concludes that while the students used several drafts for their compositions, skilled students spent more time to write those drafts, as compared to the unskilled students. She also mentions that these skilled writers "devised strategies that allowed them to pursue the development of their ideas without being side tracked by lexical and syntactic difficulties" (p.175).

2.7 The Relationship between First and Second Language Literacy

Although previous research focused on the surface level errors in students' composition, more recent research has shifted the lime light to the sociocultural aspects of the ESL/EFL student composition and by doing so the relationship between first and second language writing has become increasingly important. Mu and Carrington (2007) acknowledge that although "culture influences L2 writing, but the genre of the writing

task completed by L2 writers, cognitive development and interlanguage development should also be taken into account” (p. 1).

There are numerous pedagogical implications for comparing first and second languages.

Brown (2001) categorizes some of these implications when he explains:

(a) it is important to determine appropriate approaches to writing instruction for L2 writers in different contexts, (b) writing teachers need to be equipped to deal effectively with the sociocultural and linguistic differences of L2 students, and (c) the assessment of L2 writing may need to take into account the fundamental differences between most L1 and L2 writing (p. 339).

In 1993, Silva analyzed 72 research reports which compared first and second language writing. He was able to identify three different general sub processes. These sub processes included: *planning*, *transcribing*, and *reviewing*. He found that second language writers needed more time to understand the given assignment and did less planning as compared to their first language writing. Silva realized that these second language writers had fewer ideas to share as compared to the native speakers and eventually even failed to include their ideas in the final text. When it came to transcribing, the second language students were less fluent and in turn produced shorter texts as compared to the native speakers. Reviewing which included rereading and the overall revision of the written text, the second language students did less as compared to the native writers. Mu and Carrington (2007) also found that the Chinese students they observed were primarily concerned with planning and organizing their ideas for what they were expected to write.

Saneh (2009) also found that the students' lack of familiarity with the writing conventions of the institutions they were studying at brought about unfavorable results in the final paper scores. During the interviews she conducted with some Iranian ESL students, she came to realize:

Assuming that concepts such as thesis statement, coherence, voice, developing an argument and taking a critical stance, all of which are criteria associated with essayist literacy, are transparent and meaningful to all participants in institutions of higher education can work against those who have not been initiated into this dominant literacy practice in their prior educational experiences (p.154).

According to Cummins and Swain (1986), research on the relationship between first and second language literacy can be categorized into three general approaches: first and second languages as separate entities, first language as a continuation of the second language, and finally first and second language having common underlying literacy proficiency. Various scholars support different approaches. Bell (1995, p. 689) believes "the research certainly suggests that transfer of linguistic and literacy knowledge between language is possible, particularly in certain combinations of circumstances".

In another study, Whalen and Menard (1995) used think aloud and text analysis to analyze the writings of a group of sophomore college students who wrote in both their first language (English) and also their second language (French). They considered linguistic as well as strategic knowledge and found differences between the first and second language compositions. These differences were related to planning, evaluating, and revising of the texts produced. More specifically, they observe that the limited linguistic knowledge in the second language limited the strategic abilities in the second language for these students.

Silva (1993) declares that “L2 writing is strategically, rhetorically, and linguistically different in important ways from L1 writing” (p. 669). Kubota (1998) uncovered that poor second language writing is related to a number of different factors, including the English language proficiency level and also background experience in English composition by the students. He found out that good first language writers were also good writers in the second language and likewise, poor first language writers were poor writers in the second language as well. However, this was not uniformly done and there were some exceptions. Brown (2000) refers to the same idea when he says: “first language can be a facilitating factor and not just an interfering factor” (p. 68). In fact Hamin and Majid (2006) conducted an experimental research in which they tested the effectiveness of first language to generate new ideas in the second language composition. They found that through the background knowledge that is triggered by generating ideas in first language, the students’ writing performance in the second language greatly improved.

Maleki and Zangani (2007) studied a group of 50 Iranian English translation undergraduates and concluded that the students’ language proficiency had its greatest impact on the writing abilities of students; therefore, those students with higher language proficiency did much better in writing rather than reading or speaking.

Zare-ee and Farvardin (2009) studied 30 Iranian EFL students’ compositions in Persian and English. After measuring the students’ performance in each composition, they concluded that the students wrote shorter sentences in English as compared to Persian compositions and they also had more spelling errors. Also after running a correlation, they found that the students who were better writers in their first language, also scored higher in the second language compositions.

Teachers' concepts of good writing and their students' problematic areas in writing can also play a great role in how composition is done. Casanave and Hubbard (1992) found that teachers in the social sciences and humanities believe that vocabulary use is the greatest problem in the non native students' writings.

Diab (2005) takes a different approach and studies the students' perspectives on what the teachers should concentrate on in writing classes. The participants were 156 EFL university students enrolled in English language courses at the American University of Beirut. She found out that most students (86%) believed that teacher should point out errors in grammar more than anything else.

Radecki and Swales (1988) surveyed 59 ESL students' perspectives. They found that the ESL students expected their teachers to focus on correcting all their surface level errors. They also reported that if this expectation was not met, the teacher would lose credibility in the eyes of the students.

Golshan and Karbalaei (2009) studied the writings of 120 Iranian university students majoring in English. Their study revealed that specific areas in grammar seem to be particularly problematic. They divided the participants into two groups of lower and higher English proficiency. They found that preposition, lack of concord, and article created the greatest areas of difficulty for the lower level students while distribution of verb groups, article, preposition, and lack of concord proved to be more difficult for the higher- proficiency students.

Rahimi (2010) studied 50 Iranian EFL students majoring in English at an Iranian university. He inquired about these students' ideas regarding error feedback. He found

that the most important area the students concentrated on was transitional words (86%), followed by sentence structure (84%), spelling (52%), and finally prepositions with only 46%. This shows the importance of surface level errors in the eyes of the Iranian students.

Schneider and Fujishima (1995) focused their study on one graduate foreign student (Zhang) who was unable to continue his studies at Monterey Institute of International Studies. They found out that regardless of the dean's opinion about Zhang's 'language incompetence', cultural factors had a great deal to lay in his failure. They found that it is impolite to question authority or to directly express the opposite ideas in the Chinese culture and it was for this reason that Zhang was mostly quiet during the class discussions. They also discovered that Zhang's close relationship with his family kept him from being in contact with his classmates and this limited his exposure to the English speaking environment and in turn restrained his English language development.

In a study by Nazary (2008), 85 Iranian students studying a general English course at Tehran University, were asked to complete a questionnaire regarding their point of view toward the use of L1 in the English classrooms. The results showed that the students were uniformly reluctant to use first language in English classrooms. The reason they stated for this reluctance was their inclination to be more exposed to the second language. Nazary relates this finding to the role of the English teachers when he says: "This is likely due to their teachers' insistence on not using the L1 and identifying it as a hindrance for language learning" (p. 148). As Braine (2002) found that the teachers especially in graduate courses tend to concentrate on "global errors rather than surface level errors" (p. 65).

Schwartz (1984) conducted a study on a group of students in which he asked them to determine what kind of passage their professor would favor. The students had two choices: 1) a clear but lifeless passage 2) a very creative passage with mechanical errors. The results from this study reveal that the students all chose the first one which shows that according to students' perspective "grammatical errors are more powerful in effect than voice" (60).

In 1985, Zamel studied the native speaking teachers' responses to students' writings. Her findings indicate that:

ESL writing teachers misread student texts, are inconsistent in their reactions, make arbitrary corrections, write contradictory comments, provide vague prescriptions, impose abstract rules and standards, respond to texts as fixed and final products, and rarely make content-specific comments or offer specific strategies for revising the text (p. 86).

In his research, Crerand (1994) found data to show that second language writing was indeed a continuation of first language literacy, but no specific patterns could elucidate the students' strategy deployment.

2.8 Some Explanations for ESL/EFL Students' Difficulties in Writing

Many scholars believe that a great deal of problems arise from the differences between the students' first language and the intended language they are writing in. Strevens (1987) affirms this point when he states that the "potential value system conflict between the Asian preferences for gaining merit by literary style and the American preference for logical argument" (p. 176). Liu and You (2008, p. 154) believe that a combination of

“cultural values, literary aesthetics, and teachers’ socio-political experiences” make up the teachers’ perception of good writers.

One major source of difficulty for students’ writing can be related to the idea of organization; as it may differ between the students’ first language and the target language they are writing in. As Kaplan (1988, as cited in Matsuda 1997, p. 48) reminds us “the fact that the student knows the conventions of his or her own writing system does not mean the student understands the conventions employed in the target language”.

According to Ballard and Clanchy (1991), another source of difficulty in English writing is the time pressure placed on the ESL/EFL students. They assert that in such a case “it is not only knowledge that slips; it is also crucial language precision” (p. 28). They believe that when the students are put in a bind for time, they become too anxious and can no longer concentrate on the topic at hand.

Another source of difficulty is the student’s previous educational experience. Mohan and Lo (1985) studied the composition courses in British Columbia and in Hong Kong and they found out that both the number of students in each class and also the number of hours for composition instruction differed greatly between the two places. They report that while there are 45-60 students in Hong Kong classrooms, there are only 21-30 in British Columbia. Also, while British Columbia students receive 60-80 minutes of English composition instruction weekly, their counterparts in Hong Kong only receive 40 minutes. They assert these two factors play a vital role in how well these students write.

Another factor Mohan and Lo (1985) refer to is the instructor's emphasis in each classroom regarding English composition. While the Hong Kong instructors placed more emphasis on teaching grammar, the British Columbia instructors focused on organization and style. So, while sentence structure is considered as the most important feature in writing in Hong Kong, units larger than sentences received the limelight in British Columbia and this difference in the emphasis the instructor places on writing while teaching greatly affects the students.

Grabe and Kaplan (1989) also believe in differences in learners' background. They assert that:

Writers composing in different languages will produce rhetorically distinct texts, independent of other causal factors such as differences in processing, in age, in relative proficiency, in education, in topic, in task complexity, or in audience (p. 264).

Jordan (1997) reported the most problematic areas in English writing according to the overseas postgraduate students and also their academic staff at a university in United Kingdom. The student participants were asked to comment on their own writing. They were told to choose a comment for the 6 areas of difficulty in English writing from 'a number' to 'a lot'. The staff was asked to comment on the same areas but regarding what caused them the most difficulty when reading what the students had written. The six areas included: vocabulary, style, spelling, grammar, punctuation, and handwriting. Each area of difficulty refers to the following (p. 47): 1. Vocabulary includes "using a word correctly, own lack of vocabulary, and confusion caused by similar sounding/looking words". 2. Style is related to formal vs. informal types of writing. 3. Spelling encompasses "trying to write what is heard and confusion of similar sounding words". 4. Grammar contains verb tenses, active vs. passive form of verbs, and

agreement of verb and subject. 5. Punctuation is not being aware of how to use them properly. 6. Handwriting is related to illegibility due to quick writing. Jordan's results can be summarized:

Students' Perception

Vocabulary	62%
Style	53%
Spelling	41%
Grammar	38%
Punctuation	18%
Handwriting	12%

Staff's Perception

Style	92%
Grammar	77%
Vocabulary	70%
Handwriting	31%
Punctuation	23%
Spelling	23%

Jordan's (1997) results showed that while the students believed that vocabulary, style, and spelling caused the greatest problems for them, the staff asserted that style, grammar, and vocabulary served as the greatest areas of concern in the students' English writing. Jordan believes that this mismatch between the perception of the teachers and students can very well be a cause of problem in the English writing acquisition of the students. The present study will also take this factor into consideration to see whether the Iranian EFL students and their teachers share the same perception when it comes to the most problematic areas in English writing.

Shokrpour and Fallahzadeh (2007) studied reports written by Iranian EFL medical students and discovered that these students have problems in writing and language skills. They found that although the students had difficulty in both areas (language and writing skills), most of their problems stemmed from writing skills. A follow up interview revealed that the main reasons behind the writing problems are the students' lack of time to study English along with their specialized courses and also the fact that their General English course was presented in Persian and that they were not required to write in these classes.

2.9 A Brief History of Essay

The concept of essay as a genre was first introduced by the French writer Montaigne in the 16th century. The main purpose behind initiating such a genre was to find a gap in the non fiction prose in order to enable the ordinary man to write about and air his views; as Spellmeyer (1989) puts it “the essay genre was to position the author-as speaker by making it possible for him to present individual reflections on events” (p. 254)

In fact, “with the essay, one did not need to be a scholar, a poet, or an established rhetor to participate in discourse. Its inventor, Montaigne, was in fact a layman” (Mbaye, 2001, p. 28). Interestingly, the word *rhetor* in Greek refers to a public speaker or an orator and not a writer (Connor, 1996).

After Montaigne, it was the English writer Bacon who showed interest in the essay as a genre. Bacon believed essay was a good genre and could widely assist a writer in examining others. In fact, it was the impact of bacon’s works that made the essay genre to become popular in England and later on in America. It even became more popular when the school systems adopted essay as a form of writing and started teaching it.

The school essays are generally composed of an introductory paragraph as a thesis, a body which consists of some paragraphs to support the main idea, and finally a conclusion which sums up the writers’ main point of views (Mbaye, 2001).

According to Mbaye (2001), essay can generally be defined as “an extended composition using the author’s ideas” (p. 29). Essay writing is generally divided into

five modes of discourse including: narration, description, argumentation, persuasion, and exposition.

Research in second language writing has received a great deal of attention from the academic society in recent years. Connor (1996) ponders on the reasons why she thinks the study of writing has become overwhelmingly important. She believes these reasons are many but she pinpoints some of them:

The increased understanding of language learners' needs to read and write in the target language; the enhanced interdisciplinary approach to studying second language acquisition through educational, rhetorical, and anthropological methods; and new trends in linguistics. These new trends emphasize discourse analyses (p. 5).

However, as Leki (2003) points out

Second language (L2) writing has been somewhat undertheorised, not in terms of developing or debating specific aspects of L2 writing but in terms of connecting what researchers do to broader intellectual strands, domains, and dimensions of modern thought and contemporary lived experience. (p. 103).

Cook and Bassetti (2005) also point out that "research on L2 writing systems is at present scattered across different research areas within applied linguistics, psycholinguistics and other disciplines" (p. 2).

McClain and Roth (1998a) point out the main purpose of essay writing is

To persuade an educated, and critical reader that your point of view on a topic is correct. You cannot do this by indulging in emotional pleas or by listing fact after innumerable fact. Instead, you must make a well-reasoned and coherent argument that is backed by authoritative evidence (p. 1).

According to Cumming (2001) there are three basic dimensions to second language writing; each of which encompass two perspectives:

(a) features of the texts that people produce; (b) the composing processes that people use while they write; and (c) the sociocultural contexts in which people write. Each dimension has a micro- and a macro- perspective, viewing second-language writing either from a relatively local, episodic, or individual basis or from a more global, sequential, or holistic viewpoint (p. 2).

2.10 Persian Language and Rhetoric History

The Persian language is a part of the Indo-Iranian language group which is a member of a larger group known as Indo-European language (Daniel, 2000; Dehghani, 2007). The word 'Persian' has been used for more than 500 years in the English language. It has been used to describe not only the language, but also a nation which has a 7000 year archaeological history. The Persian language has been spoken since the time of the Achaemenides (Dastmalchian, Javidan, and Alam, 2001).

Persian along with Baluchi, Pashto, Kurdish, and Ossetic are categorized as modern Persian languages. Modern Persian is mostly spoken in Iran, but various dialects of Persian are also used in some neighboring countries of Iran as well. For example, Tajiki is spoken in Tajikistan and Dari is used in Afghanistan. Persian is the language of over 110 million people around the world. Approximately 60 -70 percent of these people are considered native speakers of Persian (Dastmalchian, Javidan, and Alam, 2001; Daniel, 2000; Dehghani, 2007).

Iran has very deep cultural roots and most Persian customs and traditions are derived from religion. Most Iranians are Muslims and more than ninety percent of them are

Shiites. Shiism affects the EFL classrooms in Iran. As Rooholamini (1986) asserts “the most noticeable differences occur during the mourning holidays of Ashurah, Tassuah and fasting month of Ramadan” (p. 5). It is during these times that laughter, telling jokes, and listening to music are not allowed in class.

As Shavarini (2004b) points out “there are at least eight religious-ethnic groups among Iranians: Muslim, Jews, Armenians, Assyrian Christians, Bahá’ís, Kurds, Turks, and Zoroastrians” (p. 2).

The Persian script has been changed many times throughout the centuries. The Persian script was initially written from left to right but with the dawn of Islam in Iran in 670 AD, the Arabic script came to the limelight and so from this point on Persian has been written from right to left (Dastmalchian, Javidan, and Alam, 2001; Daniel, 2000; Dehghani, 2007). Of course, it should be kept in mind that Persian added four characters (sounds) to its alphabet which do not exist in the Arabic language (/p/, /č/, /g/, /ž/). Linguistically speaking, English is not a very difficult language to acquire by Persian speakers (Strain, 1971). However, the English alphabet and spelling system is a completely different story. One main difference in the writing system between Persian and English is that while English is written from left to right, Persian is written in the opposite direction. This is also a reason why many Iranian students tend to be slow readers of English texts in the beginning levels.

One problem in many EFL classrooms in Iran is related to the methodology chosen for teaching. Most classrooms base their instructions on grammar. And as Rooholamini (1986, p. 7) puts it “vocabulary memorization and spelling are essential components of the course”. Unfortunately, not much has changed since that time. As Rooholamini

(1986) concludes, most EFL students are still unequipped in many different skills after attending EFL classes. She enumerates some of these shortcomings of EFL classes. Here are some of them which are related to the present study. It is disappointing to know that the present situation for EFL students has not changed much since that time. By finishing EFL classes, students are still unable to:

1. Write freely in the language with clarity and correctness in vocabulary, idiom, and syntax;
2. Understand language as an essential element of culture and understand the principle ways in which the American culture differs from Iranian culture;
3. Understand the fact that American writing and reading styles are culturally oriented (pp. 7 - 8).

While the Persian language has not received a lot of attention in regard to contrastive studies and as Reid (1988) also asserts that some languages including Persian “have not yet been carefully scrutinized” (p. 28), it is worth mentioning that Persian is also one of the foreign languages that appreciates the use of proverbs and quotes in compositions. As Dehghanpisheh (1979) states “expository topics in Persian are often developed by such literary devices as proverbs and metaphors” (p. 511). She also found out that students tend to carry this into their English writing. As Reid (1984) posits: “an expository paper by a Farsi writer may elicit such questions as what has this information to do with the topic? Why does he include so much irrelevant material?” (p. 449).

Saneh (2009) interviewed some Iranian postgraduate students studying in U.S.A. and when she asked about these students’ experiences with the Iranian educational system regarding writing, this is what she heard from the interviewees:

It's mostly essay.... no, not essay, what we call composition, in courses actually called Persian composition. It was totally different, at least for me, from the English system... I realized this only after I started writing in English...for example, in English a very important thing I learned was that you need your topic sentence or main idea at the beginning of your paper, in the introduction, you know. But I remember we didn't write like that in school, I mean in Persian. At the end of the text we would say "so we conclude that..." and then we would write the main idea. One thing I'd like to say is [at school] they never emphasized things like supporting details, like, let's support the point we want to make, or give specific examples for it. [What we did] was just expressing an opinion and that's why I say it wasn't really essay writing. (p. 82).

Another interview also refers to the same point when she says:

Composition topics were always the same, it wasn't really about creativity for the most part. And you never knew the teachers' criteria for making. For them the only good writing was beautiful writing... they kept saying "so and so writes beautifully" but we never got any instruction, they just told us start with an introduction and then talk about your topic and finally wrap it up with a conclusion of some sort. Of course the introduction could be a religious cliché, like starting in the name of God, or a line of poetry for opening...it wasn't really important if it was relevant to the topic or not, just something to take it from there and gradually get into the topic. That's all they ever told you (p. 84).

It is interesting that Saneh (2009) and even the present researcher has had a similar experience with the Iranian educational system. As Saneh (2009) mentions:

Remembering my own K-12 and part of my tertiary schooling in Iran, I was not surprised to hear from the participants that they had received little systematic writing instruction at elementary, middle, or even high school. While each of us came from different parts of Iran, we all had very similar experiences at school as the Iranian educational planning is highly centralized (p. 83).

It is noteworthy to mention that the Ministry of Education in Iran is very specific in implementing a national curriculum for all schools at all levels. This ministry is in charge of publishing the textbooks used at all levels, and also designing and administering some standardized tests for specific intervals (Dahmardeh, 2009).

Although the teaching of all four skills in English has been emphasized in the national curriculum by the Ministry of Education, Dahmardeh's (2009) analysis of the curriculum document points to only focusing on reading and grammar. He concludes that "having considered the textbooks as well as the comments made by the participants, there was no sign of presenting or even teaching these two language skills (listening and writing)" (p. 52).

By searching through the Ministry of Education's website (www.medu.ir) one can find information regarding the status of rhetoric in the Iranian education. Saneh (2009) also checked the aforementioned website and she reports the following:

A course called composition is part of the elementary school curriculum in grades three to five for only one hour per week. It then disappears from the curriculum from grades six to nine with only some writing activity incorporated in Persian Literature course syllabi throughout these years. The composition course reappears in the high school curriculum from grade ten to twelve, but only in one of the four main tracks of high school education, which is the Literature and Culture track. Students in other three tracks, including Mathematics and Physics, Experimental Sciences, and Social Science Studies do not have a composition course as part of their curriculum (p. 83).

What is even more interesting is that in the same chart where this information is provided, next to the Literature and Culture track, you can find an asterisk that refers you

to a footnote which states that this composition course is to be integrated with Persian Literature course; which shows that even in this specific track, the students do not focus on composition alone and that Persian Literature has to be taught alongside which generally leaves very little room for composition. The fact that students never get the proper instructions on how to write effective composition has been criticized by various authors (Taherkhani, 1995; Ghorbaniun, 2004; Dahmardeh, 2009).

There is a great contrast between the English writing manuals and other languages' writing manuals. While English writing manuals seem to be abundant, there is apparently few style manuals in other languages and "most of those address specific formal text features of specific text types, like business letters, or contain grammatical prescriptions" (Leki, 1991, p. 129). Many writing manuals are published every year in Iran. They range from letter writing manuals to research paper and thesis writing.

It is very interesting that most of these books share a great deal of information. Regardless of the genre, the authors concentrate on *correct spelling* (Solhjoo, 2008; Derakhshan, 1988; Ghorbaniun, 2004; Samiee, 2008; Yahaghi and Naseh, 2006) *grammar* (Solhjoo, 2008; Derakhshan, 1988; Ghorbaniun, 2004; Horri, 1991; Samiee, 2008; Yahaghi and Naseh, 2006), *coherence* (Givi, Hakemi, Shokri,Tabatabaee, 2006; Ghorbaniun, 2004; Taherkhani, 1995; Yahaghi and Naseh, 2006),*Cohesion* (Naderi and Naraghi, 1995; Givi, Hakemi, Shokri,Tabatabaee, 2006; Ghorbaniun, 2004; Taherkhani, 1995; Horri, 1991; Yahaghi and Naseh, 2006), *punctuation* (Ghorbaniun, 2004; Horri, 1991; Samiee, 2008; Yahaghi and Naseh, 2006) and even the *use of outlines* (Derakhshan, 1988; Ghorbaniun, 2004). All of these ideas are also emphasized in English writing manuals. Most research manuals have English sounding guidelines for students to follow. In fact, by checking the punctuation section of any of these books,

you can find very similar translated ideas from English. Kirkpatrick (1997) found similar composition textbooks in Chinese reflected “contemporary ‘Anglo-American’ rhetorical style more than traditional Chinese style” (p. 223).

Many Persian writing manuals (Derakhshan, 1988; Ghorbaniun, 2004; Taherkhani, 1995; Samiee, 2008) also insist on the use of literary language and quotes to enrich the writing. However, they never mention how far the students can go. In fact, one strategy many students are taught in composition classes in order to write more effective compositions is the same use of literary language. As one interviewees in Saneh (2009) interviews reveals:

I read through some books like Shariati’s Kavir and you know, I also knew some poetry by heart from Hafiz, Rumi, Sa’di, and others. So I would go to the exam session and I would just bring the words I had in my mind on paper very easily (p.87).

Another interviewee refers to the same point:

The more you had a literary quality in your writing, the more you used poetry or verses from the Koran, the better grades you got and the more teachers liked your essays (p.88).

The Persian style of writing highly values “effective use of metaphors, taking up a literary style, and reciting poetry and traditional or religious wisdom that would appeal to the emotions of the reader” (Saneh, 2009, p. 87).

Another interviewee also refers to this same idea when she mentions:

Having a literary quality is important in all kinds of writing, not only in poetry and stories and things like that. To me a good writer is one who can express whatever he means in a very smooth, fluent and beautiful language. This is very important especially in Persian (Saneh, 2009, p. 89).

The very interesting and crucial point that needs to be taken into consideration is that not only do these Iranian students believe figurative language and literary dominance is an important characteristic of Persian writing, but they also never believed that this had to be avoided in English writing. However, English professors usually have a different point of view regarding the issue. As Saneh (2009) writes:

Their [Iranian Students'] professors did not welcome traces of this textual practice [use of figurative language] in the student papers in ways that they judged them to be inappropriate. One faculty member, for instance, reasoned that these features demonstrated stylistic errors that distributed the academic diction and the evenness of tone (p. 97).

In finding the roots to this literary preference of Persian writing, Saneh (2009) conducted an interview with Dr. Kaviani who is a bilingual (Persian/English) professor teaching Comparative Literature in the U.S. for more than thirty years. He has published extensively in both Persian and English. When asked about this literary dominance in Persian writing as compared to English, he pointed out that:

It is my impression that...the English language has developed over the centuries in much more balanced way and by balanced I mean the various facets of the expression, the various fields and disciplines of inquiry in the language. Persian developed as a language to identify a people, and it came to identify those people through its literature. And so it is tremendously rich in the literary lexicon. The system of literary expression in Persian is very, very

complicated, very sophisticated, but it also is an alternative system to the system of the language itself. In English you don't have the system of expression of English poetry as being manifestly distinct or even at times at odds with the logic of the language. In Persian you do (pp. 89- 90).

There are other reasons behind this literary dominance as well. In another part of the interview Dr. Kaviani refers to this point and asserts:

Poetry has historically had license in this [Persian] culture, and so it has not been-much as it may have been oppositional at times-opposing the two tiers of power; that is the political power structure and the religious power structure. It has still been given a license to express itself. [...] The outcome of all of this has been that when people write, they often times do not have a clearly demarcated idea of the spheres of discourse. Often times I read journalistic articles, let's say in the defense of Hejab or criticism of Hejab, but their appeal is basically rhetorical-that is to say poetic. They try to persuade you not to reason with you (p. 91).

Persian is not the only language that favors such flowery language in compositions. Many languages including Spanish, Chinese, Indian, and Arabic also use a great deal of figurative language in their writing.

The Spanish style of writing tends to be more elaborative regarding the use of metaphors, similes, and an overall more poetic and flowery style of writing (Phung, 2006). According to Montano-Harmon (1991) this poetic and flowery language actually contributes in making Spanish texts more complex than English ones. She asserts that if

English-speaking writers compose texts in Spanish using the deductive, linear discourse pattern of English; at best they will sound simplistic and juvenile, or boring and dry to a native speaker of Spanish. At worse, the writer will project a hidden message of abruptness, even rudeness, insulting his Spanish-speaking reader with a linear, deductive, enumerative composition (p. 424).

As Snively (1999) puts it: “the Chinese rely greatly on quotations, analogies, aphorisms, metaphors, similes, and rhetorical questions” (p.31). In fact, according to Yang (2001), the Chinese students tend to only cite famous writing and people rather than airing their own points of view. This use of formulaic language has created a great problem for all languages that rely greatly on it. Since, although these figures of speech are used in the West, they “have been laundered out of educated English speaking and writing except in restricted genres” (Scollon, 1993, as cited in Snively, 1999, p.31). However, if the students fail to acknowledge properly, they will be accused of plagiarism which is a common error found in Chinese students’ compositions (Yang, 2001). Ballard and Clanchy (1991) refer to Nakamura’s quote in which he states that in his traditional Chinese culture the concept of learning is closely related to imitating the words and actions of great ancestors.

According to Matalene (1985), Wong (1992), and also Cortazzi and Jin’s (1997) experience with the Chinese community, these students tend to memorize a great deal of proverbs, pieces of folklore, and maxims. It is in fact through these memorized pieces that they intend to make a statement in their writings. As one of Matalen’s students laments:

The difference between composing in Chinese and composing in English is that in Chinese there are many proverbs, and in order to make my composition more vivid and beautiful, I can use many proverbs in composing in Chinese, but in English, because of the limit of our non-native speakers’ vocabulary, it’s very hard to write a real beautiful and vivid essay (p. 792).

Wong’s (1992) analysis of an 8000 character Chinese manuscript revealed that while the article only included 6 printed pages, over 32 set phrases which included proverbs were found. This shows how much the Chinese language relies on the use of figurative

language in their writing. She goes on to conclude that “Chinese students, classmates and colleagues in this study have also confirmed that the use of proverbs and saying is a requirement in Chinese academic writing” (p. 84).

In 1997, Kirkpatrick discusses the origin of two Chinese writing styles. He provides detailed reasons regarding how the writings of the contemporary mainland Chinese students are no longer influenced by the classical Chinese styles of writing and that the Western styles are being used in the composition textbooks. “This suggests that the English writing of such students will be similarly influenced by Western rather than by traditional Chinese styles” (p. 242).

McClain and Roth (1998b) believe it is useful to use quotes; however, they warn beginner writers not to rely too much on quotes to “establish a point since they can be misleading. A quote represents only one point of view and it may or may not be representative of a larger body of opinion” (p. 35).

Kachru (as cited in Kobayashi and Rinnert, 2008, p. 8) believes that the argumentative style taken up by Indian students is much different than North Americans in that the Indian students “put forward several positions, allowing the reader to decide”. Kobayashi and Rinnert (2008) believe that North Americans “take one position and try to convince the reader with supporting evidence” (p. 8).

In the Arabic research articles analyzed by Fakhri (2004), he found in Arabic there exists a “prevalence of repetition at different linguistic levels and the use of flowery, high-flown language” (p. 1132).

Ballard and Clanchy (1991) talk about an Arab student who would conclude his discussions with a verse from the Koran (The Muslim holy book). This student was under the impression that quoting the Koran, would “reverberate with authority and establish conclusively the point being made” (p. 32) to his listeners. What this student did not realize is that not all listeners and readers would understand what he was referring to and this in turn provoked responses such as ‘so, what?’ and ‘what point are you making here?’ from instructors and peers.

2.11 Myside Bias

Myside bias was first introduced by Perkins and his colleagues (Perkins, 1985; Perkins, Farady, & Bushey, 1991). This phenomenon has been the topic of research for over 25 years. Myside Bias can be generally defined as “the tendency to evaluate evidence, generate evidence, and test hypotheses in a manner biased toward one’s own opinions” (Macpherson and Stanovich, 2007, p. 115). Wolfe, and Britt (2008) define the Myside bias in a more restricted manner and they believe that myside bias in argumentation is “the failure to include any references to other-side arguments or positions in written essays” (p. 3).

As one of the first studies on myside bias, Perkins (1989) asked participants to make a list regarding their thoughts on some controversial issues and he found that people can be easily prompted to think of arguments on the other side. This in turn shows that failure to bring counterarguments does not result from not knowing them.

In a study on abortion conducted by Baron (1995), it was realized that the participants favored those arguments that were on one side over those that presented both sides which showed the presence of myside bias. The interesting point was that these

participants still had a better perception of these one sided arguments even though they were on the opposite side. It was also found that those participants who favored one sided arguments also wrote one sided arguments as well. In searching for the reason of such findings Baron suggests that “people’s standards – their beliefs about the nature of good thinking – affect the conduct of their own thinking” (p. 228). He goes on to mention that “people fail to search for arguments on both sides. This causes them to neglect counterarguments that undercut the claims they make to others and themselves” (p. 222). Of course it should be mentioned that one possibility for such results might have been the controversial idea of abortion due to its ethical and religious backgrounds.

Toplak and Stanovich (2003) studied 112 undergraduate university students. They asked these students to complete an informal reasoning task that required them to generate arguments both in favor and against the position mentioned. This was done for three separate issues. They then compared the number of arguments made for and against. They found that the participants generated more myside arguments than other side arguments on all three issues. They also found that as the number of years in university increased, the degree of myside bias decreased.

Nussbaum and Kardash (2005) studied the effect of instruction manipulation on an essay writing task. They divided the students into two groups and in one group they changed the neutral argumentative topic to the following: ‘discuss two or three reasons why others might disagree with you and why those reasons are wrong’ and they found out that this change generated more counterclaims than in the control group with a neutral topic. This shows that myside instruction on a writing task can stimulate more counterarguments in students.

In 2007, Stanovich and West studied over 1400 university students. They conducted two experiments on these participants and compared the participants' intelligence and the presence of myside bias and their results showed no correlation between intelligence and myside bias. On the results of the present research Stanovich and West (2007) report that "In the two experiments reported here we found very little evidence that individuals higher in cognitive ability were better able to avoid myside bias" (p. 239).

In 2005, Wolfe and Britt (cited in Wolfe and Britt, 2008) analyzed 35 published essays including 13 longer essays from the Hookie Awards, and 22 editorials and Opposing Opinion pieces from USA Today and after a content analysis they came to conclude that 93 % of the Hookie Awards essays, 100% of the USA Today editorials ,and 70% of the USA Opposing Opinion pieces included other side information which shows the importance of paying attention to the other side of the arguments.

In 2008, Wolfe and Britt found that half of the undergraduates excluded the other side information from their arguments. Therefore, they gave a group of undergraduates a booklet on the importance of including both sides of an argument, and later they still found that 33% of the students still only paid attention to their idea on the argument.

Wolfe, et al. (2009) sum up their findings related to their experimental work on myside bias in 2008. They outline the various reasons why myside bias occurs.

They write:

First was a failure to fully evoke an argumentation schema that encourages participants to consider both pro side and con side information. Second, some participants read both pro and con side arguments but "mined" them only for information on their side of an issue. Finally, some participants provided

evidence of a fact-based argumentation schema, a tendency to view argumentation as a simple matter of arraying facts (p. 188).

Wolfe, Britt and Butler (2009) generally believe that by including counterargument into an argumentative essay, the overall coherence of that text would improve.

In their study in 2009, Wolfe, Britt and Butler concentrated on reducing myside bias in students' argumentative essays in order to improve the quality of the essays. With this aim, they divided their 60 American students into two groups and asked them to write an argumentative essay. In the tutorial class (with half the participants) they taught some pointers in order to help the students' argumentative essay writing. The issues addressed by these researchers included: "what they (students) should do, why they should do it, what is meant to do it, and what it means to do it" (p. 198). Then they asked the students to write another argumentative essay and after analysis they found that while only 60% of the control group participants made a precise claim, 90% of the members in the tutorial class made the precise claims. This showed the effect of the tutorial session and awareness raising among students regarding argumentative essay writing.

2.12 Argumentative Writing

In recent years, a great deal of attention is being concentrated on argumentative writing and this has brought with it research in this area. In the past, most contrastive rhetoric studies consisted of expository essays, but recently, the focus of attention is being diverted to other genres such as argumentative and persuasive essays (Connor, 1996). Rozakis (2000) defines argumentation as a type of writing which:

appeals specifically to reason is often called argumentation. When you argue a point in writing, you analyze a subject, topic, or issue in order to persuade your readers to think or act a certain way (pp.24-25).

Chittleborough and Newman (1993, p. 202) believe that an argument is put forth for two main reasons. First, to “establish a proposition” and second, to “persuade one or more people to accept a proposition”.

According to Matalene (1985) what is considered a logical argument by native speakers is something specific that refers to stating the case at hand and trying to prove it right. “We expect to be provided with premises and conclusions connected by inductive or deductive reasoning” (p. 790).

Toulmin (1958) believes that argument encompasses a claim that is supported by data. He came up with three basic features for argumentative texts. He believes these three features should be present for any argumentative text. These features include the claim, the data, and the warrant. Each will be explained in brief:

2.12.1 The Claim

Generally speaking, the claim is the position taken up by the writer in any controversial situation. “Usually referred to as conclusion, the claim is always of a potentially controversial nature” (Brockriede and Ehninger, 1960, p. 44). Wolfe, Britt, and Butler (2009) believe that a claim can bring about three expectations which they call the theme, the side, and the predicate:

The theme is the topic or subject of the argument, the side is represented as either pro or con, and the predicate is the particular position taken by the author (p. 186).

According to Larson, Britt, Larson (2004) the most important part of any argument is the claim because every other element in the argument is supposed to support or oppose this claim. The common ways in which the writers tend to include claims referring to the other side is through rebut, dismiss, or concede:

We use rebuttal in the traditional sense of presenting counterarguments. Dismissal occurs when opposing claims are denied without any supporting arguments... Concession occurs when the author favorably acknowledges or agrees with an other-side claim or reason (p. 189).

2.12.2 The Data

The data is usually called the evidence in argumentative texts. It refers to the facts mentioned by the writer to lend support for the claim he/she has taken up. The data may come before or after the claim.

2.12.3 The Warrant

The warrant is what Toulmin calls the bridge like process which connects the data to the claim. The warrant shows the relationship between the facts mentioned in 'the data' and 'the claim' taken up by the writer. Toulmin, Reike and Janik (1979) give the epistemology of the term warrant:

Historically speaking, the term has always had close associations both with the notion of license or guarantee. When a medieval monarch conferred on

one of his subjects some noble rank or position of power, the document authorizing that individual to perform the functions of his office was called a royal warrant. And the continuing use of the term warrant in the familiar sense of an “arrest warrant”, issued to the police by a judge in the name of the State, is one surviving vestige of this old practice (p.45).

Connor and Lauer (1988) believe that argumentative writing is the most difficult task to undertake in writing, even for native writers. Most research on argumentation focuses on students’ writing problems- this includes organizational problems, inappropriate stylistic problems, and lack of coherence (Hirose, 2003; Ferris, 1994; Connor, 1996).

According to Eason (1995), very little research has been done in the analysis of argumentative texts and more importantly, “no single method of analysis has become firmly established” (p. 8). While Halliday and Hassan’s (1976) taxonomy has been popular, some scholars employed Koppenschmidt’s (1985) method of analysis which took into account 23 different persuasive appeals which were grouped into three types including: rational, credibility, and affective types. In 1990, Connor comes up with a three category division which generally encompasses: syntax, discourse-level coherence, and the rhetorical features of the written text.

As for the differences between various cultures regarding argumentative writing, Oliver (1971) and Eemeren and Houtlosser (2005) assert that the aim of argumentation in the Western culture is mainly to influence the audience and also to try to get the audience to agree with their point of view. This has been mentioned by Mason and Otte (1994) when they say: “rational argument is our chief way of winning allies and converts to our way of thinking” (p. 179). In contrast to the Western method, the Asian writers aim at getting their ideas accepted by the reader and they don’t go beyond this level so as to get the audience to agree with them. So, the purpose is to enlighten the audience and not to go

beyond this level and aim at convincing them. As Oliver (1971) points out, with these differences, the method organizing and the strategies used by each group differs greatly. Wolfe, Britt, and Butler (2009) believe that the argumentation schema is “evoked by demands of an assignment, expectations about the audience, and the goal of the author” (pp. 185-186).

Some results from past research on argumentation and argumentative writing tends to stand out; for example, Wolfe, Britt, and Butler (2009) announce that according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress in U.S.A., only 15% of twelfth graders are adequately prepared to write arguments. This would mean that the other 85 % of these students lack the required skill to perform such a task.

Larson, Britt, Larson (2004) found that the college students they were studying did not understand written arguments well. These students were only able to identify one third of the claims mentioned. “They selected reasons that could not possibly support their stated claim, and they often identified a stated counterclaim as the main claim” (p. 220). Siepmann (2006) asserts that in French argumentative essay writing, students are expected to follow a pattern that has been used since the 17th century. These students first have to begin by pinpointing the problem, defining any ambiguous ideas, giving an outline which would be covered in the essay, and finally in the conclusion section the student is to give their solution regarding the problem mentioned.

In another study, conducted in two separate phases, initially Oi (1984) found out that English argumentative writing which is linear; generally follows a general to specific pattern while the Japanese argumentative pattern seems to be the exact opposite of moving from specific to general. From this finding, Oi suggested using a tool which she

called ‘the inner argumentative analysis’ in order to improve the Japanese argumentative style of writing. In her method, the students would first learn to analyze argumentative texts and find out which ones were ‘for’ and which were ‘neutral’ and which ‘against’ the presented argument.

In the second phase of the study done by both Oi and Kamimura (1995), 87 students were divided into two groups and they were given 40 minutes to write an argumentative essay. In the next session one group was taught how to use Oi’s tool on two passages and also examined their own essays from the first session. In the final session, all the students were asked to write another argumentative essay. The researchers then compared the two argumentative essays written by each student and found out that the instructions given to the group of students helped them to improve their argumentative essay writing.

Koch (1983) analyzed persuasive texts written in Arabic and he came across examples of “elaborate and persuasive patterns of lexical, morphological, and syntactic repetition” which made him conclude that “Arabic argumentation is basically paratactic, abductive, and logical” (p.47).

Hatim (as cited in Connor, 2002) studies the differences in the Arabic and English argumentations and concludes that the Arabic argumentative style is different from the English argumentative style of writing. Arabic style is more of what he calls ‘through argumentation’ which follows with the thesis, then substantiation, and finally, conclusion; while English has ‘the counterargument style’ with the thesis followed by opposition, then the substantiation of the counterarguments, and ends with the conclusion. Although the Arabic style seems to be different, it should be kept in mind

that the Arab speakers view their style of argument to be just as logical and effective as the English style.

Petric (2005) compared argumentative essays written by some Russian students before and after a writing course. The results obtained showed a great difference in the mentioning of a thesis statement and the position of it. He found that in Russian there is a delay in expressing the thesis statement and sometimes even mentioning a thesis statement. While the students only mentioned a thesis statement only 63.2% of the time, after the writing course, they mentioned a thesis statement in all argumentative essays. Also while only 31.6% of the essays included a thesis statement in the introductory paragraph, after the courses, this number changed to 94.7%.

Although argumentative style of writing is very popular in English, it is not, however, a part of the writing courses offered to students at schools in many languages including Russian, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Thai, Hindi, and Arabic (Petric, 2005; Hinds, 1990; Kachru, 1999; Liebman, 1992). A possible reason for not including argumentative style of writing in Russian is that they believe this style is related to journalism and not academic writing. After a great deal of research, Saneh (2009) also admits that “there is very scant literature” (p. 179) when it comes to the structure of argumentation in Persian language.

Kobayashi and Rinnert (2008) studied 28 Japanese freshmen university students. They divided these students into four groups including (1) those that had essay writing experience with L1 and L2; (2) those that only had essay writing experience in L1; (3) those that only had essay writing experience in L2; and finally (4) those that had no writing experience. Each student was asked to write two essays; one in Japanese and one

in English. After their analysis, the researchers realized that in the Japanese essays, the focus was more on exposition while English essays favored argumentation. They also found out that in groups 1 and 2, the same discourse type was used in both essays while this was not true for groups 3 and 4. Group 3, which had training in L2 writing, chose argumentation 71 % of the time for their English essays while they did not choose this style at all for their Japanese essay. However, the most important finding of their study lies in the fact that the transfer of the students' knowledge of writing did not happen in one direction only, but from both Japanese to English and English to Japanese and so the findings "provide relatively strong evidence for transferability of writing competence across languages" (p.18).

In her study, Saneh (2009) interviewed some university professors in order to find the root of the problem in Iranian students' argumentative writing. One of the bilingual (Persian/English) professors mentioned that the Iranian students failed to incorporate rebuttals in their argumentative writings and he believed the reason for this was the attitude differences between the Iranian and American society and educational context:

You know, one of the flaws of the arguments of my Iranian students and I think the logic in Persian language is that you never give the light of day to the person you oppose. You even falsify them and you think you're in the right in doing so. I keep telling my students that they need to tone down the claims they are making and the position they're offering through appropriate hedging, through speaking tentatively rather than deterministically. But their attitude is different. You see that they [Iranian students] come from a background of accepting rather than questioning. I think the ability to question dogma and the received ideas, and at the same time giving other opinions the benefit of the doubt is greater in my American students than in many Iranian students. The attitude of constant questioning seems to be nurtured more here than in Iran (p. 134).

In the end, according to Givi, Hakemi, Shokri, and Tabatabaee (2006) one important feature to keep in mind about Persian argumentative writing is objectivity. They believe this is one of the pointers that most students do not take into consideration when writing.

2.13 The Five Contrastive Features Framework

In 2008, Xing, et al. collected 5 contrastive features found by a number of scholars in previous studies. These studies include: Ballard and Clanchy (1991); Cho (1999); Connor (1996); Cortazzi and Jin (1997); Schneider and Fujishima (1995). Xing, Wang, and Spencer (2008) used these 5 contrastive features to come up with a comprehensive framework for analyzing writing styles. They used the 5 contrastive features to compare British English and Chinese writing styles. The Five Contrastive Features Framework was used in the present study in order to compare the Persian and English essays of the participants. The 5 contrastive features of Xing et al. include:

2.13.1 Inductive vs. Deductive

This feature refers to the position of the thesis statement in the essay. A thesis statement is defined as a sentence summarizing the fundamental argument of any essay. As McClaine and Roth (1998a) point out the thesis statement is “a declarative sentence that tells your reader what you think about a topic. In other words, it is your opinion” (p. 1).

According to Xing, et al. (2008) If the thesis statement is placed at the beginning of the introduction or at most in the first paragraph of the written essay, the essay is assumed to be deductive, and if background information is given first then followed by the main point, it might be inductive. The British or American preferred style of writing is

deductive. Chinese and Finnish are considered as inductive languages in nature (Xing, et al., 2008; Kirkpatrick, 1995; Connor, 1996).

Deductive style of writing has some benefits for the reader. Singh and Fu (2008) believe that the deductive style of writing is more logically organized and easier to understand for the Western reader. They believe this style of writing assists writers

to indicate the proposition to be explored and makes clear the logical structuring of their argument. Another benefit of providing the topic sentence first is that it gives the reader the starting point for the argument (p. 127).

2.13.2 Start-Sustain-Turn-Sum vs. Introduction-Body-Conclusion

This feature mentions the overall rhetorical style used in the written essay. It is believed that the Chinese rhetorical style consists of four sections (Kirkpatrick, 1995). Xing, Wang, and Spencer (2008) explain about these four sections

qi ('start, open') establishes the field or prepares the reader for the topic; cheng ('carry on, sustain') introduces and develops the topic; zhuan ('turn') turns to a seemingly unrelated subject or looks at the problem from another angle; and he ('conclude') sums up the essay whereby the author's opinion is established or hinted at (p. 74).

The English (American and British) way of structuring an essay usually includes an introduction, a body and a conclusion. English essays generally place a great emphasis on form and each section of the essay has its particular function. Xing, et al. (2008) assert that "the introduction brings out the theme, the middle contains the argument with its supporting evidence, and the ending summarizes the essay" (p.74).

2.13.3 Circular vs. Linear

This third feature pertains to the number of topic sentences mentioned per paragraph. In his article in 1966, Kaplan asserts that the Anglo American style of writing is linear while Oriental languages including Arabic and Chinese are circular. Kaplan (1966) further explains about his definition of linearity in saying: “linear is defined as a discourse pattern in which the topic occurs at the beginning of the discourse unit and controls its content” (p.2). In order to have a more systematic definition Xing, et al. (2008) elucidate that

Circularity can be measured by looking at the frequency of topic changes in paragraphs where topic sentences are used. Linearity can be indicated by a low frequency of topic changes or a low average number of topic sentences in a paragraph (p. 74).

2.13.4 Metaphorical vs. Straightforward

This feature directs our attention to the use of metaphors and proverbs in a written essay. The use of metaphors, allusions, similes, analogies, proverbs, etc. generally present “more than one interpretation of meaning” (Xing, et al., 2008, p. 75) and this can bring about confusion for the reader. This might be the reason why in the West, students are advised to voice their own points of views using their own words. Xing, et al. (2008) believe that the use of flowery language in written essays is considered a cliché by Western readers. Wong (1992) also believes using proverbs can be seen as lack of originality in the students’ writing. Therefore, when ESL/EFL students use such clichés in their writings, they receive negative scoring.

2.13.5 Explicit Discourse Markers

The last feature in the 5 contrastive features refers to the number and type of discourse markers. The use of explicit discourse markers adds to the unity and overall coherence of the written essay. Discourse markers can be defined as

Those natural language expressions whose primary function is to facilitate the process of interpreting the coherence relation(s) between a particular unit of discourse and other, surrounding units and/or aspects of the communicative situation. As such, the category of discourse markers includes members of a number of different word classes, e.g. adverbs, connectors, parenthetical expressions, as well as particles in the sense referred to above (Risselada & Spooren, 1998, p. 132).

Discourse markers act as signposts to signal coherence and unity in a written text and “English readers expect and require landmarks of coherence and unity as they read” (Connor, 1996; p. 20). The number and kind of discourse markers used can show the rhetorical differences that might exist between two languages. However, it must be mentioned that Xing, Wang, and Spencer (2008) do not mention what specific discourse markers taxonomy they have used in their study. It is with this in mind that the researcher decided to use Fraser’s Taxonomy of Discourse Markers in order to make the methodology more systematic.

2.14 Discourse Markers and Fraser’s Taxonomy of Discourse Markers

Discourse markers have been defined differently by various scholars all around the world. Schiffrin (1987) defines discourse markers as a set of devices that bring about contextual coordination in both verbal and non verbal situations. Discourse markers

generally help with the overall understanding of the text and in doing so assist the writer to produce a more effective piece of writing. McDaniel (1994) views discourse as a structure in which “the framework of ideas is created by the selection and arrangement of words, phrases, and sentences into meaningful blocks” (p. 30). Risselada and Spooren (1998) believe discourse markers are:

Those natural language expressions whose primary function is to facilitate the process of interpreting the coherence relation(s) between a particular unit of discourse and other, surrounding units and/or aspects of the communicative situation. As such, the category of discourse markers includes members of a number of different word classes, e.g. adverbs, connectors, parenthetical expressions, as well as particles in the sense referred to above (p. 132).

Fraser (1999) asserts: “I define discourse markers as a class of lexical expressions drawn primarily from the syntactic classes of conjunctions, adverbs, and prepositional phrases” (p. 931). Finally, Hutchinson (2004) categorizes discourse markers as lexical items which “signal relations between propositions, events, or speech acts” (p. 2).

Fraser’s Taxonomy of Discourse Markers

For the present study, the researcher decided to use Fraser’s (1999) Taxonomy of Discourse Markers. This taxonomy was selected because “it conforms to written discourse and that it seems to be the most comprehensive classification in written discourse” (Jalilifar, 2008, p. 115).

This taxonomy is made up of three main subclasses including:

Contrastive markers that signal "the explicit interpretation of the second sentence contrasts with an interpretation of the first sentence" e.g. although, but, despite,... (Jalilifar, 2008, p. 115).

Elaborative markers that signal "a quasi parallel relationship between the sentences" e.g. and, above all, also,... (Fraser, 1999, p. 948).

Inferential markers that signal "the following sentence is a conclusion derived from the preceding sentence" e.g. accordingly, so, then,... (Fraser, 1999, p. 948).

It is generally believed that the more experienced the writer, the greater the overall frequency of the discourse markers will be (Jalilifar, 2008). The present study used Fraser's taxonomy in order to compare the number and type of discourse markers used by the participants. A translated version of the taxonomy was also applied to the Persian essays of the participants (See 1.1.2.1 Consultation).

2.15 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research has been utilized more often for composition analysis in recent years. It has been used more predominantly in fields of study such as anthropology and sociology (Stake, 1995).

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) define qualitative research in the following way:

Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials-case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts-that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. Accordingly, qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected methods, hoping always to get a better fix on the subject matter at hand (p.3).

As for the purposes of qualitative research, Lauer and Asher (1988) best explain this by asserting that:

Qualitative research tries to answer questions by closely studying individuals, small groups, or whole environments. It tries to discover variables that seem important for understanding the nature of writing, its contexts, its development, and its successful pedagogy. When researchers engage in descriptive research, they examine and analyze segments or whole situations as they occur. This kind of research, therefore, does not primarily attempt to establish cause-and-effect relationships among variables; it seldom has that kind of explicit power. It is, instead, a design that, by close observation of natural conditions, helps the researcher to identify new variables and questions for further research (p.23).

2.16 Triangulation

Triangulation generally means to examine one single subject from various perspectives.

Stake (1995) affirms that:

Triangulation has been generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or

interpretation. But, acknowledging that no observations or interpretations are perfectly repeatable, triangulation serves also to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the phenomenon is being seen (p. 97).

Triangulation was used in the present study to analyze the participants' perceptions and performance from more than one angle.

2.17 Questionnaire

The questionnaire- one of the most popular methods of collecting quantitative information from informants- has a history that dates back to the late 1700s when it was used to elicit information from British prisoners by John Howard. It was not until the 1930s that questionnaire usage flourished. Questionnaires can be administered in face to face contact, by mail, over the phone, and even through the internet (De Munck, 2009).

Various steps have to be taken in order to design, administer and finally analyze a questionnaire. De Munck (2009, p. 98) divides these steps into 5 categories. These five categories include:

- 1. Defining the objectives of the survey:** This is a vital stage since poorly defined objectives in a questionnaire can influence the analysis and the findings and can jeopardize the whole research.
- 2. Determining the sampling group:** The participants selected have to fit the research and research questions.
- 3. Constructing the questionnaire:** It is important to design the questionnaire items in a way so as to “reliably test answers regarding a particular theme” (p. 108).

4. Administering the questionnaire: The questionnaire needs to be administered in a non threatening way. This can include how participants are approached, the issue of anonymity, even how the researcher or assistant researcher is dressed and talks. De Munck (2009, pp. 122-123) gives some guidelines on how to avoid pitfalls in administering questionnaires. His guidelines include:

1. Dress appropriately and have lots of things on your person that symbolize your status as a researcher (e.g., clipboard, name tag).
2. Rehearse introductory remarks, and make sure they include assurances that participation is anonymous and participants can quit whenever they want.
3. Encourage participants to feel that what they are doing is intrinsically good and valuable.
4. Guarantee anonymity by never requesting names or other personal identifiers.
5. Have the respondents themselves place their questionnaires in an envelope or other container that already contains a batch of completed questionnaires.
6. Try to recruit people when they have time to complete the questionnaire and not when they are in a hurry.
7. Go to places where people are not in a rush and which are distributed over the field site (e.g., parks in all parts of an urban area).

5. Interpreting the results: This stage has to be done with utmost care as it is the final stage. The interpretation should match the research questions and information elicited from the questionnaire.

Designing a questionnaire is the first and most crucial step to elicit relevant information from respondents and various pitfalls await a novice researcher. Bradburn, Sudman, and Wansink (2004, pp. 315-316); Siniscalco and Auriat (2005, pp 29-34); and De Munck (2009 p. 122) suggest the following guidelines for constructing a questionnaire:

1. **Keep the vocabulary simple:** This means that the wording of the instruction, the questionnaire items along with answer choices have to be simple enough for participants to understand. Ideas such as abbreviations, acronyms, technical terms, abstract words, and jargons should be avoided. If a technical word is to be used in a questionnaire, then the meaning should also be provided.
2. **Keep the question short:** Lengthy questionnaire items should also be avoided. As a general rule, each questionnaire item should be 25 words or less. In case of using a longer sentence, it should be broken up into a number of smaller sentences.
3. **Avoid “double-barreled” questions:** These types of questions ask about two things in one question and therefore require two answers (they include conjunctions “and” or “or”). Answering such items becomes difficult for respondents who want to answer “yes” to one part and “no” to the other.
4. **Avoid hypothetical questions:** Evidence has shown that respondents are usually poor predictors when it comes to their behavior. This is mainly due to the changing of circumstances. Therefore, it is better to collect more valid data regarding the past or even the present situation, attitude, or behavior of participants.
5. **Don’t overtax the respondent’s memory:** It is generally very difficult for respondents to recall information over a long span of time. Answers to such questions are not very reliable. If such questions need to be mentioned, then a maximum time span of one week recall period is suggested.
6. **Avoid double negatives:** Using double negatives either in the questionnaire items or the answer choices can create confusion for the respondents.
7. **Avoid overlapping response categories:** It is important that each questionnaire item only elicits one answer choice from respondents and that it would not be

possible to choose more than one answer choice-unless the instructions allow them to select more than one response.

- 8. Beware of 'leading' questions:** Leading questions are those which seem to have the right answer implied in the questionnaire item.
- 9. Ask a number of questions on same topic:** In order to measure the reliability and intensify of the responses, it is a good idea to construct more than one questionnaire item on the same topic.
- 10. Pilot-test the questions on a small group:** Conduct a pilot test with 20-50 respondents who could be possible respondents of the research. Implement the ideas elicited from the pilot to the final version of the questionnaire. Eliminate questionnaire items that do not provide any specific information and do not discriminate between respondents.
- 11. Pre-code the responses:** make sure to pre-code the responses the respondents would give in order to include all possibilities.

It is with these pointers in mind that the researcher ventures out to elicit information for the present research.

2.18 Interview

Interview is one of the most famous methods used in triangulation. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) declare:

You might also interview in research of an explanation for why something happened. Interviewing puts you on the trail of understandings that you may infer from what you observe, but not as the actors themselves construe their actions. You cannot, that is, expect through interviewing, get the actor's explanations (p. 65).

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) propose that the interviewer tries to go deep into each interview question and tries to follow up on all the different points of interest in the topic and they believe that the intent of such an interview would be:

To capture the unseen that was, is, will be, or should be; how respondents think or feel about something; and how they explain or account for something. Such a broad-scale approach to understanding is drawn from the assumption that qualitative research, notably nonreductionist, is directed to understanding phenomena in their fullest possible complexity (p. 92).

Kvale (1996; p. 88) outlines an effective interview investigation into 7 stages. These stages include:

- 1. Thematizing-** Formulating the main purpose of the investigation.
- 2. Designing -** Planning the design of the study.
- 3. Interviewing -** Conducting interviews based on a guide.
- 4. Transcribing -** Preparing the interview material for analysis (transcription of oral speech to written text).
- 5. Analyzing-** Deciding which purpose, topic, and methods of analysis are appropriate.
- 6. Verifying -** Ascertaining the validity of the interview findings.
- 7. Reporting -** communicating findings of the study based on scientific criteria.

Researchers can use the above checklist to ensure they are on the right track when it comes to conducting interviews. However, to go more in depth, Berg (2001; pp. 99-100) has come up with what he believes to be the ten commandments of interviewing. He asserts that these commandments sum up the basic rules which guarantee a successful interview. Here is a summarized version of the Ten Commandments:

- 1. Never begin an interview cold-** Always start off with some kind of friendly introduction.

2. **Remember your purpose-** Keeping the interview on course. Keep a copy of the interview questions on hand so as not to forget anything.
3. **Present a natural front-**Since interview questions are memorized, try to show each question has just popped into your head. Be relaxed, affirmative, and as natural as you can.
4. **Demonstrate aware hearing-**Use non verbal responses to show the interviewee that you are fully aware of what is going on. For example, smile when they say something funny and look sad when they look upset. Present yourself as keenly interested in what they are saying.
5. **Think about appearance-** Be sure to dress appropriately for the specific participants involved. Business attire for adults and more casual wear for children interviewees are suggested.
6. **Interview in a comfortable place-** Be sure the location selected for the interview is suitable for the interviewees and that you are not interrupted by others during the interview.
7. **Don't be satisfied with monosyllabic answers-** Yes and no answers are not sufficient and when this occurs ask for further information; sometimes even an uncomfortable silence or a pause might yield additional information.
8. **Be respectful-** Make the interviewees feel they are an integral part of your research and any information they give you is wonderful.
9. **Practice, practice, and practice some more-**The more interviews you conduct, the more proficient you become as an interviewer.
10. **Be cordial and appreciative-** Always remember to thank the interviewees when the interview is over and answer any questions they might have about the research.

It is with all of these pointers in mind that the present researcher conducts interviews.

2.19 Concluding Marks

The above review of literature shows that contrastive rhetoric along with second language writing in general have received a great deal of attention from researchers and this fact shows the important impact of these research areas on ESL and EFL teaching and language acquisition and their impact on the society.

By considering the numerous research done in the field of contrastive rhetoric and the many languages studied in research, it becomes apparent that research efforts need to be directed toward languages whose speakers are interested in continuing their education abroad, so that the differences between these languages and English could be pinpointed and both the teachers and students can be made aware of them so as not to encounter such difficulties. Persian is one such language that has not received its due attention.

The studies that have been reviewed in this chapter all contribute to the significant role that contrastive rhetoric plays in our realization of the unique characteristics of texts written by second or foreign language writers with various languages, cultural, religious, political, and social backgrounds.

The present study looks at argumentative essays produced by Iranian higher intermediate level EFL students both in Persian and English. The present study aims at comparing the rhetorical performance of these EFL students in their native language as opposed to that of English according to the Five Contrastive Features Framework.

The next chapter discusses the main methodology and theoretical framework utilized in the present study and includes the research design, data collection and the data analysis procedures.

Chapter 3

3.0 Introduction

In order to find answers to the research questions, the researcher initially decided to collect and analyze data. In this chapter the researcher focused on describing how the study was planned out and how it was put into action. This chapter gives information regarding the sampling, the instrumentation, and finally the procedure that was used in the study.

The researcher analyzed 80 argumentative essays which included two sets of 40 essays written in English and Persian by 40 Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL learners at a well known college in Mashhad, Iran. The analysis was done according to the Five Contrastive Features Framework used by Xing, et al. in 2008 (See 2.13 The Five Contrastive Features Framework).

3.1 Sampling

The sampling can be divided into two main sections, namely: the setting and the participants.

3.1.1 Setting

40 Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students (both males and females) were asked to fill out a questionnaire (See Appendix 1) and write two argumentative essays. 20 Iranian EFL teachers (both males and females) were chosen from a well known college in Mashhad, Iran. 30 Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students (both males and females) were also asked to participate in the pilot study.

3.1.2 Participants

The participants of the present research can be divided into three groups. 1) The student participants; 2) the teacher participants; and 3) the bilingual raters

3.1.2.1 Student Participants

The 40 students who participated in the main section of present study were all university students (Bachelor/ Master/PhD). They were majoring in foreign languages (French, Russian, and Arabic), humanities, engineering, medical and veterinary sciences, basic sciences, art, and management. Since the amount of English exposure could be an effective factor for the present study, the researcher made sure that no students studying English (English Literature, Teaching, and Translation) were included in the participants. Their ages ranged from 25 to 40, (Mean= 27.90, SD=3.177). Overall, 13 males (Mean= 28, SD= 3.391) and 27 females (Mean= 27.85, SD= 3.134) took part in this section. The age range shows that the students were young and generally more motivated to learn English (Gomleksiz, 2001; Petrides, 2006).

There were more females than males because there were generally more female students in each of the English classes. However, it should be mentioned that age and gender were not among the variables under study. It should also be pointed out that the participants' world knowledge did not play a role in the present study as the participants' essays were not rated according to the quality of the ideas mentioned. The 5 specific features in the framework do not concentrate on the quality of the written essays, but rather consider specific elements such as position of thesis statement,

organization, number of main ideas per paragraph, number of flowery language samples and discourse markers in the essays.

All participants had studied English for at least 3 years. The mean for the number of years they had studied English was 9.70 (SD= 4.847). This was necessary in order to make sure the participants had a good command of English vocabulary and structure and were able to write and speak English well. These students were at a Higher-intermediate level (Kouritzin, 1999). They were placed at this level based on the college's achievement exam. This exam which is provided through the New Interchange Placement and Evaluation Package written by Richards, Lesley, Sandy, Hansen, and Zukowski (2008) is given to students after 9 semesters of general English classes. After achieving a total score of at least 75% on all four skills (including Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) of this test, the students are allowed to continue onto higher levels.

These students were among the five classes studying at this specific level at the college. Two classes were used for the pilot study and the other three were used in the actual study. Thus, the single stage sampling of participants was conducted based on these students' availability as "potential respondents in the population" (Creswell, 2009; p. 148).

Regarding the number of participants, Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) assert that guidelines for determining the number of sample size in qualitative studies virtually do not exist. Out of the 560 qualitative PhD studies that Mason (2010) analyzed, he found that the mean sample size is 31. Mason (2010) states that the average number of participants for a qualitative PhD study is 31. De Munck (2009) also mentions that

“many cross cultural questionnaires use samples as small as 20 or 40 to represent a country” (p.98). Therefore, according to the above numbers, the 40 participants involved in this qualitative study (See 2.15. Qualitative Research) can be said to be a representative number for the purposes of the present study.

30 Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students (both males and females) were asked to participate in the pilot study. These participants were all university students (Bachelor/ Master/ PhD). They were majoring in foreign languages (French, Russian, and Arabic), humanities, engineering, medical and veterinary sciences, basic sciences, art, and management. It was also ensured that none of the participants were studying English (English Literature, Teaching, and Translation). These students were selected from two classes out of the five classes available at the college under study. Their ages ranged from 20 to 36 (Mean= 26.77, SD= 4.477). Overall, 9 males (Mean= 26.33, SD= 3.775) and 21 females (Mean= 26.95, SD= 4.822) took part in this section. These Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students were placed at this level based on the college's achievement exam which was described above for the 40 participants.

Based on studies by a number of researchers as discussed below, it was determined that 80 essays would be a representative number. Baleghizadeh and Pashaii (2010) conducted their study with 50 argumentative essays and they report that Ostler in 1987 used 22 argumentative essays. Zare-ee and farvardin (2009) had also worked with 60 argumentative essays.

In the final stage of data collection 8 participants out of 40 students, which is 20% of the total number of participants, were selected (on a voluntary basis) to take part in an interview on writing techniques (See 3.2.7 Interview). Regarding the number of

interviews in a qualitative study, Kvale (1996) believes there is no specific number; he asserts that an interview should be conducted using as many subjects required to discover what the researcher wants to know. Green and Thorogood (2004) also emphasize what Kvale (1996) mentions and answer the question of the number of participants for an interview by stating “however many will be credible to the users of your research” (p. 102).

Through the interviews Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) have conducted, they found that the basic elements necessary for answering the research questions were present as early as 6 interviews. They also believe that the number of interviewees needed for each research (saturation point) depends on the aim of the research. Guest, et al. (2006) define saturation point as “the point at which no new information or themes are observed in the data” (p. 59). According to the above, a total of 8 participants took part in the interview and it should be mentioned that the information necessary to answer the research questions were elicited through the interviews and so the saturation point was reached.

3.1.2.2 Teacher Participants

A total of 20 Iranian EFL teachers were selected based on their teaching experience for this study. These teachers had taught different levels of English proficiency and had a minimum of 3 years experience in teaching. They were invited by the researcher to take part in the present study. The teachers had a bachelor or Master degree in English (Teaching English as a Foreign Language, English Literature). Their ages ranged from 23 to 65, (Mean= 35.20, SD= 12.972). Overall, 10 males (Mean= 34.60, SD= 12.92) and 10 females (Mean= 35.80, SD= 13.69) took part in this section.

After filling out the consent forms (See Appendix 4) and the demographics section of the questionnaire (See Appendix 3), the teachers were asked to express their perception regarding their students' most problematic areas in English writing. This section was used in order to answer the third research question (What are the most problematic areas in English writing according to Iranian EFL students and teachers?). Six problem areas (vocabulary, grammar, spelling, style, punctuation, and handwriting) were introduced (based on Jordan, 1997) and the teachers were asked to choose from "Completely Disagree" to "Completely Agree" on a five point Likert scale.

3.1.2.3 Bilingual Raters

The 80 argumentative essays were evaluated by two bilingual (Persian/English) raters to ensure interrater reliability. The raters evaluated the two versions of the argumentative essays according to the Five Contrastive Features Framework used by Xing, et al. (2008). The essays were written in both English and Persian.

As for the term bilingual, as it is used in this present study, it should be clarified that according to Altarriba and Heredia (2008) we can designate a bilingual as "someone who can read, write, and speak fluently in more than one language, and without fluency in all three aspects would not be called a bilingual" (p. 3). With this said, it should be pointed out that both raters had spent at least 6 years in an English speaking or the 'inner circle' (See 2.5.2 The Three Circles of Kachru) country and since they had studied from elementary to junior high school in these countries, they had become bilingual speakers of English and Persian. The Persian language skills were maintained through the Persian language classes they had to attend in order to sit for the Persian

exams at the end of each year and also through everyday communication with parents, siblings, and Iranian friends.

According to Mukhuba (2005), Bloomfield believes that a bilingual is someone who “should possess native-like control of two languages” (p.269). Mukhuba (2005) asserts that Bloomfield has made the highest demand when defining bilingualism. According to this view it is worth mentioning that one rater has a TOEFL iBT score of 115/120 and the other rater has an IELTS score of 8.5/9. Both scores show that each rater is an ‘expert user’ of English in each of the four skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing (See http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/TOEFL/pdf/TOEFL_Perf_Feedback.pdf and <http://www.cambridgeesol.org/exams/ielts/index.html#tab6>). The Cambridge website (mentioned above) defines the abilities of a person who achieves an 8.5 band on IELTS as someone who “has fully operational command of the language: appropriate, accurate and fluent with complete understanding”.

The ETS website (mentioned above) also gives a full description of someone who has achieved a score of 115 on TOEFL iBT. However, since the descriptions from this website are given separately for each skill and in order to avoid a bulky description, the above website can be referred to by the reader.

Each rater was also an English instructor at a language institute and a lecturer at a university. Each had a minimum 7 years of teaching experience. One rater was female and the other one male. This was done to ensure that there would be no gender bias.

3.2 Instrumentation

3.2.1 Five Contrastive Features Framework

In order to answer the first and second research questions of the present study, regarding the style differences between Persian and English argumentative writing and also the contrastive features that are transferred from Persian to English argumentative writing, the researcher used the Five Contrastive Features Framework. In 2008, Xing, et al. combined 5 contrastive features found by a number of scholars in previous studies. These studies include: Ballard and Clanchy (1991); Cho (1999); Connor (1996); Cortazzi and Jin (1997); Schneider and Fujishima (1995). Xing, et al. (2008) used these 5 contrastive features to come up with a comprehensive framework for analyzing writing styles. They used the 5 contrastive features to compare British English and Chinese writing styles.

In the present study, the five features were used in order to compare British English and Persian writing styles. This was done using the argumentative essays written by the 40 participants. All 5 categories namely: Inductive vs. Deductive; Start-Sustain-Turn-Sum vs. Introduction-Body-Conclusion; Circular vs. Linear; Metaphorical vs. Straightforward; Explicit Discourse Markers as described in chapter 2. (2.12.4. The Five Contrastive Features Framework) were utilized in order to compare British English and Persian writing styles.

In order to use each of the five categories, the researcher had to systematically define (Creswell, 2009) what each category described as regard to the students' essays; to do so, the researcher and the second rater met and together they formed a clear-cut definition for each of the five categories. This was mainly done in areas where the five

contrastive features were not clear enough about the categorization procedure. This assisted the raters in assessing each essay more objectively. The researcher also contacted one of the creators of the framework and clarified the ambiguous points with her (See Appendix 7).

As for the first contrastive feature, according to Cho (1999) it was decided that if the writer mentioned his/her position as regard to the main idea he/she took in the first paragraph, the essays would be considered deductive; otherwise, it would be inductive. The sample essay on page 122 shows a sample of an inductive English essay written by one of the participants. In this sample, the main idea comes as the last sentence of the essay.

As for the overall structure of the essay, it was decided that if the writer strayed away from the main ideas he/she mentions and ends up jeopardizing the coherence by pointing to irrelevant ideas in the essay, then the essay would be titled as “Start-Sustain-Turn-Sum”. Otherwise, the essay would have an Introduction-Body-Conclusion structure. In the sample essay on page 122, paragraph 1 is related to the introduction. The second and third paragraphs refer to the body and the last paragraph provides the reader with a conclusion. Since no seemingly irrelevant information is mentioned in this essay, the structure of this essay is Introduction-Body-Conclusion.

In the third feature, Xing, et al. (2008) refer to the overall number of main ideas used in each paragraph. In order to objectify this concept, the researcher referred to the sample analyses done by Xing and her colleagues and found that these researchers had decided to label an essay “Circular” if each paragraphs included two or more than two main ideas. This point was double checked with one of the creators of the framework for

reference purposes (See Appendix 7). The main ideas mentioned in the sample essay on page 122 are bolded by the researcher in order to help the reader. As can be seen in the sample essay, the second and forth paragraph have 2 main ideas while the third paragraph has 3 main ideas. Hence, this sample essay is considered to be a circular essay.

As for the type of language used in the essays, Xing, et al. (2008) mention any use of allusion, metaphor, idiom, and proverbs in an essay means that essay has metaphorical language. Again in order to make the analysis more systematic, it was decided that if an essay contained two or more figurative language (flowery language), it would be grouped as “Metaphorical”. The raters believed that since the essays were 300-350 words, coming across one case of figurative language would not cause the whole essay to be labeled “Metaphorical”. This systematic selection was also double checked with one of the creators of the framework (See Appendix 7). As can be seen in the sample essay on page 122 (all cases have been underlined by the researcher), there are 6 references that can be considered flowery language. Therefore, this essay is categorized as metaphorical.

For the last contrastive feature the NVivo software was utilized in order to discover the number and type of discourse markers used (See 4.1.1.5 Explicit Discourse Markers Feature).

Sample essay (Essay 14):

First of all my opinion is that it's good to check new methods in our educational system, and examine the function of them, because it seems with our procedure we wouldn't have well progress, and students study without good causes. Definitely all new methods would have advantages and disadvantages.

In Iranian cultures the schools are in a way that the boys and girls are studding separately at different schools (Main idea1). This things causes that they cant communicate with each others very well. When the girls and boys are teenager they aren't free as birds but after that they enter to the universities which are not separate and in this way they face a lot of difficulties. I think we should teach the girls and boys how to communicate with each other in this way they will prepare for future. **Primary school age is of the very important stages in life because this time a person's character is made (Main idea 2).** As the primary importance of this famous poem says if the first brick architect is tilt, tilted wall goes up Soraya.

On the other hand in foreign countries the boys and girls are studding together and some times they fell in love and cant continue their education completely (Main idea 1). People are living in different levels of life and it makes some problems to children (Main idea 2). **Because they can't figure out what's going on in the crazy world and what exactly they think is what exactly they need (Main idea 3).** Sometimes someone sees a clothe they love to wear in their friends' body. This disaster has appeared in girls more.

And boys and girls are different (Main idea 1). The boys are usually interested in being a hero and it means they are usually fighting with something like superman. on the other hand, the girls always want to be an angle and it means they are always helping someone or playing a role as a mother. The boys are usually egotistical but the girls are sympathetic in that age. **Considering all, it is surely not a good idea to have coeducational elementary schools in Iran (Main idea 2).**

3.2.2 Fraser's Taxonomy of Discourse Markers

For the last contrastive feature in the five contrastive features Xing, et al. (2008) had not mentioned any particular taxonomy used in their study. The researcher decided to use Fraser's (1999) Taxonomy of Discourse Markers (See Appendix 8). This taxonomy along with its components was described in chapter 2. (See 2.14 Fraser's Taxonomy of Discourse Markers). This taxonomy was selected because "it conforms to written discourse and that it seems to be the most comprehensive classification in written discourse" (Jalilifar, 2008, p. 115). The three markers defined and used by Fraser (1999)- namely: Contrastive markers; Elaborative markers; and Inferential markers

were applied in order to compare how the English and Persian argumentative essays in this study used discourse markers.

Fraser's (1999) taxonomy was also translated into Persian (See Appendix 8) and this was applied to the Persian essays the students had written. It is worth mentioning that since this taxonomy had not been translated into Persian before, the researcher had to translate the taxonomy herself. She consulted 3 experts from the department of linguistics at the faculty of Literature and Humanities at the Ferdowsi University of Mashhad regarding the translation and implemented these experts' opinions (See 1.1.2.1 Consultation).

3.2.3 Myside Bias

In pursuing to answer the fourth research question (Does the *myside bias* exist in the English argumentative writings of Iranian EFL students?), the researcher turned to Wolfe and Britt's (2008) definition of the Myside bias in which they believe myside bias in argumentation is "the failure to include any references to other-side arguments or positions in written essays" (p. 3). Therefore, it was important to see whether the Iranian EFL students in this study paid attention to objectivity while writing or whether they only focused on proving their own point of views in the argumentative essays they wrote. The idea of myside bias was initially checked in the written argumentative essays and also triangulated in the questionnaire items and also in the interviews with the same participants.

3.2.4 Consultation

The consultations can be divided into two main sections (See 1.1.2.1 Consultation). The first section of the consultation included information regarding the existence of the Five

Contrastive Features Framework in Persian and also Persian writing norms and the second section of the consultation was regarding the Persian translation of Fraser's Taxonomy of Discourse Markers.

3.2.5 Questionnaire, Pilot Study, and Inter Rater Reliability

Each of the three topics will be discussed separately.

3.2.5.1 Questionnaire

For the present study, a questionnaire (See Appendix 1) consisting of three different parts was used for the EFL students. The questionnaire items were written according to the guidelines mentioned by Siniscalco and Auriat in 2005 (See 2.17 Questionnaire). The EFL teachers were given a similar questionnaire which included the first two parts of the EFL students' version. The first part of the questionnaire includes the demographics. In this section, demographic information such as age, gender, field of study, mother tongue, number of years allocated for English learning was obtained. The questionnaire items were prepared in English and it was given to each student. The questionnaire was designed in English since the students had a good command of English vocabulary and structure. The researcher was present to make sure there was no ambiguity regarding vocabulary or comprehension difficulty in each section of the questionnaire. A Persian questionnaire was not used because some points may have been lost in the translation of the ideas provided by previous studies.

In order to seek answers to the third research question regarding the most problematic areas in English writing, the second part of the questionnaire was used. This part focused on the participants' perception of the most problematic areas of English writing. In this section, the participants were asked to express their perceptions regarding the six

different problems in writing (vocabulary, grammar, spelling, style, punctuation, and handwriting) as mentioned by Jordan (1997) using a five point Likert scale.

In the third part of the questionnaire, the student participants were asked to comment on their writing techniques, styles, and Myside bias. A five point Likert scale was used to collect the participants' ideas on this section. The designed questionnaire (based on Zia Houseini and Derakhshan, 2006; Mu and Carrington, 2007; Wolfe, Britt, and Butler, 2009; and Saneh, 2009) was piloted before administration. It took about 20 minutes for the students to fill out the entire questionnaire.

A similar questionnaire consisting of the demographics and the second part of the questionnaire (perception of the most problematic areas in English writing) was distributed among 20 Iranian EFL teachers who had at least 3 years of teaching experience and who had taught the higher intermediate level of language proficiencies. Jordan's (1997) questionnaire was used for the present study.

Since the researcher did not want the participants to become self conscious and jeopardize the outcome of the study, the students were first given the consent form, then they wrote the argumentative essays and after the essays were handed in, they were given the questionnaire. This was done to ensure the questionnaire items would not affect the essays written by the participants.

3.2.5.2 The Pilot Study (Reliability)

Before using the questionnaire in the main part of the study a pilot study was conducted. The questionnaire which included 6 problematic areas in English writing and also 6 question items on writing techniques, styles and myside bias (using a five-point Likert

scale) was given to 30 Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students (9 males and 21 females). Students were given 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. All the students' comments regarding ambiguous vocabulary and sentence structures were taken into account. Through the students' comments, it was established that the adverb "always" which was mentioned in the questionnaire items was "too strong" and made the students "feel restricted" while answering. Therefore, this adverb was omitted from the questionnaire items. Cronbach's alpha was applied to the data obtained from the 12 items of the questionnaire and this showed 0.76. The questionnaire was now ready to be used for the actual study.

3.2.5.3 Inter Rater Reliability

In order to be objective in presenting the results of the study, it was essential that more than one rater analyze the essays (Connor, 1996). One statistical measurement for interrater reliability is Cohen's Kappa. The SPSS tutorial (<http://www.statstutorials.com/SPSS/index.html>) defines Cohen's Kappa as a measurement "which ranges generally from 0 to 1.0 (although negative numbers are possible) where large numbers mean better reliability, values near or less than zero suggest that agreement is attributable to chance alone". Cohen's Kappa was calculated separately (See Table 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5) for each of the six subsections and a final average of all subsection was calculated in order to report the overall inter rater reliability. The overall inter rater reliability was 0.821. It should be pointed out that NVivo calculated the Kappa for the explicit discourse markers and that came to 0.970.

As for the rest of the subsections, the SPSS tables showing the results are as follow:

Table 3.1: Kappa inter rater reliability result for inductive vs. deductive

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error(a)	Approx. T(b)	Approx. Sig.
Measure of Kappa Agreement		.800	.067	7.164	.000
N of Valid Cases		80			

a Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Table 3.2: Kappa inter rater reliability result for start-sustain-turn-sum vs. introduction-body-conclusion

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error(a)	Approx. T(b)	Approx. Sig.
Measure of Kappa Agreement		.794	.200	7.256	.000
N of Valid Cases		80			

a Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Table 3.3: Kappa inter rater reliability result for circular vs. linear

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error(a)	Approx. T(b)	Approx. Sig.
Measure of Kappa Agreement		.701	.126	6.286	.000
N of Valid Cases		80			

a Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Table 3.4: Kappa inter rater reliability result for straightforward vs. metaphorical

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error(a)	Approx. T(b)	Approx. Sig.
Measure of Kappa Agreement		.775	.074	7.112	.000
N of Valid Cases		80			

a Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Table 3.5: Kappa inter rater reliability result for myside bias

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error(a)	Approx. T(b)	Approx. Sig.
Measure of Kappa Agreement		.900	.049	8.058	.000
N of Valid Cases		80			

a Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

As one of the pioneering works on Kappa-type statistics, Landis and Koch (1977) successfully categorized the various ranges of Kappa statistics results according to their strength of agreement. Table 3.6 shows this categorization.

**Table 3.6: Categorization of Kappa statistics results according to strength of agreement
(adopted from Landis and Koch, 1977, p. 165)**

Kappa Statistic	Strength of Agreement
<0.00	Poor
0.00-0.20	Slight
0.21-0.40	Fair
0.41-0.60	Moderate
0.61-0.80	Substantial
0.81-1.00	Almost Perfect

According to this categorization the strength of agreement between the two raters for four of the six categories fall under “substantial” and the remaining two could be classed as “almost perfect”. The overall inter rater reliability (0.821) also shows that the agreement between the two raters was “almost perfect” in this study. Discrepancies in the coding of the essays were resolved by having the two raters discuss scoring differences and determine the most appropriate coding.

3.2.6 Argumentative Writing Task

According to Kim (2008) most cross cultural studies based on rhetorical patterns suffer from two weaknesses. First, they only take into account the English texts that the ESL/EFL student has written with the belief that “the ESL compositions would reflect the rhetorical patterns of the students’ first language” (p.1). Secondly, Kim (2008) believes that when the ESL/EFL students are asked to write only in English, they might be “primed by English culture and may try to adopt English rhetorical patterns rather than follow the rhetorical styles preferred in their native culture” (p. 2). Therefore, it is not sufficient to only take into account the English texts written by the ESL/EFL students

when conducting contrastive rhetoric studies. In order to get a better perspective when studying the rhetoric of any specific culture, it is necessary to “investigate the texts written in the speakers’ native language in order to determine whether the rhetorical pattern is transferred from the native language” (Kim, 2008, p.3).

It should also be kept in mind that Iranian students’ writing experience is "essentially limited to the formal writing courses in Persian during their elementary and high school days" (Abdollahzadeh, 2010, p. 69). The compositions they do write are only in Persian and the students are not required to write compositions in English classes in schools. Students are not required to write essays or compositions after high school in the Iranian educational system (Abdollahzadeh, 2010).

Since this study focused on students who have had typical academic training in Iran, any student who had formally studied or attended English classes overseas was excluded. In order to avoid translation from one language to another, participants were not informed in the beginning that they would be writing about the same topic in both Persian and English, and the second essay writing task was given one week after the first task was introduced. Writing was done outside the class. All the essays were typed in order to facilitate text analysis and avoid illegible handwriting. All errors remained unchanged in the typed texts.

In order to ensure the students’ precision in writing the argumentative essays, the researcher approached a number of EFL teachers who were teaching the Higher-intermediate courses at a well known college in Mashhad, Iran. This was done in order to use the teachers’ authority in class to ensure students’ precision in writing. After getting their cooperation, the teachers assigned the writing tasks as class activity for the students.

A total of 40 Iranian Higher-intermediate EFL Students were asked to write a 300-350 word Persian argumentative essay. The students were instructed to write an essay arguing for or against the idea of establishing coeducational elementary schools in Iran. This was translated into Persian as “ایجاد دبستان های مختلط در ایران باید تشویق گردد”. The students were asked to type the essays and E-mail them to an E-mail account set up by the researcher. A week later, the same instructions were given to the students but this time round they were asked to write an English essay with the same topic “Having coeducational elementary schools in Iran should be encouraged”.

Since the researcher wanted to check whether the students would transfer Persian structures and expressions to their English essays, the Persian essay was appointed to the participants first. This order of task presentation was also used by many previous studies including Reid (1984), Kubota (1998), Kobayashi and Rinnert (2008) and Saneh (2009). Widdowson (1990) emphasizes that when students feel under pressure in ESL writing, they automatically turn to their first language for relief of pressure and end up making mistakes. Since including all 80 essays might be considered bulky, two samples (one in English and one in Persian) of the written essays can be seen in Appendix 6.

This essay topic was chosen because it is a current controversial issue that has been debated in Iran at the time of data collection, it is thought provoking, and also has a number of potential arguments for both writing for or against the topic. Various websites have devoted various WebPages to the issue [<http://www.independentschools.com/iran/> (Independent School); <http://www.iranchamber.com/index.php> (Iran Chamber Society); http://www.iranjewish.com/News_e.htm (Tehran Jewish Committee)]. Thus, the researcher considered the topic to be interesting and motivating for students to write about.

Wolfe, Britt and Butler (2009) believe that there are three “expectations or slots” to be filled in any argumentative text. These include: the theme, the side, and finally the predicate. They define each in the following way: “theme is the topic or subject of the argument, the side is represented as either pro or con, and the predicate is the particular position taken by the author” (p. 186). According to this, the three slots for the argumentative topic used in the present research would be: 1. the theme is having coeducational elementary schools in Iran should be encouraged 2. The side is for the practice and 3. The predicate is it should be legalized.

The main reason for choosing this number of words for the essays was that the students’ writing tasks generally include 300-350 words and so the students are acquainted with this for their writing activities. Also, since the argumentative essays were going to be a part of the students’ class writing activity, the researcher needed to follow the classes’ normal procedures. The students were asked to hand in their writings in a week’s time. There was no time restriction as many scholars (Raimes, 1983; Ballard and Clanchy, 1991; Zia Houseini & Derakhshan, 2006; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2008) believe time restriction can hinder the true performance of students. Participants were also allowed to use dictionaries in order to enhance their essay production and also to feel less constrained due to their limited knowledge of vocabulary and expressions. This was also the class norm for any writing activity.

Argumentative essay was chosen for a number of reasons; including "it is common in the academic disciplines and it is sensitive to task, audience and community, and it is particularly difficult for non native speaker" (Johns, 1993, p. 76). Also, it demands more attention on the part of the writer with regard to the audience the composition is written for. In argumentative writing, the writer has to address and consider the views of the

audience and so has to pay closer attention to what he/she writes (Connor, 1987; Rafoth, 1984).

3.2.7 Interview

There are numerous limitations regarding the use of close-ended questionnaires in a study. Some of these limitations would include collecting data which is distant from the real context it is meant to be used in, being limited to only the designers' preferences, not having room for the respondents' explanation or elaboration (Baker and Boonkit, 2004; Petric and Czarl, 2003). In order to reduce the effects of some of these shortcomings, the researcher decided to use an interview along with the students' written essays to help triangulate (See 2.16 Triangulation) the responses and collect complementary data. The interviews were mainly used as a secondary source of information in order to confirm what the students had mentioned in the questionnaire and what they produced in the argumentative essays. The interview was used more as "a medium for guided reflections" (Buckingham, 2008, p. 5) in this study.

The interview questions (See Appendix 5) aimed at uncovering how the respondents plan and write in English and what they transfer from Persian writing styles. The aim of conducting such an interview was to get the Iranian EFL students' perspectives regarding their essay writing and their writing background. The interview questions were based on Gosden (1996); Victori (1999); and Buckingham (2008). The interview was conducted in English as the participants had a good command of English. The length of the interview was restricted to 15 minutes to keep it manageable.

A variety of question types were used in the interview. As Buckingham (2008) suggest “closed questions that received a positive response were followed by an open question asking the respondent to describe the relevant experience or provide reasons for the situation discussed” (p. 5). To help keep the interview on course, the researcher employed many interviewing techniques (See 2.18 Interview; Berg, 2001). Some of these techniques included appreciative comments, an interested silence, expressing doubt on what had been mentioned, and referring to past points mentioned by the interviewee (Abdollahzadeh, 2010). Kvale’s (1996) stages of conducting an effective interview were taken into consideration during the interview (See 2.18 Interview). The interviews were audio taped and transcribed. A total of 8 participants (on a voluntary basis) were selected to take part in the interview. Of these 8 participants 4 were male and 4 were female students. This was done so as to ensure both genders had an equal chance at expressing their views.

3.3 Research Design

3.3.1 Data Collection

The data collection happened in five phases. As a first step, a number of experts from the departments of Persian language and literature and also English Language and Literature at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran were consulted regarding the five different sections of the contrastive features mentioned by Xing, et al. (2008). The experts were generally consulted regarding the position of Persian language in the Five Contrastive Features Framework (See 1.1.2.1 Consultation).

After consultation, the researcher went to a renowned college and after getting their approval for cooperation on the present study; she addressed some EFL teachers and

asked for their cooperation in this research. This was done to enable the researcher to use the teachers' authority in classes to make sure the students spend enough time and energy on the required sections.

In the first phase of the study, a pilot study was conducted on 30 Iranian EFL Higher-intermediate students. The students were first given a consent form (See Appendix 2) and then they were given the questionnaire and asked to fill out the required information. The researcher was present to answer any questions the participants may have. The collected data were used for substantiating the overall reliability of the questionnaire. Finally, the validated questionnaire was ready to be administered to a new group of participants to collect the data for the different parts of the second aim of the study. The data for this phase were collected during March 17- 19, 2010.

In the second phase, each student was initially given a written consent form (See Appendix 2) explaining the student's participation and also giving some information regarding the overall research. After the consent forms were signed by the students, in the next session of class the participants were asked to write an argumentative essay in Persian and E-mail it to the E-mail address set up by the researcher by next week. In the next week's session, the students were told to write the argumentative essay in English and E-mail it to the same Email address. This was also the time interval selected by many previous studies including Eason (1995), Kubota (1998), Mbaye (2001), and Lin (2007). Since the students were told this was a part of their writing activity for the class, the students all met the deadlines set by the researcher. The data for this phase were collected during April 4-17, 2010.

In the third phase, the questionnaire (See Appendix 1) was given to the actual group under study with 40 participants who had the same characteristics as those who participated in the pilot study. The researcher was present during the 20 minutes it took the participants to complete the questionnaire. She read through each part of the questionnaire and answered any questions the participants' might have. The data for this phase was collected during April 17-19, 2010.

In the fourth phase, to determine the teachers' point of view on students' problematic areas in English writing a similar questionnaire (See Appendix 3) was given to 20 Iranian EFL teachers. They initially signed a written consent form (See Appendix 4). The teachers all had at least 3 years of experience teaching English classes. It took the teachers about 15 minutes to fill out the questionnaire. The researcher was present to make sure there would be no ambiguities for the teachers. The data for this phase were collected during April 6-9, 2010.

In the last phase, to further probe into participants' writing techniques and myside bias, an interview was held with 8 chosen EFL students from the participants (on a voluntary basis). The interviewees were briefed beforehand regarding the purpose of the interview, and the interview was conducted in a semi-structured format so that the interviewer's questions would not limit the participants and they could openly discuss the writing strategies they employed. The researcher prepared a set of open ended questions (See Appendix 5) based on Gosden (1996), Victori (1999), and Buckingham (2008) for the participants to answer; however, the researcher also allowed room for digression during the interviews and encouraged interviewees to talk about any issue they felt relevant to the topic. The interviewees' names were changed to numerical codes to protect anonymity. The interviews were conducted during April 19-22, 2010. All parts of the

interviews including the repetition were transcribed. The data collection can be seen on the timeline provided below (Figure 3.1).

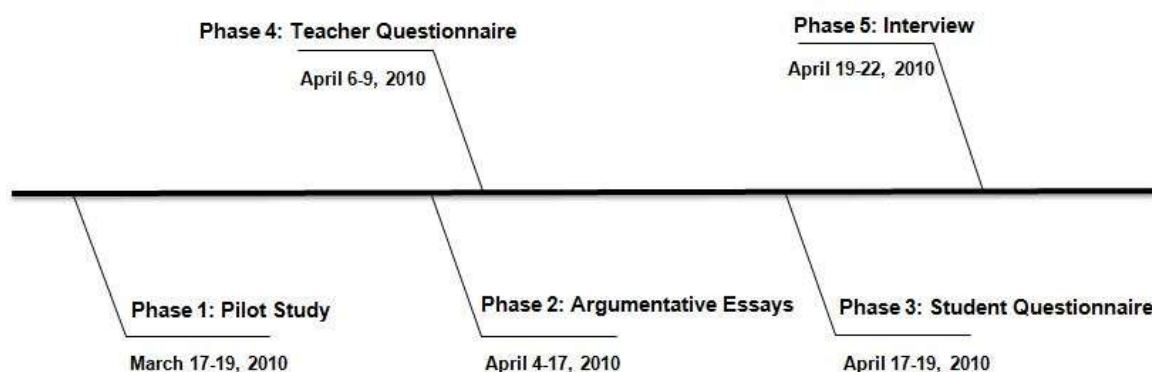


Figure3.1: Data collection timeline

3.3.2 Data Analysis

The argumentative writings were coded according to the framework provided by Xing, et al. (2008). This was done by two bilingual (English and Persian) raters to insure inter rater reliability. The scoring procedure will be discussed below. The SPSS software (version 11.5) was used for the statistical analyses of the questionnaire and the NVivo software was used for locating and counting the discourse markers.

SPSS or Statistical Package for the Social Sciences is one of the most widely used programs for statistical analysis in social science. According to the official website (www.spss.com), this software is used for quantitative studies. This software has the “flexibility you need, including access to a wide variety of data and file types, direct access to command syntax for power users and a range of deployment options that put the power of statistics where you need it”.

The NVivo software is a computer program used for qualitative data analysis. It generally assists the raters in locating and marking the discourse markers present in each text. So, it generally helps with data management and data analysis. According to NVivo's official website (www.qsrinternational.com), "NVivo is a qualitative data analysis computer software package produced by QSR International. It has been designed for qualitative researchers working with very rich text-based and/or multimedia information, where deep levels of analysis on small or large volumes of data are required". The important feature of NVivo is the fact that it can deal with texts in any language. Most similar software including Weft-QDA do not support Persian scripts. The site goes on to explain that "NVivo lets you organize and classify data quickly. Work systematically and ensure you don't miss anything in your data".

Scoring Procedure

In order to reduce the effects of subjectivity in the data analysis and also to increase the reliability of the results obtained, the researcher asked another bilingual (English and Persian) to analyze all the 80 essays including 40 English and 40 Persian argumentative essays. By doing so the researcher tried to ensure interrater reliability. A briefing session was held with the other rater. The researcher initially explained the various sections of the framework to the other rater. Both raters agreed on the validity of the framework. The raters then randomly rated one essay together in order to make sure no misinterpretation had taken place during the briefing session and that the explanations were sufficient. Afterwards, each essay was scored holistically by the two raters independently. The raters were allowed as much time as necessary in hoping to improve the overall reliability by eliminating the time pressure. After the scoring was completed, the interrater reliability was measured by Cronbach's alpha.

As for the last section of the framework which was the discourse markers, the raters both used the NVivo software. Each argumentative essay was rated by two different bilingual raters who were TEFL specialist and had at least 7 years of experience teaching and grading students' writing samples.

3.4 Concluding Marks

In this chapter a descriptive report was given regarding how the study was planned and administered. In the first section a brief introduction was given regarding the study. In the next section the sampling which included setting and participants was explained. The participants were divided into three parts namely, student participants, teacher participants, bilingual raters were reported. In the third section, the instrumentation was discussed. This section included 7 parts including 1. Five contrastive features framework; 2. Fraser's Taxonomy of Discourse Markers; 3. Myside bias; 4. Consultation; 5. Argumentative writing task; 6. Questionnaire; and finally, 7. Interview. In the last section the procedure used in the study was thoroughly explained. This section was divided into two parts. The first part was data collection and this was directly followed by data analysis. The results of these different phases along with a discussion will be explained in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

4.0 Introduction

This chapter provides us with a discussion and analysis of data regarding the research findings in response to the research questions concerned with style differences in writing, contrastive features, perception of most difficult areas in English writing, and traces of myside bias of the participating EFL students in their writing activities.

The overall pool of data for the present study was gathered through the responses the participants gave in the argumentative essays written by the participants, the survey questionnaire and finally the information which was elicited from the interviews (See 3.2 Instrumentation). A combination of all of the above data was used in order to investigate and answer the research questions. It should be kept in mind that the Iranian EFL students' 80 written argumentative essays were used as the key to unfolding the Five Contrastive Features Framework (See 3.2.1 Five Contrastive Features Framework). To assist the reader in comprehending the various categories, the results of this study will be presented in three main sections in this chapter namely- the argumentative writing task, questionnaire, and interview.

4.1 Argumentative Writing Task

The argumentative writing tasks were the essence of the present study (See Appendix 6). These written essays served as the main instrument that yielded data required to answer research questions 1, 2 and 4 (See 1.0.3 Purpose of the Study). This section provides us with the results of the five contrastive features from the framework and one additional section. The additional section was introduced by the researcher in order to

check whether myside bias was present in the written essays. These results are the outcome of the raters' analysis of each essay (See 3.2.5 Questionnaire, Pilot Study, and Inter Rater Reliability). In the final stage the Social Science Statistical Package (SPSS) along with NVivo were employed (See 3.3.2 Data Analysis) to obtain the results. In order to help with the presentation of the results, this part is divided into 2 main sections-namely English essays and Persian essays; and 6 subsections to encompass the 5 Contrastive Features Framework plus myside bias.

4.1.1 English Essays

The participants' English argumentative essays were assessed by two bilingual (English and Persian) evaluators (See 3.1.2.3 Bilingual Raters). Xing, Wang, and Spencer's (2008) Five Contrastive Features Framework along with the presence of myside bias were the overall six categories analyzed by the two raters. Overall, a total of 13,508 words were used by the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students throughout their 40 English argumentative essays. The following subsections will describe and interpret the results obtained from the English argumentative essays:

4.1.1.1 Inductive vs. Deductive Feature

After analyzing each English argumentative essay for the position of the main idea, values were given to each of the binary features (inductive/deductive) and the results were entered into the SPSS (version 11.5). Later on, the frequency of the two binary features was checked (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Frequency results for inductive vs. deductive feature (English essays)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Deductive	18	45.0	45.0	45.0
	Inductive	22	55.0	55.0	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

As can be seen from above, 55% of the English argumentative essays were inductive in nature. Chen-Yu (1981) also found similar results in her Chinese speaking participants' writings. This could very well be one area of concern since most English essays (British or American) prefer a deductive style of presenting the main idea (Xing et al., 2008). In their study in 2008, Xing and her colleagues found that 60% of the English writers used a deductive style of presenting the main idea. Donahue (2008) also found that 84% of the essays which her American participants had written were deductive in nature. The delay in introducing the purpose of the essay can make the writing seem disorganized to the native Western reader and this could bring about negative scoring for the students in the academic community in general and specifically on internationally renowned exams such as TOEFL and IELTS (See 2.13.1 Inductive vs. Deductive).

4.1.1.2 Start-Sustain-Turn-Sum vs. Introduction-Body-Conclusion Feature

One important feature of any rhetorical style is the overall method of structuring the information. The English (British and American) preferred manner is the introduction-body-conclusion. In this method the main idea or theme is introduced in the introduction, the body contains the argument and the supporting details, and finally everything is summarized in the conclusion. After analyzing the 40 English essays the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students wrote, the results (Table 4.2) of their overall rhetorical structuring was determined through utilizing SPSS.

Table 4.2: Frequency results for start-sustain-turn-sum vs. introduction-body-conclusion feature (English essays)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I-B-C	39	97.5	97.5	97.5
	S-S-T-S	1	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

As can be seen from Table 4.2, almost all writers followed the introduction-body-conclusion structure. The student's essays used coherent links to connect the different paragraphs and they did not turn to any unrelated topics within the essay. This is the style which is preferred by the native English speakers (Xing et al., 2008; Cho, 1999). One main reason for this selection might be the writing instructions Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students received from the onset of English classes. The English writing syllabus focuses on teaching the students how to write according to introduction-body-conclusion style. This is what almost all the interviewees pointed out in their interviews. Interviewee 1 elaborated that the main stages of writing an English argumentative essay include:

The first one is introduction and in the introduction (eh) we should (eh) say about the topic first and (um) then (um) express our opinion about the topic (um) for example, we are agree with the sentence or disagree with the sentence or something like that. And after introduction we have (eh) body (eh) which contains for example two, three or four paragraphs and at the end (pause) and in the body (eh) we should (eh) we should say about the different (eh) reasons that support our idea... And (eh) in the summary or in the conclusion we should (eh) rephrase (eh) what we have (eh) said in the or mentioned in the body in different words, but in short and not the long and (eh).

When asked the same question, interviewee 4 had a similar idea:

So, (um) for writing an essay or argumentative writing, first thing that we need that's really required is (eh) a strong opinion. An absolute topic, what we're going to write about it, what we're going to talk about it. You know a strong opinion, a clear one, evidences and reasons. The first thing pretty important introducing the issue very clear maybe all your evidence of that issue is just a misunderstanding between definitions. We should define clearly everything, every expression, what we're gonna write about, (eh) the definitions are important, I think. The third thing, I think, clarifying of why I chose this (eh) topic, what's the background, why am I related to the topic, how to make a connection between the evidences, what's the background of it, and (um) reasons. In these steps, three or four, reasons should be put clearly by pure evidences. The evidences can be lots of things, for example, you can use examples, logic, and lots of things and the last part should be conclusion, clear and exponential conclusion. I mean, according to the methods, we should conclude and at least have enough, big enough conclusion or to have (eh) the most influence. When the reader read it, gain (eh); get everything that you want to say.

4.1.1.3 Circular vs. Linear Feature

Kaplan (1966) claims that the English paragraph organization is linear while other languages have an array of different organizational methods (See 2.1 Kaplan and Contrastive Rhetoric). Through an email correspondence with one of the creators of the Five Contrastive Features Framework (See Appendix 7), it was determined that any paragraph that had two or more main ideas would be considered 'circular'. After analyzing all 40 essays, the SPSS results (Table 4.3) are as follow.

Table 4.3: Frequency results for circular vs. linear feature (English essays)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Circular	40	100.0	100.0	100.0

It is noteworthy to see that all the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students opted for a circular development for their essays. This is also in line with what Xing, et al. (2008) found in the Chinese students' English essays they analyzed. They found that the Chinese students had "a greater tendency to change topics within paragraphs" (P. 85).

According to the above finding regarding circularity, one area of concern in the Iranian EFL students' writings is revealed. Circular writing which involves writing more than one main idea per paragraph could explain why non native speakers' writings are sometimes labeled as disorganized, digressive, drifting, waffling, vague, indirect, incoherent, irrelevant, and loosely structured (Lux, 1991; Ballard and Clanchy, 1991; Cortazzi and Jin 1997; Saneh, 2009). This could be an important pointer for teachers to focus on when teaching writing to their students.

Here are some samples of circular paragraphs written by the participants (main ideas are bolded and italicized).

Excerpt 1 (Essay 7):

Opposite sex relationship plays an important role in one's emotional awareness and can be considered as a significant factor affecting future life quality and marriage success (main idea 1). If the family can not provide this opportunity, there is no where to obtain such experience but at school. Single-sex education especially at elementary schools deprives children from this necessary part of emotional awareness improvement, and will lead to lots of misconception about opposite sex, which can make problem in their future relationships. In co-education system, which students of both sexes study at the same class rooms, the relation between both sexes will be deepen that can cause better opposite sex cognition and self-confidence level increase. ***Boys will be less coarse like rocks and girls more active*** (main idea 2). ***Besides, it***

also has educational benefits. It blows the spirit of competition and more intellectuals will be produced (main idea 3).

As can be seen from the bolded and italicized sections, this participant has mentioned three main ideas in this paragraph. He begins by pointing out how coeducational schools can contribute to the emotional awareness of the students and links this to successful marriage. He then follows by comparing boys to rocks, but does not mention how this idea is related to the past claim. Finally, he talks about the benefits of coeducational school as regard to the sense of competition among students and how this can increase the number of intellectuals. He does not explain how this can be achieved. The number of words in this particular paragraph is 141. According to Arnaudet (1981) a good paragraph should include at least 3 sentences and be in the range of 100-200 words. However, Zemach and Islam (2004) explain further and believe a paragraph should only have 6 -12 sentences. Each sentence should in fact be directly related to the main sentence. Hence, according to the above scholars the mentioned paragraph appears acceptable according to the length (141 words) and number of sentences (7). The sentences in this paragraph ranged from 6-34 words which show a great change in the length of sentences.

Excerpt 2 (Essay 16):

My opinion is that both boys and girls are freer in single sex classrooms (main idea 1). Although interaction with opposite gender prepares students for life out of school, it can happen outside of school easily instead. Some research seems to suggest that boys and girls learn in different ways. If you accept this, coeducation probably will not work satisfactorily for every child. In Iran, many people want that their children study in single-sex schools instead of co-educational schools because it is better. It is obvious that children can concentrate on their lessons more easily in single-sex schools. *I*

think this condition do not happen in university because we talk about older people who can realize many things and have enough capacity (main idea 2). Moreover, in co-educational schools, pupils attempt to attract opposite gender instead of paying attention to their lessons. *Schools are a suitable place for studying well not for dealing with opposite gender* (main idea 3). Therefore, I think single-sex schools are much better than co-educational schools.

In the above paragraph, the participant begins the first main idea by talking about the liberating feeling students have in single sex schools. Afterwards, he talks about students at the university level and how they have reached a stage in which they can manage to study together in a coeducational environment. In the third main idea, the student goes back to the idea of schools and points out that school is an environment for learning and not dealing with the opposite gender and he finally concludes the essay. The organization of ideas here tends to hint at composing a complete essay in one paragraph. The paragraph seems to be crammed with many ideas, some of which have not been fully developed by the writer. The writer seems to be jumping back and forth between ideas mentioned and this can become a bit confusing for the reader. However, the paragraph is considered to be acceptable according to the length (161 words) and number of sentences (10) used (Arnaudet, 1981; Zemach and Islam, 2004). The sentence length ranges from 11-24 words.

Excerpt 3 (Essay 22):

I remember when my father taught in small villages around Birjand, the elementary schools were coeducational (main idea 1). However I wasn't in these schools and I don't know what they are. But, now, there are some schools which are coeducational, too. As a result, it is not possible to say the schools are separated completely. May be the truth is this fact. Since schools are parts of human society, it is not possible to make a complete separation between men and women or boys and girls in the society at the different ages.

If the schools in Iran become coeducational, the competition sense of students might be strengthened (main idea 2). As I said before, there are a lot of elementary schools, not only in villages, even in small towns which are coeducational. For example, I know one of these elementary schools in Babolsar. *However, it seems that by reducing the number of entries of elementary schools in Iran in compare to last years, existence of coeducational elementary schools is happening automatically* (main idea 3). May be this happening is indication of needing to coeducational of elementary schools.

In excerpt 3, the writer tends to mention three different ideas but does not go in depth to explain each one. She starts by remembering how her father taught at coeducational schools (main idea 1), followed by an advantage of coeducational schools- namely the competitive spirit among student (main idea 2) - and finishes by pointing out the decrease in the number of students entering elementary schools (main idea 3). However, she does not provide any reference as to why she believes the number of elementary students is decreasing! And what makes this argument less effective is how she arrives at her conclusion based on the decrease of the number of elementary students. However, the analysis of the strength of claims is beyond the scope of the present study. This paragraph has 180 words which means about two thirds of the words in the essay have been used in this one paragraph. However, according to Arnaudet (1981) and Zemach and Islam (2004), the paragraph length (180 words) and number of sentences (11) are acceptable. The sentence length ranges from 7-31 words which shows a great diversity in the length.

Excerpt 4 (Essay 39):

Despite of so many differences between men and women which may cause some issues in their relations, still advantages of involvement of both sexes in societies outweighs it's drawbacks (main idea 1). One of the fundamental aspects of this integration can be observed in schools, more specifically in elementary schools wherein the personality of a child is made. Human society prosperity is based upon this fact that how well women and men can face, understand and manage their differences or even their contractions, the more they can do this the more successful society can be established through their cooperation. *This ability is acquisitive and school training is one of the best ways to gain it, certainly family education has a great impact on this achievement too* (main idea 2). On the other hand, to make this skill permanent in the children's personality, it needs to be taught to them in early ages like in elementary schools. *Coeducational elementary school is one of the options that comprise both of these factors; integrated as well as early age training* (main idea 3).

This excerpt is also somewhat lengthy and it talks about three main ideas. The writer initiates by mentioning her side as regard to the argumentative topic (main idea 1). She mentions the interaction between men and women from early on can be an effective factor in their success in the long run. Then she goes on to point out that 'family education' plays a significant role (main idea 2), but fails to explain what she means or even how this can be achieved. She finally ends her essay by referring to combining 'two factors' which she does not highlight very well (main idea 3). This essay had 171 words and 6 sentences which make it an acceptable paragraph (Arnaudet, 1981; Zemach and Islam, 2004). The sentence length ranges from 21-41 words which makes this a long-winded paragraph for reader comprehension.

4.1.1.4 Metaphorical vs. Straightforward Feature

Using quotes, proverbs, allusions, metaphors etc. is a common part of Persian composition (Dehghanpisheh, 1979; Reid, 1984; and Saneh, 2009). The use of figurative language adds to the beauty of writing and in turn contributes to higher grades for students on Persian writing tests. However, to the Western reader, the use of literary patterns is considered as a cliché and contributes to negative scoring on writing exams. “Western teachers of writing encourage students to write in their own voice using their own words” (Xing et al., 2008; p. 75)

Through correspondence with one of the authors of the Five Contrastive Features Framework, it was determined that any essay that included two or more metaphors, proverbs, idioms etc. would be labeled ‘metaphorical’. The results of the analysis of the 40 essays can be seen in Table 4.4 Overall, a total of 98 cases of figurative patterns were found in the 40 English argumentative essays written by the participants.

Table 4.4: Frequency results for metaphorical vs. straightforward feature (English essays)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Straightforward	18	45.0	45.0	45.0
	Metaphorical	22	55.0	55.0	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.4 shows that a little more than half of the essays (55%) included more than two cases of literary patterns such as metaphors, proverbs, idioms, allusion, etc. This result is also echoed in the students’ responses in the questionnaire items. In questionnaire item 2 (See Table 4.18) 77.5% of the participants asserted they use quotes, proverbs, idioms etc. to reinforce their ideas in essay writing. Although the percentage of literary

passage usage is not as high as what the participants had perceived, it is still a noteworthy result.

Connor (1996) reports that her Iranian students faced a problem in making their writings comprehensible to other students due to the use of Persian thinking and use of proverbs.

One of her students at the end of the freshman English class mentions:

Thinking in English rather than Persian or in French was something that I had to take into consideration every time I started to write something. Many times I explained an idea the way I used to do in Iran and the reader could not understand my point. For example in my essay about “friendship”, I used a Persian proverb and my writing group members did not really understand its meaning so I had to change it. Gradually I learned to think in English but I still have to practice more (pp. 3 and 4).

The use of flowery language in general can bring about a great deal of difficulty in the comprehension of ideas especially to the non natives of that language. Ballard and Clanchy (1991) found similar results with an Arab student who was under the impression that a verse from Koran (Muslim’s holy book) could very well sum up his writing. This student never realized that his writings might not be comprehensible to non Muslims. Here is a list of some excerpts used by the participants in their essays to show a sample of flowery language used (Table 4.5). References drawn from the Persian figurative language samples are provided in the third column by the researcher.

Table 4.5: Samples of figurative language in English essays

Essay Number	Figurative Language	Reference
1	Girls are sensitive flowers and boys are not patient gardeners.	Referring to the differences between boys and girls regarding sensitivity.
3	This two way street situation	Referring to a two way relationship
4	Each coin has two faces	Referring to the viewing the same topic in two ways

6	So this way boys would not be lions and the girls become mouse	Referring to the strength and boldness of boys as opposed to girls
7	Basically in Iran, the family has been responsible for keeping flower buds safe till they bloom.	Referring to ensuring a safe environment for raising children
7	Youth is blind	Referring to inexperience of youth
8	Appearing like tom-boys	Referring to exhibiting characteristics or behaviors which are considered typical of guys
11	Human being is greedy to what is forbidden to	Referring to limitations in relationships
11	This issue is not that black and white to answer clearly	Referring to not having a clear cut answer
12	we don't have to cage the existence of a religion with hard frames like Islam	Referring to religious limitations
14	The boys are usually interested in being a hero and it means they are usually fighting with something. On the other hand, the girls always want to be an angle.	Referring to the nature of boys vs. girls
17	If the first brick architect is tilt, tilted wall goes up Soraya.	Referring to the saying "a good beginning makes a good ending"
18	The girls will also wash their shyness of the boys if they are taught with them	Referring to removing shyness
21	boys won't be like cold stone	Referring to boys being less emotional
21	differences move them to a positive challenge and compete, which can act like a lifting lever	Referring to differences helping to progress academically
24	the girls don't need to be like mice and shy away	Referring to shyness of girls
26	Primary schools are of main venues at the beginning of growth of small flowers	Referring to raising children

26	It is in such a creative place that the child flourishes like wild flower	Referring to raising children
26	The hope is that doing this project for our baby boom generation will be fruitful	Referring to being productive
27	I think children at this age are so sensitive flowers	Referring to the critical age of children
28	The girls will not feel shy and weak like mice in the presence of boys	Referring to the shyness of girls
29	As our great poet Sadi said, all humans are a part of each other and so there should be no difference between them	Referring to the equality of men
30	The process and quality of relationship with opposite gender is an unknown and foggy area	Referring to ambiguity
32	Girls can easily set shyness away	Referring to overcoming shyness
35	The discrimination behavior against male and female is one the most significant problems that could be softened with the coeducational system.	Referring to avoiding discrimination
37	Two heads are better than one!	Referring to when two people work together more can be accomplished
37	Boys can become more friendly and soft and can omit an old thought which was: "the boys should tolerate everything and be hard as a rock"	Referring to an old belief that boys should be less emotional and stronger than girls.
38	A co-educational school offers children nothing less than a true version of society in miniature.	Referring to life in a nutshell
38	Boys and girls are made to feel that they are a race apart.	Referring to the distance and differences between boys and girls

4.1.1.5 Explicit Discourse Markers Feature

According to Fraser's (1999) Taxonomy of Discourse Markers (See Appendix 8), the discourse markers were divided into three categories- contrastive, elaborative, and inferential markers. This was done using NVivo (Version 8). Each discourse marker was introduced as a 'tree node' and the samples of discourse markers were introduced as subcategories of each tree node. The 40 English argumentative essays were imported as the sources for the inquiry. Then each of the essays was checked for the presence of every individual sample of each of the markers. After each sample was highlighted by NVivo, the researcher checked the context in which the sample discourse marker appeared in to ensure it was correct. Once this was established, the discourse marker would be dragged into its slot in the nodes. This was done for every discourse sample in all 40 English argumentative essays. After this was done, each of the selected discourse markers was double checked and entered into the specific tree node. So, overall, each sample of discourse marker was checked twice by the researcher. The total number of discourse markers and the relative percentage found are shown in figure 4.1. A total number of 896 discourse markers were found in the English argumentative essays.

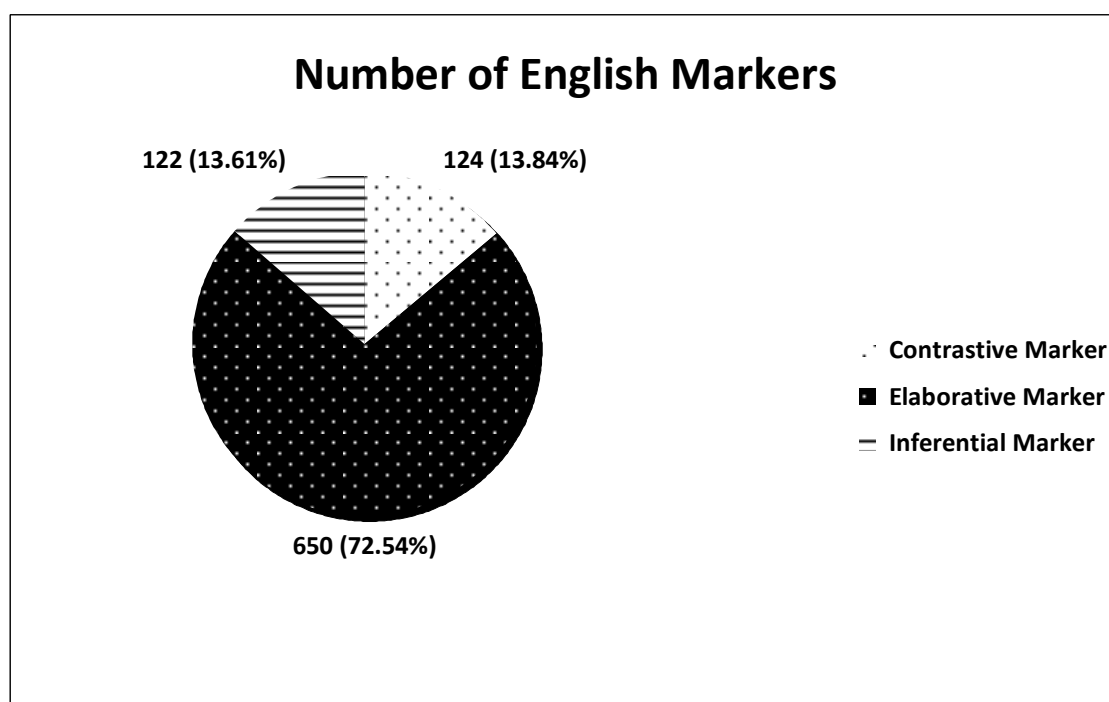


Figure 4.1: Number and percentage of English markers

As can be seen in Figure 4.1, elaborative markers had the highest number of references (650) in the essays. One main reason for this is that the word ‘and’ is a sample of this marker and ‘and’ had the highest number of cases in the elaborative marker. Overall, a total of 520 references were allocated to ‘and’.

Contrastive (124) and inferential (122) markers had a similar number of references. In contrastive markers, the word ‘but’ had the highest number of references (68 references) and in inferential markers, the word ‘so’ was repeated more than others with 56 references. It should be mentioned that some of the samples of discourse markers-including: ‘conversely’, ‘nonetheless’, ‘on the contrary’, ‘though’, ‘above all’, ‘analogously’, ‘better yet’, ‘by the same token’, ‘likewise’, ‘accordingly’, ‘all things considered’, ‘surely’, ‘if so’...-were not used in the 40 English argumentative essays. Accordingly, the highest percentage of English markers also belonged to elaborative markers (72.5%) followed by contrastive (13.8%) and inferential (13.6%) markers.

4.1.1.6 Myside Bias Feature

This feature was added on to the framework by the researcher in order to see whether the participants paid attention to both sides of the argument in the argumentative essays or whether they just focused on proving their own point of views. The results are as follow (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6: Frequency results for myside bias feature (English essays)					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes (Myside bias present)	22	55.0	55.0	55.0
	No	18	45.0	45.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

The results obtained from the essays regarding the presence of myside bias are also supported by what the participants responded on the questionnaire and also the interviews. The two questionnaire items related to the presence of myside bias (questionnaire items 4 and 6) had very strong, that is, ranging from 79% to 83%, responses (See Table 4.18) from the participants. These responses all pointed to the participants' desire to focus and prove their point of views and not pay attention to the other side of the argument.

Many interviewees also referred to their support of myside bias in their writing. When asked about whether they paid attention to both sides of an argument in their argumentative writing, interviewee 7 had this to say: "Most of the time I write what I think and sometimes what I think about something is more important than what people think". This was also echoed in the response which interviewee 8 gave: "My idea is more important than that of others. Interviewee 6 also believed in myside bias: "I just address at on my point of view because in that time, I believe in it".

Interviewee 3 also pointed out that although she knew it would be better to pay attention to both sides, in practice she could not:

I know that it's better to think of both sides, but (eh) I can't. I mean (eh) when I want to write an argumentative writing (eh), I focus on the side that (eh) I think (eh) it's (eh) the side which is my choice and bring some (eh) reason to support it, but (eh) I try to use both sides.

4.1.2 Persian Essays

Similar to the English argumentative essays, the Persian essays were analyzed by two bilingual (English and Persian) raters (See 3.1.2.3 Bilingual Raters). Xing, Wang, and Spencer's (2008) Five Contrastive Features Framework along with the myside bias category were the overall six categories analyzed by the two raters. Overall, a total of 13,525 words were used by the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students throughout their 40 Persian argumentative essays. Although the participants were limited in the number of words used in the essays (300-350), they still used slightly more words in their Persian argumentative essays as compared to the English ones (13,508 words). This is mainly due to the fact that Persian is the participants' mother tongue and it is obviously easier for them to write in Persian.

4.1.2.1 Inductive vs. Deductive Feature

The binary features (inductive/deductive) were also used for the Persian essays and the results for the frequency of the two binary features was found (Table 4.7).

Table 4.7: Frequency results for inductive vs. deductive feature (Persian essays)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Deductive	22	55.0	55.0	55.0
	Inductive	18	45.0	45.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

As can be seen from the results, the inductive/deductive feature of the Persian argumentative essays has a surprising twist as compared to English ones. 55% of the Persian argumentative essays were deductive and the remaining 45% were inductive in nature. This shows that although the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students have been taught to apply a deductive style of writing in their English essays, they tend to use this style more in their Persian argumentative essays. Xing, et al. (2008) found that only 17% of their Chinese participants used a deductive style of writing. Here, a little more than half the participants (55%) used this style of writing.

4.1.2.2 Start-Sustain-Turn-Sum vs. Introduction-Body-Conclusion Feature

The 40 Persian essays written by the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students were also analyzed for the overall method of structuring the information. The results of the analysis can be found in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Frequency results for start-sustain-turn-sum vs. introduction-body-conclusion feature (Persian essays)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I-B-C	39	97.5	97.5	97.5
	S-S-T-S	1	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

As was mentioned earlier, (See 4.1.1.2 Start-Sustain-Turn-Sum vs. Introduction-Body-Conclusion Feature) the English preferred manner of structuring information is the introduction-body-conclusion. As can be seen from the above table (Table 4.8), 97.5% of the participants opted for the introduction-body-conclusion structure over the start-sustain-turn-sum structure. During the consults with the experts at the department of Persian language and literature (See 1.1.2.1 Consultation), it was determined that the Persian style of writing has been changing during the past few decades. The experts asserted that the present general style of writing being used in Persian composition is actually the same as English. This was also what was observed in many Persian writing manuals (Derakhshan, 1988; Taherkhani, 1995; Ghorbaniun, 2004; Givi, Hakemi, Shokri, Tabatabaee, 2006; Samiee, 2008; and Solhjoo, 2008).

In their study, Xing, et al. (2008) found that some of their Chinese participants used the start-sustain-turn-sum structure and that this structure had emerged from the Chinese poetry.

In one of the interviews, the interviewee (Interviewee 2) described the Persian manner of structuring information in the following way:

...the first paragraph is to just (eh) give us general (eh) for example opinion about the writing... And in the second we can talk about the positive side and in the third paragraph the negative side and in the conclusion we can express our personal idea.

She believed that the overall structure is the same in English and Persian argumentative writing. Interviewee 3 also asserted that “If I want to write an essay in Farsi I would follow the stages in that English told”. Another participant also mentioned (Interviewee 8):

I think but the whole structure [of English and Persian argumentative essay] is the same. For example when I read some articles in Persian, and found some articles and some books the structure of all of them is the same [as English]. I think the introduction, expanding and conclusion.

In another part, interviewee 8 sums up the idea of the comparison between English and Persian structure by saying:

It was all the same as the ones that we learn in English that for example, it was in the whole structure. That if you want to read [write] about some subject, at first you have to introduce it what you want to talk about and after that in some paragraphs you have to mention it more and expand it more and the total is the conclusion that what you get it from the text.

4.1.2.3 Circular vs. Linear Feature

The 40 Persian argumentative essays were analyzed using the same method as English. After analyzing all 40 essays, the SPSS results (Table 4.9) showed the following.

Table 4.9: Frequency results for circular vs. linear feature (Persian essays)					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Linear	1	2.5	2.5	2.5
	Circular	39	97.5	97.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

As can be seen in the above table, almost all (97.5%) of the Persian argumentative essays were written in a circular manner. This shows that the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students preferred to use a wide range of ideas in each paragraph they wrote. This result is supported by Baleghizadeh and Pashaii (2010), and Meskoob (1995). Baleghizadeh and Pashaii (2010) point out that there is no explicit boundary between spoken and written discourse in Persian and that spoken discourse is the

presiding style and has a great impact on the written discourse. They then go on to explain that

One of the main characteristics of oral discourse in Farsi is topic shift, i.e. the speaker, from time to time, shifts from one topic to another trying his or her best to make the issue as attractive and persuasive as possible (p. 18).

Consequently, having multi-topical or 'circular' (as Xing, et al. describe in 2008) paragraphs, are common in Persian writing. This might very well be one reason why these Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students opted for this style even in their English argumentative essays. Here are four sample paragraphs to show the circularity in the essays written in the Persian language. It should be kept in mind that the same paragraphs from the English essays could not be selected as some of the participants wrote linearly when it came to their Persian essays.

An English translation of each of the excerpts is provided following the paragraphs. All translations were also checked with the second rater in order to ensure a less ambiguous translation. Discrepancies in the translations were resolved by having the two raters discuss the differences and determine the most appropriate translation.

Persian Excerpt 1 (Essay 3):

تشکیل کلاسهای مختلط در دبستانها و موضوعاتی که همیشه مطرح بوده است و از دیدگاه شخصی من با وجود مشکلات و معایبی که ممکن است وجود داشته باشد مزایای این سیستم آموزشی بیشتر است (main idea 1). از لحاظ آموزشی تحصیل دختران و پسران در یک محیط باعث ایجاد حس رقابت شده و این به پیشرفت علمی آنان کمک بسزایی خواهد کرد و البته قابل به ذکر است که نظارت و کنترل در این کلاسها به مراتب سخت تر از کلاسهای معمولی خواهد بود (main idea 2)، زیرا برقراری تعادل بین دو گروه حاضر در کلاس که از دو جنس مختلف هستند نیازمند قدرت مدیریتی و تجربه ی بالا است.

English Translation of Excerpt 1 (Essay 3):

I support creating coeducational classes in elementary schools regardless of the problems and disadvantages it can have and I believe there are more advantages for having such schools. Based on academic issues, having girls and boys study in the same environment can create a sense of competition and this can help them academically, *however it should be pointed out that keeping control of such classrooms by the teacher is far more difficult than usual classrooms* (single sex classrooms) since creating a balance between the two genders in the classroom requires immense management skills and lots of experience.

The writer starts by supporting coeducational school and saying there are more advantages than disadvantages to having these types of elementary schools. In the second main idea she refers to the teachers' difficulty in controlling and teaching coeducational classes. This paragraph has 103 words which makes it acceptable according to the length of paragraph, however, the number sentences does not qualify. This paragraph only consists of 2 very long sentences and according to Arnaudet (1981) we at least need 3 sentences per paragraph. It is interesting to see that the number of words per sentence range from 34-69 which make the sentences extremely long.

Persian Excerpt 2 (Essay 11):

از آنجا که ایران کشوری اسلامی با عقاید و فرهنگ اسلامی است این مساله میتواند مغایر با احکام اسلام تلقی شده و قویا با آن برخورد شود. اما از سویی دیگر از دید روانشناختی و جامعه شناختی می توان با دیدی مثبت به آن نگریست (main idea 1). مساله ارتباط زن و مرد در صدر اسلام و زمان نبی اکرم (ص) نیز وجود داشته است (main idea 2). فی المثل خدیجه که زنی تنها بود مال التجاره ای در اختیار محمد امین قرار داد تا با آن تجارت کند. این گونه وقایع حکایت از آن دارد که رابطه بین زن و مرد در اسلام به کل مردود نیست.

English Translation of Excerpt 2 (Essay 11):

Since Iran is an Islamic country with Islamic beliefs and culture, this issue can be considered contrary to the Islamic doctrines and be opposed strongly. But on the other hand, according to a psychological and sociological perspective, mixed classrooms are considered to have positive outcomes (main idea 1). The issue of the interaction between men and women even existed during the early Islamic period and the time of the prophet (PBUH) (main idea 2). For example, Khadije, who was a single woman, left her personal possessions at the disposal of Mohammad Amin to trade with. These events prove that the interaction between men and women is not condemned in Islam.

In this excerpt, the writer begins by mentioning that Iran is an Islamic country and according to religious doctrines, there are limitations for having coeducational schools; but then she acknowledges that psychology and sociology support the presence of coeducational schools. She does not develop this idea. Then in the second main idea she focuses on the relationship between men and women in early Islam and concludes that even in the past; there was mention of men and women interacting within the society. So, there seem to be two different sets of ideas in this paragraph. This paragraph has 100 words and also 5 sentences which make it an acceptable paragraph (Arnaudet, 1981; Zemach and Islam, 2004). The sentence length ranges from 16-27 words which is somewhat long.

Persian Excerpt 3 (Essay 23):

از طرفی این گونه روابط ممکن است در زندگی آینده این افراد خدشه به وجود آورد (main idea 1). تحقیقات دانشمندان نشان داده که پسروانی که در مدارس مختلط درس می خوانند نسبت به دیگر دانش آموزان در وضعیت بهتر درسی قرار دارند. با این حال این عمل برای دختران نتیجه ی معکوس داشته و برای دختران درس خواندن در مدارس تک جنسیتی بهتر است به همین دلیل است که امروزه فمینیست ها فعالیت های زیادی را در جهت ایجاد مدارس تک جنسیتی آغاز کرده اند. **بر پایان می توان**

به این نتیجه رسید که ایجاد دبستان های مختلط چه در ایران چه در سایر کشورها علیرغم معایبی که دارد می تواند مفید باشد در صورتی که دختران و پسران به صورت صحیح در خانواده ها جامعه پذیر شده باشند (main idea 2) و به آن ها فقط به صرف اینکه از دو جنس مختلف هستند توجه نشود بلکه به صورت انسان با تمام ویژگیهای والای یک انسان توجه شود.

English Translation of Excerpt 3 (Essay 23):

From another point of view, relationships involving two different genders may jeopardize the future of the individuals (main idea 1). Studies have shown the academic performance of boys who study in coeducational schools is superior to other male students. However, these results have been the opposite when it comes to girls and it is better for girls to study in single sex schools. This is the reason behind the recent feminist movement favoring single sex schools for girls. *In the end it can be concluded that creating coeducational elementary schools, whether in Iran or other countries, will have its benefits if girls and boys are raised to be sociable in their families (main idea 2).* Another point that must be mentioned is that boys and girls should equally be looked at as humans with all the characteristics of a higher being and not as two different genders.

In this paragraph, the writer initially talks about the disadvantages of having coeducational schools. Then she goes on to exemplify what she is referring to. The second main idea appears to be the overall conclusion that supports the establishment of coeducational schools. What the student did not realize is that the concluding paragraph should be a separate paragraph standing on its own. This paragraph has 142 words and 4 sentences. These numbers are also acceptable (Arnaudet, 1981; Zemach and Islam, 2004). The sentence length in the paragraph ranges from 16-65 words which shows a great variation in the number of words.

Persian Excerpt 4 (Essay 32):

جدا بودن مدارس همچنین باعث شده که جوانان در ارتباط برقرار نمودن بسیار ساده با جنس مخالف به شدت مشکل داشته باشند (main idea 1). برخی به شدت افراطی عمل می کنند و واکنش هایشان شامل هیجان های بسیار شدید می باشد و عده ای دیگر در مقابل جنس مخالف خجالتی و فاقد اعتماد به نفس کافی می باشند. گمان نمی رود که این نوع رفتارها در تعامل میان دو جنس طبیعی باشد. هر جنس بسیار کنجکاو است تا رفتارهای جنس دیگر را بشناسد و در عین حال چون می ترسد که این کنجکاوی لو برود از طرف دیگر سعی می کند تا خود را نسبت به جنس مخالف متنفر جلوه دهد. این را هم بدانیم که این رفتارها در افراد با پیشینه ی فرهنگی و اعتقادی متفاوت فرق می کند. اینک باید بیاندیشیم که چرا در جامعه ی ما چنین معضلی وجود دارد؟ (main idea 2)

English Translation of Excerpt 4 (Essay 32):

Segregated schools have also created serious problems for the interaction between the young males and females (main idea 1). Some display radical behavior including intense excitement, while others simply shy away and don't have any self confidence. These kinds of interactions between two genders are not considered natural. Each gender is curious to identify the other genders' behaviors and at the same time, since they are afraid of their intentions being revealed they pretend to hate the other gender. It is worth mentioning that these behaviors vary based on the individual's cultural and religious background. *We now have to ponder why our society has these problems? (main idea 2)*

The writer begins this paragraph by mentioning that segregating schools can have a harmful effect on the interaction between males and females. In the second main idea which comes at the end of the paragraph the writer enquires about the roots of the problem; however, he does not explain or try to answer his own question and therefore leaves this idea underdeveloped. This paragraph has 129 words and 6 sentences and according to Arnaudet (1981) and Zemach and Islam (2004), it qualifies as a paragraph based on length and number of sentences. The number of words per sentence ranges from 12-37.

4.1.2.4 Metaphorical vs. Straightforward Feature

Using the same pattern of analysis, the 40 Persian argumentative essays were either labeled as ‘straightforward’ or ‘metaphorical’. This was done for the overall number of metaphors, proverbs, idioms, etc. that were used by the participants in their Persian essays.

The results of the analysis of the 40 essays can be seen in Table 4.10. A total of 126 cases of literary patterns were encountered during the analysis of the 40 Persian argumentative essays written by the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students.

Table 4.10: Frequency results for metaphorical vs. straightforward feature (Persian essays)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Straightforward	14	35.0	35.0	35.0
	Metaphorical	26	65.0	65.0	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

It can be seen from the above results that 65% of the participants included more than two cases of literary patterns such as metaphors, idioms, allusion, imageries, etc. in their Persian argumentative essays.

This result is in line with what many scholars (Dehghanpisheh, 1979; Reid, 1984; and Saneh, 2009) have found when observing Persian writing samples. Dehghanpisheh (1979) best sums up the matter when she asserts “expository topics in Persian are often developed by such literary devices as proverbs and metaphors” (p.511).

This result is also echoed in the students’ responses in their interviews. Interviewees 1 and 2 both refer to this idea. Interviewee 1 states:

they [teachers] said (eh), they (eh) suggest us for example some use for example (eh) quotes from (eh) important persons important people to get some for example extra points.

One of the interviewees in Saneh's (2009) interviews puts Persian composition in a nutshell:

I read through some books like Shariati's Kavar and you know, I also knew some poetry by heart from Hafiz, Rumi, Sa'di, and others. So I would go to the exam session and I would just bring the words I had in my mind on paper very easily (p.87).

Here is a list of some of the figurative language used by the participants. The translation of each figurative language section is provided in the third column (Table 4.11). It should be pointed out that some of the ideas are shared with English, while others only exist in Persian. In order to help with the comprehension, I will provide the English equivalents for the items that exist in English.

Table 4.11: Samples of figurative language in Persian essays

Essay Number	Figurative Language	Means
1	جنس تمام به قیمت خراب شدن آینده هر دو شود	At the expense of destroying the future of both genders
2	تنها فکرشان رفع عقده هاي غريزي سرکوب شده است	Fulfilling suppressed desires
3	بتوان به راحتی از آنها چشم پوشي کرد	It is easy to turn a blind eye to it
4	زمانی که بین دختران و پسران یک خانواده مرزها بي کشيده مي شود	When a distinction is made between boys and girls (and their rights) within families
5	در اجتماع خود را آنگونه نشان مي دهد که از او خواسته شده و در خلوت "آن کار ديگر مي کند."	Presenting in a socially acceptable manner in society and "doing what he pleases in the dark"
5	مرز کشورها به سادگی توسط اینترنت و ماهواره ها درنور دیده شده	Countries' borders have been easily breached by internet and satellites
8	موجوداتي ضعيف و نازک نارنجي مي دانند	They know them as weak and squeamish creatures
8	مدرسه دروازه اي به سوي جامعه است	School is a gateway to society

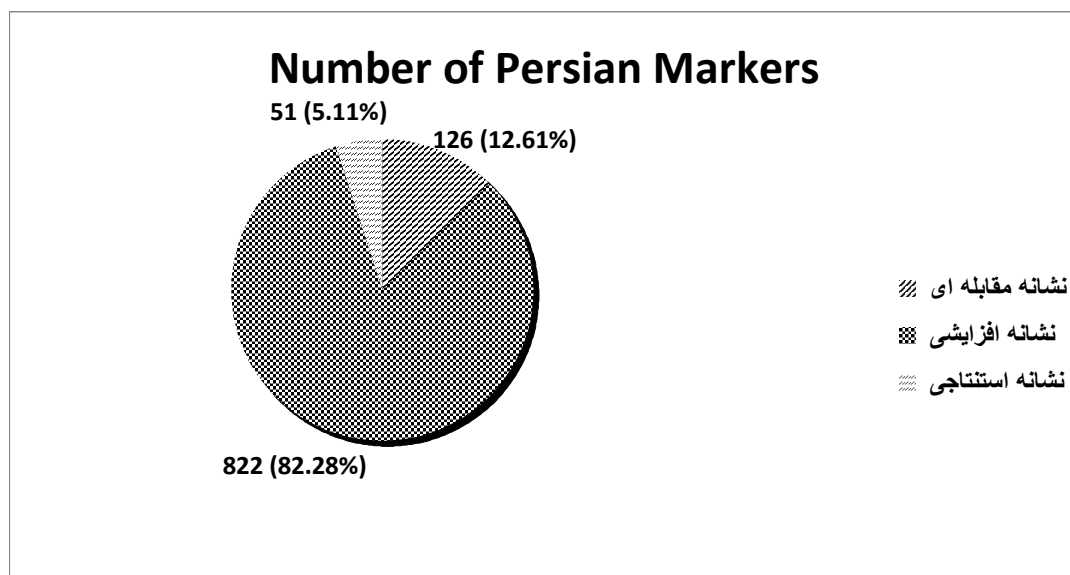
9	لذا نقش هاي اجتماعي خود را در آينده بهتر ايفا نمايند	They can play their social roles better in the future
10	ارتباط دختران و پسران در محيط جامعه زير ذرهبين قرار دارد	The relationship between boys and girls is being put under a magnifying glass (highly scrutinized)
11	حضرت / به طور مثال پيامبر اکرم (ص) علي (ع) ميفرمايند	Quotes from prophet Mohammad and Imam Ali
11	محلي از اعراب قائل شويم	Considering something important
12	در دستيابي به اين هدف با بن بست روبرو ميکند	In achieving this goal, we have hit a dead end
12	معلمين ميتوانند با فراغ بال بيشتري به امر آموزش بپردازند	Teachers can teach with greater ease and comfort
13	بيشتر مي توانم اين موضوع را لمس کنم	this idea becomes more palpable for me
13	اگر خدا ادم و حوا را از ان ميوه ي ممنوعه بود منع نکرده	If God had not banned Adam and Eve from that fruit
14	به استقبال مشکلات برويم	Let us embrace the challenges
15	يک تمرين واقعي قبل از پا نهادن آنها در اجتماع بزرگتر مردها و زن هاست	A real practice before stepping into the larger society of men and women
17	اين شعر معروف را که خشت اول گر نهد معمار کج، تا ثريا مي رود ديوار کج را تداعي مي کند	Generally means a good beginning makes a good ending
17	روي اين امر مهم سرپوش گذاشته است	Covering up this important fact
20	براي ايضاح بيشتري مطلب، ذکر مثالي خالي از لطف نيست	To explain the matter, referring to an example seems to be in place
21	حلقه گمشده زنجيره زندگي اجتماعي مشترك زن و مرد " شناخت " است	"Understanding" is the missing link to men and women's social life
23	دختران به عنوان جنس دوم تربيت مي شوند	Girls being raised as second class citizens
26	در يک چنين مکاني است که خلاقيت کودک شکوفا شده	It is in such a place that the child's creativity flourishes
26	از جنس مخالف خود به عنوان يک غريبه ي محض نام نبرد	Not to refer to the opposite sex as a complete stranger
27	بچه ها سرشار هستند از احساسات بي منطق	Children are overflowing with illogical emotions
27	دختران دوست دارند مانند يك فرشته رفتار كنند	Girls like to behave like angels
28	امر تحصيل بخصوص براي دختران در خانواده ها باب نبود	Girl's education was not popular in families

28	نان اور خانہ بودن	Bread winners of the households
29	جامعه صنعتي نیم بند ونوپا	An incomplete and emerging industrial society
30	باورهاي هزارتوي فسیل شده	Complex archaic beliefs
32	کمتر پیش مي آید چشمشان به جنس مخالف هم سن خود بیفتد	There are few opportunities for them to meet opposite sex their age
34	مسائل جنسي در حالت خفته در آنها است	Sexual desires are laying dormant within them
36	خمیر مایه اصلي در ذهن کودک شکل مي گیرد	The foundations will be formed within the child's mind
38	پسران پهلواناني عاشق هستند	Boys are romantic heroes

Each translation was checked with the second rater to ensure a less ambiguous translation. Discrepancies in the translations were resolved by having the two raters discuss the differences and determine the most appropriate translation.

4.1.2.5 Explicit Discourse Markers Feature

According to the Persian translated version of Fraser's (1999) Taxonomy of Discourse Markers (See 3.2.2 Fraser's Taxonomy of Discourse Markers), the discourse markers were divided into three categories which represented contrastive, elaborative, and inferential markers (See Appendix 8). The NVivo software was used in the same way as for English in order to determine the overall number of explicit discourse markers in the Persian argumentative essays. The total number of discourse markers and the relative percentage found in the Persian argumentative essays are shown in figure 4.2. Overall, a total of 997 discourse markers were found in the Persian argumentative essays.



As can be seen in Figure 4.2, elaborative markers (نشانه های افزایشی) had the highest number of references (822) in the Persian essays. One main reason for this is that the word ‘and’ (‘و’) is an example of this marker and ‘and’ had the highest number of cases in the elaborative marker. Overall, a total of 629 references were allocated to ‘and’.

Contrastive or مقابله ای marker had 124 and inferential or استنتاجی marker had 51 references. In contrastive markers, the word ‘but’ (with the following synonyms in Persian (مگر، به استثنای، فقط، نه تنها، به طور محض، بی، بدون، ‘ولی، اما، لیکن، جز_ Persian (پس، پس (از آن)، آن گاه، در آن هنگام، در آن وقت، در آن زمان، آن - following synonyms in Persian- (پس، پس (از آن)، آن گاه، در آن هنگام، در آن وقت، در آن زمان، آن - was repeated more than others with 28 references. It should be mentioned that some of the samples of discourse markers were not used in the 40 Persian argumentative essays. Some of these samples include:

از این جهت، از این منظر، پس از این، با در نظر گرفتن همه جوانب، به شرط، به واسطه، به طور برابر، و گرنه، به همان اندازه، در هر صورت، به طور دیگر، منظورم، مقصودم، در مقایسه با، با وجود، به هر جهت.

Accordingly, the highest percentage of Persian markers also belonged to elaborative markers (82.2%) followed by contrastive (12.6%) and inferential (5.11%) markers.

4.1.2.6 Myside Bias Feature

As previously mentioned (See Section 4.1.1.6) the myside bias feature was added on to the framework by the researcher in order to see whether the participants paid attention to both sides of the argument in the argumentative. The result can be seen in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Frequency results for myside bias feature (Persian essays)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	15	37.5	37.5	37.5
	No (Myside bias)	25	62.5	62.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

The results obtained from the essays show that 62.5% of the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students paid attention to both sides of the argument and were therefore more objective when they wrote their Persian essays. One reason for this might be the participants' overall better command over their mother tongue as compared to the foreign language (English) which in turn assists them in focusing on both sides of the argument.

4.2 Comparison and Contrast between Participants' English and Persian Argumentative Essays

In this section, the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students' English and Persian argumentative essays are compared with regard to the 5 Contrastive Features Framework and the myside bias. In order to provide a deeper analysis of the

comparison, the results from Tables 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10 and 4.12 are included in comparative figures (4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7). Also, the results from Figures 4.1, 4.2, are summarized in Figures (4.8, and 4.9).

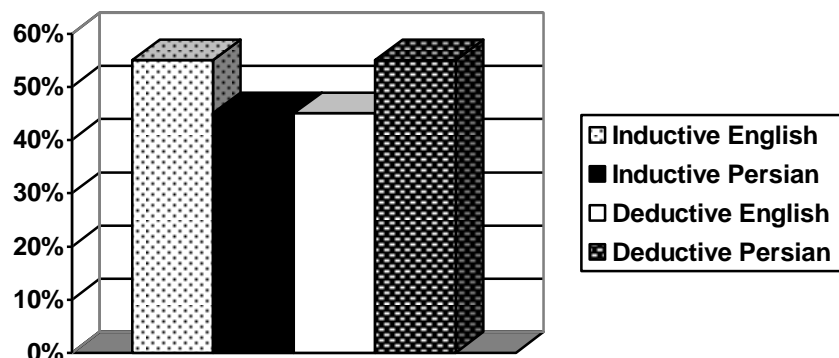


Figure 4.3: Percentage of inductive vs. deductive in English and Persian

As can be seen in Figure 4.3, while in the English argumentative essays the EFL students opted for an inductive feature (55%), their Persian argumentative essays are more deductive (55%). Although the students are indirectly encouraged to write more in the English preferred style of deductive structure, they seem to pay more attention to this fact while writing their Persian argumentative essays. From the onset of English classes, students' books focus on the deductive style of writing which encourages the students to mention their opinions at the beginning of the essay.

One reason for obtaining the present result might come from the fact that students are more comfortable writing in their mother tongue and so they might find it easier to take a stand at the beginning in Persian writing than in English. When asked about how they planned their writing in English, Interviewee 7 had this to say: "At first because of my mother tongue, I like to write in Persian". This comment shows that he pays more attention to Persian even when planning for an English essay.

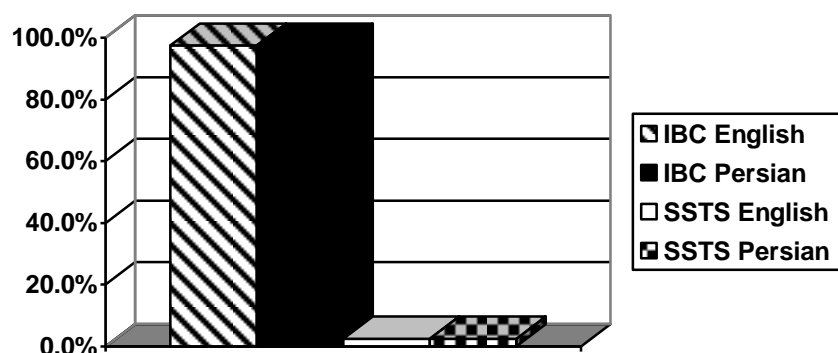


Figure 4.4: Percentage of SSTS vs. IBC in English and Persian

The results in Figure 4.4 show the same situation for both English and Persian argumentative essays. Most Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students (97.5%) preferred to use the introduction-body-conclusion style of writing as opposed to the start-sustain-turn-sum (S-S-T-S) style. They generally focused on the topic they were writing about and did not stray from it. This was the same case in both languages. It is interesting to point out that S-S-T-S structure was only used by one student in his writing and it was this same student who used this structure in both his written essays. This shows that the train of thoughts for this Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL student revolves around mentioning seemingly irrelevant ideas in his writing (Xing et al., 2008).

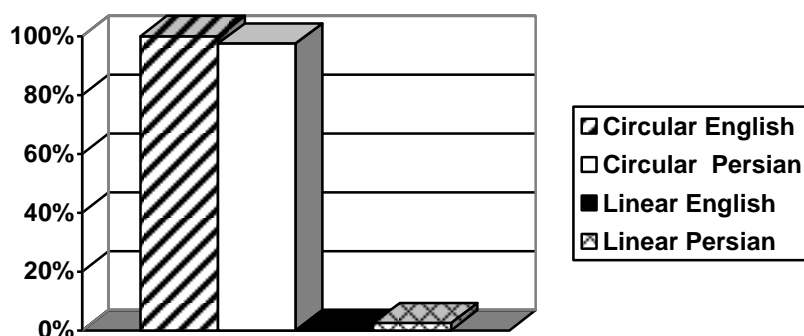


Figure 4.5: Percentage of circular vs. linear in English and Persian

It is apparent from Figure 4.5, that the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students preferred a circular style of writing in both their English and Persian argumentative essays. This means that the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students had a high frequency of topic changes within a paragraph which in turn adds up to a less comprehensive essay from the readers' perspective (Xing et al., 2008). Although non linearity is common in Persian writing (Baleghizadeh and Pashaii, 2010), it is evident from these results, that the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students have transferred the rhetorical pattern from Persian (native language) to English (target language).

By comparing the four extracts (See 4.1.1.3 Circular vs. Linear Feature and 4.1.2.3 Circular vs. Linear Feature) from the English and Persian essays, we can conclude that:

1. The English paragraphs include more sentences (up to 11 sentences in extract 3) as compared to the Persian (the highest number of sentences was used in extract 4 with 6 sentences). This is in line with what Zare-ee and Farvardin (2009) found in their analysis of the English and Persian essays of their Iranian students. This means that although the length of the paragraphs was similar, the participants tended to break down their ideas more efficiently in their English compositions. Hence, the English extracts would be more reader-friendly in terms of text comprehension than the Persian ones.
2. The participants used a more manageable sentence length in the English extracts (ranged between 6-41 words) as compared to the Persian extracts (ranged from 12-69 words). This was also the case in Zare-ee and Farvardin (2009). They reported a range of 12-41 for the English, and 15.50-62 for the Persian essays. Therefore, the results from the present extracts echoes what the above scholars

found. Zare-ee and Farvardin also refer to Park (1986) who asserts that students tend to write longer sentences when they are writing in their native tongue.

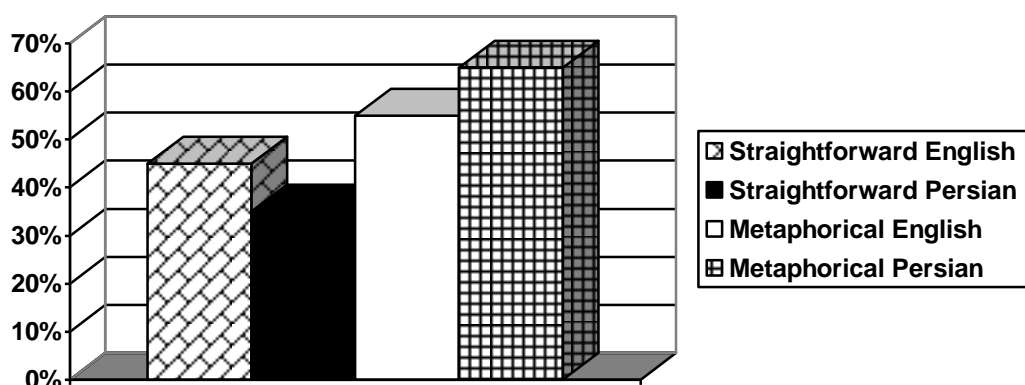


Figure 4.6: Percentage of straightforward vs. metaphorical in English and Persian

The use of metaphors, allusions, imageries, proverbs, idioms etc. is thought to contribute to the overall beauty of the written text in Persian (Dehghanpisheh, 1979; Reid, 1984; and Saneh, 2009). However, these literary patterns are mostly considered clichés in the western readers' eyes. The findings from this study are in line with what has been indicated by the above scholars; the results from figure 4.6, clearly show the preference of the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students in applying a metaphorical style to their argumentative writing in both English and Persian. Hence, this is another feature which the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students have transferred from Persian to English style of writing. It is noteworthy to mention that the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students used 10% more metaphorical elements in their Persian essays as compared to their English essays.

Most of the transfers that were found during the analysis of the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students' argumentative essays included vocabulary, prepositions and expression from Persian to English. Therefore a table was created for each of these features with some extracts from the essays.

Table 4.13, consists of some of the Persian vocabulary items which have been transferred to English by the participants. Again, the translations were all checked with the second rater in order to establish a better translation.

Table 4.13: Sample of vocabulary items transferred from Persian to English

Essay Number	Persian Vocabulary (extract from Persian essays)	Vocabulary Translated (not mentioned in Persian essays)	Vocabulary Used (transferred to English)	Vocabulary Meant
5	Not mentioned in Persian essay	تحصیلات عالیه	Elementary school is the basis of <i>complete</i> educations	Higher education
10	Not mentioned in Persian essay	شرایط	Coeducational physical education classes revealed quite different <i>climates</i>	Condition
11	Not mentioned in Persian essay	روبرو شدن	We still <i>face</i> some university students who have some problems in communicating with the other gender	Encounter, come across, meet
12	پیدایش چنین مدارس سهل و ممتنع باشد	--	The <i>infrastructure</i> of these schools is easy but impossible.	Establishment
12	میخواهیم با او دوست باشیم	--	We meet someone and we want to <i>have</i> friendship	Become friends with/ Establish a friendship
12	کارهای خارج از برنامه	--	Out of classes work	Extra curricular activity
14	Not mentioned in Persian essay	سطوح مختلف زندگی	People are living in different <i>levels</i> of life	Walks
17	به جهت سیاست و یا سوء استفاده و به جیب زدن درآمد کلان	--	Direction and policy abuse and <i>pocket presence</i> of large income	Embezzlement
18	نمرات دخترها از	--	Girls <i>degrees</i> are	Scores

	پسرها بهتر است		better than boys	
19	تعامل با غیر هم جنسان خود	--	co-workers who <i>have</i> opposite sex	Are
20	Not mentioned in Persian essay	نمرات خیلی بالا	Very <i>top grades</i>	Very high scores
20	Not mentioned in Persian essay	از طرف دیگر	On the <i>different side</i>	On the other hand
23	Not mentioned in Persian essay	فعالیت های بدنی	Bodily activities	Physical activity
25	Not mentioned in Persian essay	از دست ندادن دانش آموزان ممتاز	In order not to <i>lose</i> our top students	In order for our top students not to <i>drop out</i>
26	به نظر من	--	This causes more disadvantages than benefits <i>in my eye</i> .	view
32	Not mentioned in Persian essay	کنار گذاشتن خجالت	<i>Set</i> shyness <i>away</i>	overcome
32	Not mentioned in Persian essay	کسب نمرات بیشتر و بیشتر	They will try their best to get <i>more and more marks</i> than each other.	Better grades
34	Not mentioned in Persian essay	بدست آوردن	That may help girls to <i>earn</i> important experiences	gain
36	Not mentioned in Persian essay	صحنه	How true is it behind the <i>stage</i>	scene
40	محیطی آرام	--	Peaceful <i>space</i>	Environment

As can be seen from Table 4.13, the italicized bolded vocabulary items have been translated from Persian into English. Bhela (1999) also found vocabulary and prepositions to be two of the most important groups to be transferred from the students' L1 (Spanish, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Italian) into English. Bhela (1999) believes the participants' first language can directly interfere with learning second language writing.

Table 4.14, takes into account the prepositions that have been transferred from Persian to English.

Table 4.14: Sample of preposition items transferred from Persian to English

Essay Number	Persian Preposition (extract from Persian essays)	Preposition Translated (not mentioned in Persian essays)	Preposition Used (transferred to English)	Preposition Meant
2	Not mentioned in Persian essay	در	<i>In</i> all over the world	No <i>In</i> needed in English
2	Not mentioned in Persian essay	به	The Iranian educational system permits <i>to</i> pre-schools to mix boys and girls	No <i>to</i> needed in English
7	Not mentioned in Persian essay	با	Encounters <i>to</i> others	with
13	Not mentioned in Persian essay	از	<i>In</i> the other hand	On
19	Not mentioned in Persian essay	رو برو شدن	<i>Face up to</i> their opposite sex	Encounter
20	Not mentioned in Persian essay	به صورت	Repeat the first question <i>in other</i> way	In another
22	به	--	Don't need <i>to</i> two separate school	No <i>to</i> needed in English
25	Not mentioned in Persian essay	به	The first step for entering <i>in</i> society	No <i>in</i> needed in English

As can be observed from the above table, most prepositional errors occur when the students add prepositions which are not needed in English. They use the prepositions from Persian and directly transfer them to their English argumentative essays. Izadi Agha (2007) found that Iranian students have a great difficulty applying the correct preposition in English. She believed the reason for this to be the extensive number and the variety of prepositions in English as compared to Persian. She asserts that “for every two or three prepositions in English, there usually exists only one counterpart in

Persian” (p. 105). Therefore, the Iranian students just tend to use that one preposition to represent the various counterparts in English.

Finally, in Table 4.15, the Persian expressions translated into English can be observed.

Table 4.15: Sample of expression items transferred from Persian to English

Essay Number(s)	Persian Expression (extract from Persian essays)	Expression Translated (not mentioned in Persian essays)	Expression Used (transferred to English)	Expression Meaning
1, 26	مدرسه به عنوان خانه دوم	--	School is their second home	Referring to the importance of school
4, 8	Not mentioned in Persian essay	هر سکه دو رو دارد	Each coin has two faces	Each coin has two sides
6, 21, 24, 25, 29	پسر ها شیر و دختر ها موش بودن	--	Boys would not be lions and the girls become mouse	Shows the strength and boldness of boys as opposed to girls
7, 28	Not mentioned in Persian essay	پسر ها کمتر مثل سنگ, سخت خواهند بود	Boys will be less coarse/rough like rocks.	Referring to the roughness of boys
9	نمی تواند جلوی مواجهه آن ها در محیط خارج از مدرسه، نظیر کلاس های فوق برنامه، روابط همسایگی و دوستانه را بگیرد	--	it cannot stop children meeting others through extra classes, the in alleys and streets	Referring to opposite sex meeting each other in extra curricular classes and in society
12	به قولی حیا	--	Where is the Haya of the cat	Emphasizes the integrity of humans.
14,17	خشت اول گر نهد معمار کج، تا ثریا می رود دیوار کج	--	If the first brick architect is tilt, tilted wall goes up Soraya	Generally means a good beginning makes a good ending

20	مي توان پرسيد به چه بهايي؟	--	We can ask how much it costs?	At what price?
21	Not mentioned in Persian essay	پسر ها مثل سنگ سرد و بي احساس نخواهند بود	Boys won't be like cold stone	Referring to without emotions
28	Not mentioned in Persian essay	دخترها موشند مثل خرگوشند	The girls will not feel shy and weak like mice	Referring to weakness and shyness
30	Not mentioned in Persian essay	مقابله با قوانين دست و پا گير جامعه	Fighting with old and hand closed rules of society	Referring to feeling restricted
31	با كوله باري از تجربيات گذشته، همسر خود را انتخاب مي كنند	--	They select their wife with knapsack of past experiences	Referring to the amount of experience
31	در يك كلام در جلوي هم ظاهر و باطنشان يكي است	--	In one word, their appearance and inside is one	Referring to the words and actions being similar
33	Not mentioned in Persian essay	سر به زير	Girls are always head down when talking to boys.	Referring to girls being shy
36	Not mentioned in Persian essay	به هر دست بدهيد به همان دست مي گيريد	I always believe that this was the behavior of others comes back into our own behavior	Referring to what goes around comes around
37	Not mentioned in Persian essay	پسر ها همه چيز را تحمل كرده و مثل سنگ مقاوم باشند	Boys should tolerate everything and be hard as rock	Referring to tolerance and strength expected from boys in the Persian culture

This last table includes expressions which can bring about the greatest problem in comprehension. As many of these expressions refer to Persian belief or idiom or proverb, they can create the greatest problems for non Persian readers. Hence, these

transfers in general can be another reason why the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students' written essays may receive negative scoring on international exams.

EFL teachers should also be aware of these transfers and try to assist students to move beyond them. Possible reasons for the transfer could be the interference of Persian, the complexity of vocabulary, prepositions and expressions in English, and the students' inadequate knowledge of English (Whalen and Menard, 1995; Izadi Agha, 2007). Bhela (1999) asserts that "learners will not attain mastery of the target language as long as the process of translation equivalence is in place" (p.30). He believes that it is only through abandoning translation from L1 to L2 and initiating thinking in L2 that the students can master the second language.

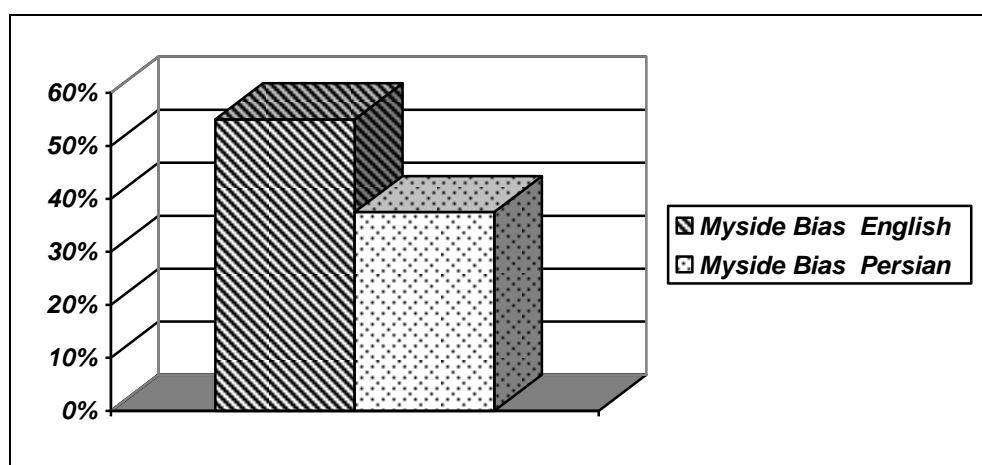


Figure 4.7: Percentage of English myside bias vs. Persian myside bias

Myside bias -the author's failure to present the other side of the argument in an argumentative essay- was observed numerously in the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students written argumentative essays. According to Figure 4.7, the presence of myside bias was felt more in the English argumentative essays (55%). The Persian argumentative essays only showed 37.5% for the presence of myside bias. This means that the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students in this study focused more on being

objective when writing their Persian argumentative essays. One reason for this could be their overall better command over their native language (Persian).

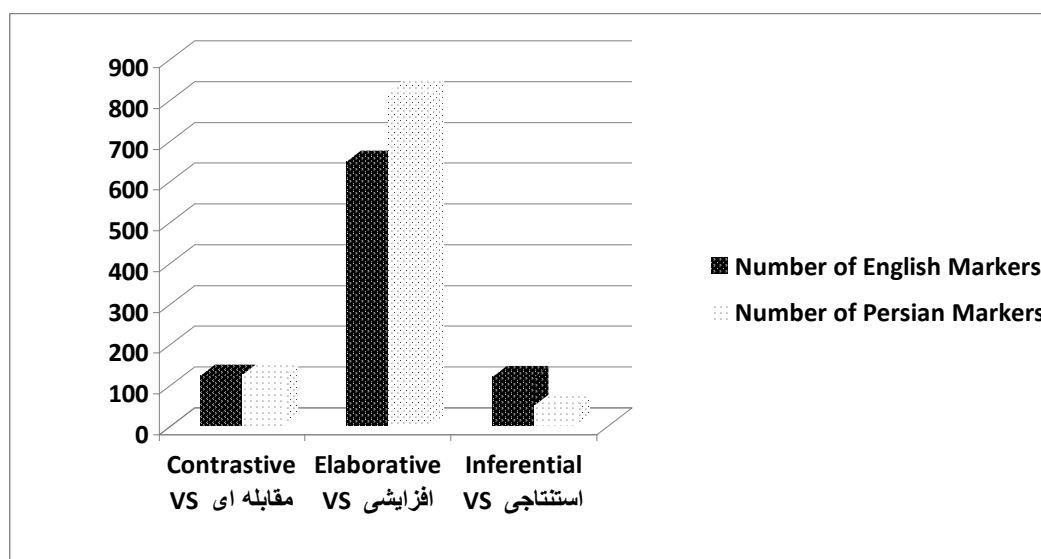


Figure 4.8: Number of English markers vs. Persian markers

Figures 4.8, and 4.9, show the number and the percentage of English markers as opposed to the Persian ones. In the contrastive marker, the two languages performed very similarly with Persian having 1.31% more references than English. In elaborative marker, it can be seen that the Persian argumentative essays had more references than the English ones (about 10% more); and finally the inferential marker seems to be more dominant in the English argumentative essays with almost 8.5% more references.

In the contrastive markers, the two languages performed similarly. In the Persian elaborative markers, the marker ‘and’ was used most often (629 references as opposed to the 520 references in the English essays) which could explain the relatively longer sentences written in the Persian argumentative essays as compared to the English ones (See analysis on the extracts in 4.1.1.3 Circular vs. Linear Feature and 4.1.2.3 Circular vs. Linear Feature). In the inferential markers, the English essays used ‘so’ more often (56 references as opposed to the 28 in Persian essays) which could show the participants

concern to signal the conclusions and results in their English essays more than the Persian ones.

All in all, the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students in this study used more explicit discourse markers in their Persian argumentative essays as compared to their English ones. Overall, a total of 103 more references were found in the Persian essays. According to Connor (1996), the higher number of discourse markers assist the readers in trying to make more connections between information coming before and following the discourse markers. It also improves the overall coherence and unity of the writing. Therefore, it seems the students wrote more coherent texts in Persian as compared to the English essays.

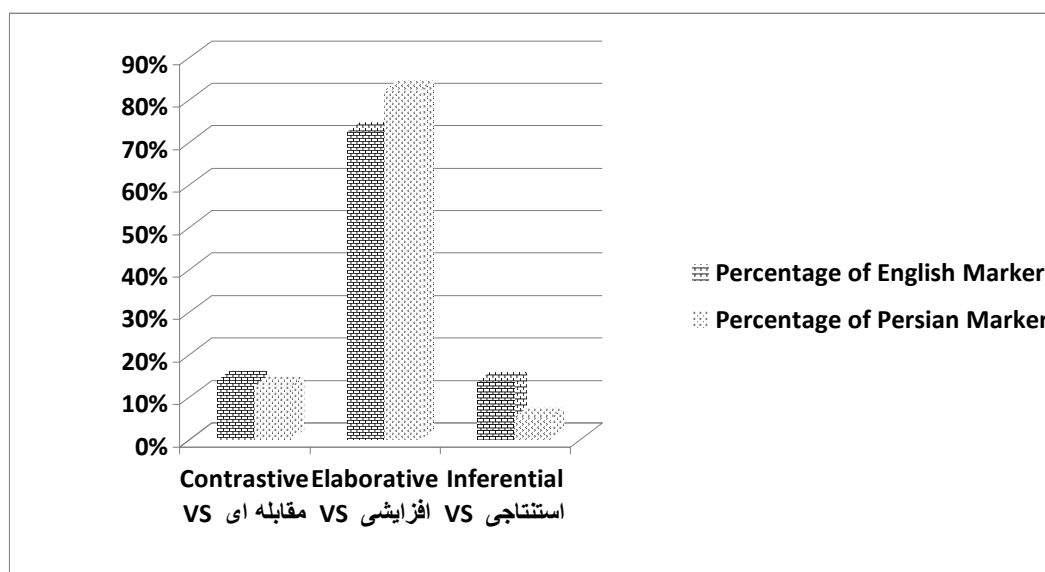


Figure 4.9: Percentage of English markers vs. Persian markers

Figure 4.9, also shows the percentage of the discourse markers used by the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students.

4.3 Questionnaire

One of the instruments used in the present study was a questionnaire. The questionnaire mainly served as a triangulation device in the present study. The questionnaire was designed and piloted before the final administration (See 3.2.5 Questionnaire, Pilot Study, and InterRater Reliability). This section can be divided into 3 phases. The first phase involves the reliability of the questionnaire and the next two phases focus on the three parts of the questionnaire.

4.3.1 Phase 1: The Reliability of the Questionnaire

In this phase, the piloted questionnaire (See 3.2.5 Questionnaire and Pilot Study) was ready to be used for the main study. During this phase of the study, the questionnaire including- 6 problematic areas in English writing and also 6 questionnaire items on writing techniques, writing style and myside bias was administered to 40 Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students (13 males and 27 females). The participants were given approximately 20 minutes to answer the questionnaire items. The researcher was present to answer any questions the participants had. Cronbach's alpha was applied to the data obtained from the 12 items of the questionnaire and this was 0.80 which according to De Munck (2009) is an acceptable reliability.

4.3.2 Phase 2: The Second Part of the Questionnaire (The Participants' Perception)

The first part of the questionnaire mainly shed light on the demographics of the participants. For more information on this please refer to chapter 3 (See 3.1.2.1 Student Participants, 3.1.2.2 Teacher Participants and 3.2.5 Questionnaire, Pilot Study, and Inter Rater Reliability).

The second part of the questionnaire focused on the participants' perception of the most problematic areas in English writing. As mentioned before (See 3.2.5 Questionnaire, Pilot Study, and Inter Rater Reliability), the six problematic areas had been suggested by Jordan (1997). The six areas mentioned were vocabulary, grammar, spelling, style, punctuation, and handwriting. The second part of the questionnaire asked the participants to express their perceptions regarding the six different problems in writing. This part of the questionnaire was distributed both among Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students and also their teachers. The results are as follow:

4.3.2.1 The Students

Forty Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students were asked to express their perception through a five point Likert scale from 'Completely Disagree' to 'Completely Agree'. The order of the most problematic areas selected by the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students (according to %) is listed below in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16: Students' perception of the most problematic areas in English writing

Problematic Area	Percentage
Grammar	75
Vocabulary	63
Spelling	61
Style	48
Punctuation	38
<i>Handwriting</i>	25

As can be seen above, the students perceive grammar to be the most problematic area followed by vocabulary and spelling. They perceived handwriting to be the least problematic area in English writing. The students seem to focus on surface level errors which show their concern in language accuracy difficulties. This is also what many scholars (Hedgcock and Lefkowitz 1994; Kern, 1995; Schulz, 1996; Schulz, 2001; Diab, 2005; Diab, 2006; Rahimi, 2010) have found in their studies. Diab (2006, p. 3)

asserts “surface level correction is often what students want and expect from their teachers”. This shows that students perceive more time needs to be spent on learning and checking grammar before handing in a piece of writing in class. This was also what most students mentioned in the interview when they were asked about the changes they made between the drafts they wrote. One student (Interviewee 4) mentioned:

...The grammar is more important because (eh) the structures (eh) can make difference between the meanings. If you use one structure maybe the meanings had change. If I have any mistakes it's all because I'm not that much good in grammar.

Another student (Interviewee 6) referred to the same point when he talked about his difficulty in English writing. He explains that some English grammatical structures do not exist in Persian and therefore he needs to change the structure in order to convey the same meaning. He said:

Grammar and structure in some points are different [Between Persian and English]... I (eh) can remember one situation where I had problem that our language [Persian] (eh) didn't prepare this English structure and I should change my meaning of sentence.

A third student (Interviewee 1) also referred to the changes she made in her writing. She also had a similar set of ideas which she expressed by saying “I put my sentences grammatically or I try to sometimes I try to use collocations or I try to improve vocabulary or something like that”.

4.3.2.2 The Teachers

Twenty Iranian EFL teachers were also asked to participate in this section of the questionnaire. They were asked to number the areas they perceived their students had the most difficulty in English writing. They were asked to express their perception regarding their students' most problematic areas in English writing using a five point Likert scale (from 'Completely Disagree' to 'Completely Agree'). The order of the most problematic areas selected by the Iranian EFL teachers (according to %) is listed below in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17: Teachers' perception of the most problematic areas in English writing

Problematic Area	Percentage
Style	75
Vocabulary	65
Grammar	60
Punctuation	55
Spelling	40
Handwriting	30

From the table above, it is clear that the teachers perceive style to be the most problematic area followed by vocabulary and grammar. They perceive handwriting to be the least problematic area in their students' English writing. This shows that according to the teachers more time needs to be allocated to the overall organization and style of the students' writing. This in fact is in line with what Jordan (1997) found. According to him 92% of the teachers were worried about the style the students were using in their writing.

The results from the above table show a mismatch between the students and the teachers' perception of the most problematic areas associated with English writing. Whereas the students selected grammar (75%) as their greatest challenge in English writing, their teachers clearly believed style (75%) indicated the greatest concern. Both groups felt equally strong about their selection and this shows a discrepancy. It is

noteworthy to mention that the students ranked style as the fourth area of difficulty which shows they do not know the importance of formal vs. informal type of writing in the eyes of their teachers.

This mismatch might be one of the reasons why students think of English writing as a barrier in English acquisition and in thinking so still have not been able to move beyond this barrier. While the students pay close attention to surface level errors such as grammar (Braine, 2002), their teachers are equally concerned about the overall writing skills problems such as the style of writing the students are using. It seems apparent that the best way to equip the students for overcoming this barrier is through awareness raising by the teachers during writing classes.

However, it is interesting to know that both groups considered handwriting to be the least problematic area. One main reason for this might be the advent of typed out pieces of writing which is becoming more and more popular each day at English classes in Iran.

4.3.3 Phase 3: The Third Part of the Questionnaire (The Writing Techniques, Styles, and Myside Bias)

The last part of the questionnaire encompassed the students' opinions on writing techniques, writing style and myside bias questionnaire items. Overall, 6 questionnaire items were used in this phase and the main purpose of these questions was to triangulate how the students composed their essays and what they mentioned in the interviews. A five point Likert scale (from 'Completely Disagree' to 'Completely Agree') was used to collect the 40 Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students' ideas on each of the questionnaire items.

Each questionnaire item was written in a way so as to support at least one of the research questions. The questionnaire items were inspired by ideas from Zia Houseini and Derakhshan (2006), Mu and Carrington (2007), Wolfe, Britt, and Butler (2009), and Saneh (2009). Questionnaire items (See Appendix 1) 2 and 5 are related to research question 1, while questionnaire items 1 and 3 support research question 2 and finally questionnaire items 4 and 6 triangulate the responses to research question 4.

The results of the questionnaire items (in %) can be seen in the table below (Table 4.18).

Table 4.18: Students' responses (in %) to writing techniques, style, and myside bias	
Questionnaire item	Percentage
1. Before I write in English, I arrange my thoughts in Persian.	63
2. I use quotes, proverbs, and idioms to strengthen my point of view when writing in English.	78
3. I make a Persian outline for my English texts.	72
4. I focus on proving my point of view in English argumentative writing.	79
5. I believe that English and Persian argumentative styles of writing are the same.	55
<i>6. I think it is unnecessary to formulate counter arguments in English argumentative writing.</i>	83

The results from these questionnaire items are used in various parts of the study.

4.4 Interview

After the completion of the questionnaire and writing tasks, interviews were conducted with some of the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students (on a voluntary basis) which served as the third source of guided reflection for data gathering. Conducting interviews for the present study assisted the researcher in triangulating the content of what the

participants were composing. Although the information obtained through interviews is considered to be subjective in nature and can at best show certain aspects and experiences of each individual, “it nevertheless sheds light on what is usually a long-term, private process of skill development” (Buckingham, 2008).

A total of 8 Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students were selected to take part in the interview. A set of interview questions were written based on Gosden (1996), Victori (1999), and Buckingham (2008). The interview was conducted in such a way that the EFL students may be encouraged to explain their English writing performance. The interview questions (See Appendix 5) were each related to one of the research questions. Interview questions 1 and 6 were related to research question 1; while interview questions 2 and 5 reflected the ideas in research question 2. Interview question 3 echoed the essence of research question 3; and finally interview question 4 was related to research question 4.

Each interview was confidential and it was conducted on an individual basis. Each of the interviews, which lasted for about 8-15 minutes, was also transcribed. The interviewees’ perspectives and comments are used in the various parts of this chapter.

By employing the first interview question involving the interviewees’ point of view on the main stages in writing an English argumentative text, it was determined that most interviewees (6 out of 8) only described a general description of a writing format and did not refer to the specific stages regarding English argumentative writing. 2 out of 8 interviewees referred to specific information regarding English argumentative writing.

For example Interviewee 2 mentioned:

as I've learned, the structure was that we should think about the both sides of the argument and then (eh) we talk about both of them and we try to be objective and then in conclusion we express our side.

Interviewee 4 also refers to English argumentative text in specific when he asserts:

So, (um) for writing an essay or argumentative writing, first thing that we need that's really required is (eh) a strong opinion. An absolute topic, what we're going to write about it, what we're going to talk about it. You know a strong opinion, a clear one, evidences and reasons.

In the second interview question (when planning a text, which language do you use? Do you use mix languages? If yes, does it help or hinder you?), it was discovered that 2 out of 8 interviewees plan their writings in Persian while another half the interviewees mentioned that when they first started writing in English, they planned their writings in Persian and the remaining 2 out of 8 asserted that they plan in the language they are required to write in. It is interesting to know that the 2 out of 8 who plan their writing in Persian believe what they are doing is wrong but they still continue:

because most of the time I think in Persian... sometimes I convert Persian to English and after that I (um) for example (eh, eh). For example I write a sentence and after that I realize that it's very awful in English and I (um) change it in the correct way in English (interviewee 1).

Later on in the interview interviewee 1 explains the reason why she thinks she uses Persian to plan her writing. She mentions: "I, (eh) think maybe my English (eh) hasn't improved enough thinking in English (laugh) and maybe because I live in a Persian language country and everyday I speak Persian".

Most interviewees refer to translating from Persian to English during their English writings. This was also the case in Gosden's (1996) study; 9 out of 13 participants in that study translated from Japanese to English. Many scholars including Gosden, 1996 and Kobayashi and Rinnert (2008) believe that the use of L1 may delay the learner's L2 writing development since translation can hinder the learner's power to find the meanings in the second language.

Only 2 of the 8 interviewees mentioned that they used a mix of Persian and English to plan their writing at one stage. When asked whether this style helped or hindered them in writing one asserted that

It help me (eh) to (eh) to understand what I'm saying and (eh) for (eh) other people that they hear me because (eh) we are Persian and you're familiar with our expressions and when I mix this expression with (eh) words in English, they can understand it (interviewee 6).

While the second one had a different perspective

At that time [when using the mix of English and Persian to plan] I didn't know (eh) the (eh) disadvantages of these type of mixing these two languages (eh) and at that time it helped me to write it. To be able to present it to the teacher or who I want to give, (eh) but now when I look back at that time, I see there is some mistakes adapt in my mind that I can't change them because I used that structure in writing. So, (eh) I noticed that (eh) from 3 or 4 months ago and started to think in English (Interviewee 4).

The interviews conducted by Buckingham (2008) also had a range of ideas when it came to utilizing a mixing of languages. While some of them believed they did not mix English and Turkish due to the difficulty of transferring some ideas into English, others believed one source which assists them in complex cognitive tasks is mixing languages.

The third interview question focused on how many drafts the participants made and the type of changes they made between drafts. It also took into account whether the participants used outlines for their writings. Through conducting the interview, it was determined that half the interviewees did not use outlines. Outline, being the framework that assists in organizing a text, serves many purposes.

According to the Writing Tutorial Services at Indiana University website (<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/index.php>), outlines can aid a writer to “think over their notes, consider them from several perspectives, and devise/revise an organizational plan appropriate to their topic, audience, and assignment”. Victori (1999) also found that the good writers in his study made outlines before writing and kept referring to them during their writing. This in turn helped them stay on track and develop the most relevant ideas from their outline (Grenville, 2001). Those interviewees who used an outline to plan their essays in the present study believed they were lost without an outline. As one interviewee added:

We need that one [an outline] because we are going to make a plan to start and without a plan we can't do anything so we have to make plan for the beginning, the middle, the end (interviewee 4).

Other interviewees who used outlines reported jotting down key words, specific examples, and main reasons they wanted to use in the different parts of their essay. When asked about the reason behind not using an outline one interviewee (Interviewee 3) had this to say:

I don't [use outlines], because (eh) I think the whole thing and then try to focus on details and I can't (eh) bring the details on my paper and then (eh) try to explain the whole one.

Half the interviewees claimed they only used one draft in both their English and Persian writing, but all interviewees declared that they made changes in vocabulary and grammar in their English essays before handing them in. Some went further to add collocations, expressions, and spelling to that list of changes. This is in line with what most interviewees reported in Buckingham (2008). One asserted that “our vocabulary is less than native speakers. My biggest difficulty is vocabulary. If I use the same word in consecutive sentences then I need to use my thesaurus” (Buckingham, 2008; p. 6).

In almost all cases, it was determined that the interviewees used more drafts for their English writings as compared to the Persian ones. This was because of their non native perspective toward the language; however, since Persian is their mother tongue, they had no difficulty in Persian writing.

It should be pointed out that since these students do not have classes dedicated to writing as a separate skill, the teachers usually do not find the time to talk about the importance of outlines and drafts in writing.

Interview question 4 was related to myside bias; it was determined that around 5 out of 8 interviewees pointed out they only paid attention to their own point of view when writing. After hearing this from the interviewees, the researcher decided to ask them why they believed this to be true. Here are the most common replies

when I recognize what I think is more important, but sometimes it is very important and maybe somebody doesn't realize that (Interviewee 7).

My idea is more important than that of others (Interviewee 8).

I just address at on my point of view because in that time, I believe in it (Interviewee 6).

As for the other 3 out of 8, they also had their own ideas on why they should consider both sides of the argument

I think (eh) when for example we say (eh) we write, (um) we write an argumentative writing we should be fair and (eh) we should (eh) mention something which might be against what we think (eh), but (eh) and I try to concentrate on both sides (Interviewee 1).

Because (eh) if it's just (eh) I don't want to be a stubborn person and try to pay attention to the both sides of the argument and (eh), for example (eh) take up reasonable, rational idea and then (eh) choose my (eh) for example final decide (Interviewee 2).

As for interview question 5, the researcher wanted to see whether students consciously or unconsciously transferred their knowledge from their Persian composition classes to their English writings. This was inspired by Matsuda's (1997, 2001) revised version of contrastive rhetoric in which he considers background education as an affective variable on L2 writing.

According to Connor (1996) different texts written by ESL learners depends on their cultural background. This shows that "people learn many of the conventions and uses of writing through schools or some kind of instruction" (p. 100). With this in mind, when asked what the interviewees had learned from the Persian composition classes in elementary, junior high and high schools, all of them mentioned they had not learned anything in those composition classes. Buckingham (2008) came across similar results in her interviews with the Turkish scholars. Some of the interviewees in the present study described what they remembered from Persian composition classes. Interviewee 1 mentioned:

I (eh) my writing or my composition was not bad but it was good, but no one directly (eh) teach, (eh) taught us about anything. Most of the time they (eh)

only (eh) write (eh), they used to write a topic on the for example blackboard or then asked us to write and when for example (eh) we (eh) write our writing (eh) or give in to our teacher, she corrected for us.

Interviewee 3 also had a similar idea

I (eh) just remember that they give us a topic and (eh) ask us to write, but (eh) only sometimes if they want to correct us they (eh) only (eh) they only (eh) mention (eh) some specific and some general mistakes, but (eh) not the whole thing.

However, throughout the interviews the researcher found a pattern in which some interviewees referred to being instructed to use quotations, poems, and proverbs in their writing. After analyzing the written essays, it was determined that the participants had unconsciously followed this pointer not only in their Persian essays, but also transferred it to their English essays as well.

Hence, although the interviewees believed they had not learned anything from those Persian composition classes, they were in fact unconsciously affected by some pointers given to them in those classes. Phung (2006) found similar results with the Chinese students he studied. When he asked what the students had learned about writing in the composition classes, the students mentioned that “they read and imitated examples of famous writers and those who were successful in the national exam” (p. 108). He also found that the students believed the best way to persuade the reader in argumentative essays was to “include historical references, one’s own personal examples, and speeches given by famous people” (p. 108). Examples of these were also observed in the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students’ argumentative essays in both their English and Persian essays.

The last interview question put the lime light on the interviewees' perspective regarding the similarities/differences between English and Persian argumentative writing. 63% of the interviewees stated that they believed the structure of English and Persian argumentative writing was the same. From the 3 out of 8, one interviewee believed the type of language used was different

I read some of them in magazines and news paper, and some character is the same and some parts, yeah, there could be different. For example, (eh) in our (eh) argument and argumentative writing in Persian, I think some of informal (eh) language (eh), but in English we told, we were told that it is better to use formal language; especially for essays(Interviewee 2).

Another interviewee put the difference on the type of grammar used: “you know, actually the situation of verbs are different” (Interviewee 6) and a final interviewee believed the difference was in the ease of using fewer words in English writing

Yeah, in English when I write it (eh) when I wrote it in English, it become short and short because I guess you can compose and express your idea in English faster than Persian (Interviewee 7).

4.5 Concluding Marks

This chapter has examined the results of the three main sources of data used for the present study. These three main sources included questionnaire, argumentative writing task, and interview. Each of the three sources was individually scrutinized. Tables and figures were provided in order to clarify the results.

The method in which each of the results obtained help answers the research questions will be discussed in the next concluding chapter.

Chapter 5

5.0 Introduction

This last chapter includes a short conclusion of the results obtained from the findings of chapter 4. In this chapter, the researcher draws conclusions with respect to the data analysis and compares them with the existing literature presented in previous chapters and answers each of the research questions. In addition, the implications of the results and suggestions for further research will be presented.

The main theoretical frameworks that the present research was built upon were Kaplan's theory of contrastive rhetoric in 1966 (See 2.1 Kaplan and Contrastive Rhetoric), Matsuda's revised version of contrastive rhetoric in 1997 and 2001, (See 2.4 New Contrastive Rhetoric and Studies Surrounding the Issue), Xing, Wang, and Spencer's Five Contrastive Features Framework (FCFF) in 2008, (See 2.13 The Five Contrastive Features Framework), and finally Fraser's Taxonomy of Discourse Markers in 1999 (See 2.14 Discourse Markers and Fraser's Taxonomy of Discourse Markers).

While Kaplan's early contrastive rhetoric theory (1966) is criticized on some grounds including only taking into consideration the learners' tendency to transfer the organizational patterns from their mother tongue, Matsuda's revised version of contrastive rhetoric (1997, 2001) goes on to include some intervening factors in second language writing. One of these factors relates to the educational background of the learners as an effective factor in second language organizational patterns. Masuda's revised version, in fact, has a supplementary function for what Kaplan had proposed from the start. The present study also found traces of educational background affecting

the way the participants wrote in L2 (See 5.2 Contrastive Features Transferred from Persian to English Writings).

According to the findings obtained in chapter 4, the present study corresponds with Kaplan and Matsuda's theory of contrastive rhetoric in that it finds differences between English and Persian organizational patterns in writing. Therefore, it could be argued that the differences between the contrastive features may arise from different world views and also rhetorical cultural backgrounds of the two languages. This shows that writing is in fact a cultural phenomenon and the cultural backgrounds play a vital role in how an individual writes (Buckingham, 2008; Siepmann, 2006; Gosden, 1996; Jalilifar, 2008, Rooholamini, 1986; Victori, 1999; Schneider and Fujishima 1995; and Samiee, 2008).

The present study also finds instances of vocabulary, preposition, and expression transfer from Persian to English. It is commonly believed that when an individual writes in a second or foreign language, they tend to transfer their native language to the target language (Baleghizadeh and Pashaii, 2010). The results of the present research show this taking place in the essays written by the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students (See 4.2 Comparison and Contrast between Participants' English and Persian Argumentative Essays). This transfer could very well be one of the main reasons why non native students' writings sometimes get labeled as disorganized, digressive, drifting, waffling, vague, indirect, incoherent, irrelevant, and loosely structured (Lux, 1991; Ballard and Clanchy, 1991; Cortazzi and Jin 1997; Saneh, 2009).

In this study, the researcher aimed to investigate the style differences between English and Persian writing and to determine whether the 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 were studied. The presence of *myside bias* was also considered in the essays. Before responding to each of the research questions, it seems appropriate to recapitulate the four research questions that were used to guide this study. These research questions included:

1. What are the style differences in writing (according to the five contrastive features) between Persian and English?
2. What contrastive features (according to the five contrastive features) do the Iranian EFL students transfer from Persian to English writing?
3. What are the most problematic areas in English writing according to Iranian EFL students and teachers?
4. Does the *myside bias* exist in the Persian or English argumentative writings of Iranian EFL students?

The research questions along with the related conclusions will be discussed in the next sections. Each of the research questions will be discussed separately in order to provide more in depth information.

5.1 Style Differences between Persian and English Writing According to FCFF (Research Question 1)

The Five Contrastive Features Framework was created by Xing, et al. in 2008 and the framework includes 5 sections, namely- Inductive vs. Deductive, Start-Sustain-Turn-Sum vs. Introduction-Body-Conclusion, Circular vs. Linear, Metaphorical vs. Straightforward, and Explicit Discourse Markers (See 2.13 The Five Contrastive

Features Framework). Overall, out of the five contrastive features, two differences were found between the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students' Persian and English argumentative essays.

The first difference found was related to the position of the thesis statement. While the English essays were more inductive (55%) in nature, the Persian essays were more deductive (55%). The second difference is in the number of discourse markers used by the participants. The students used an overall 103 more discourse markers in their Persian essays which makes them more coherent and unified to the reader (Schiffrin, 1987; Connor, 1996; Fraser, 1999; Hutchinson, 2004).

The most prevalent type of discourse marker used in the Persian essays was the elaborative marker and from the elaborative marker subcategories, the marker 'and' was used most often (629 references as opposed to the 520 references in the English essays). This could very well be one reason why the Persian essays included fewer and also longer sentences as compared to the English ones (See analysis on the extracts in 4.1.1.3 Circular vs. Linear Feature and 4.1.2.3 Circular vs. Linear Feature).

The most frequent type of discourse markers in the English essays was related to the inferential markers and from the inferential marker subcategories 'so' was used more often (56 references as opposed to the 28 in Persian essays). This can mean that the participants tried to signal results and conclusions better when it came to English essays.

5.2 Contrastive Features Transferred from Persian to English Writings

(Research Question 2)

By comparing the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students' English essays with the norms in English writing, some interesting results can be revealed. While English essays are generally more deductive (Kaplan, 1966; Hinds, 1990; Cortazzi and Jin, 1997; Kirkpatrick, 1997; Kubota, 1998; Cho, 1999; Xing et al, 2008), the English essays produced by the respondents were inductive in nature (See 4.1.1.1 Inductive vs. Deductive Feature). Although students are encouraged to mention their main idea in the first paragraph from the onset of English classes, these Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students did not do so. What is more interesting is that they did not even transfer this from their Persian essay style to their English essays as they had used a deductive mode for their thesis statements.

However, there is a possibility of a backward transfer (Matsuda, 1997; 2001; Cook, 2003; Kecskes, 2008; Kobayashi and Rinnert, 2008) from English into the Persian essays the students wrote. Meaning, although the students were taught to use a deductive style in their English essays, they ended up transferring this feature to their Persian essays instead of their English ones. The Persian writing manuals generally talk about both styles of deductive and inductive writing without showing preference of one over the other (Horri, 1991; Ghorbaniun, 2004; Solhjoo, 2008). One main reason for the use of deductive style of writing in L1 can be the degree of ease the students feel while writing in their mother tongue. This helps them to mention their main idea at the beginning of the Persian essays.

Backward transfer has been studied by many scholars and in various areas of language learning. Noor (2007) found that Arab bilingual students used their L2 knowledge to better process the sentences they wrote in L1 as compared to their monolingual counterparts. Yelland, Polland, and Mercuri (1993) discovered that the English children who received an hour a week of Italian lessons read English better than the ones who did not. Kecskes and Papp (2000) reported that the Hungarian children who knew English used more complex sentences in their first language than those who did not know English. Saygin (2001) found that the Turkish bilinguals had a translation advantage from L2 to L1 over the monolingual participants when it came to metaphorical (figurative) translations. And finally, Chen (2006) found that backward translation takes place in the Chinese students' L1 writing at the sentence level while forward transfer happens at discourse level.

The second difference found was related to number of topic sentences per paragraph (See 4.2 Comparison and Contrast between Participants' English and Persian Argumentative Essays). As Kaplan (1966) emphasized, the English paragraph should include one main idea and the rest of the ideas should support this main idea. This is generally known as linearity of English paragraphs (Clyne, 1982; Xing et al, 2008). According to the findings of the present study, it was determined that the participants used a circular style in which two or more main ideas were used in each paragraph which in turn creates a less comprehensive essay from the readers' perspective (See 4.1.1.3 Circular vs. Linear Feature).

Since it is generally believed that the Persian style of writing is circular (Baleghizadeh and Pashaii, 2010), there is a great possibility that the students have transferred this norm to their English writing. Many of the writing manuals in Persian also warn

students against the use of more than one main idea per paragraph (Horri, 1991; Ghorbaniun, 2004; Solhjoo, 2008). These manuals emphasize the fact that circularity is indeed one area of concern, even in writing Persian essays. The Persian essays written by the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students also reveal a circular style of writing which can lend support to the possibility of transfer from the students' first language.

The last difference found between the Persian and English essays lies in the type of language used. Many scholars assert that straightforward language is often used in English writing in which the meaning is directly transmitted to the reader (Matalene, 1985; Montano-Harmon, 1991; Connor, 1996; Xing et al., 2008). In the English essays written by the participants, it was discovered that a metaphorical type of language which includes two or more instances of figurative patterns such as metaphor, simile, proverb etc. was dominant.

Persian, like Chinese (Ballard and Clanchy, 1991; Wong, 1992; Kirkpatrick, 1995; Snively, 1999; Yang, 2001; Xing et al., 2008), Spanish (Montano-Harmon, 1991; Phung, 2006) and Arabic (Ballard and Clanchy, 1991; Fakhri, 2004), relies on the literary patterns used in writing to contribute to the overall beauty of the written text (Dehghanpisheh, 1979; Reid, 1984; Saneh, 2009). As Wong (1992) mentions "to the American English teacher, quoting Chairman Mao, the Communist Party or even peppering one's writings with excerpts from Chinese classics may be seen as lacking in originality" (p. 76). However, this is believed to be a popular method to represent evidence in Chinese writing (Kirkpatrick, 1995).

Baleghizadeh and Pashaii (2010) also believe that one reason behind the differences between Persian and English rhetoric lies in the fact that Persian is "heavily influenced

by poetry so that Iranian prose writers more or less follow the convention of the poetic style” (p. 24). Likewise, it is apparent that the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students have been transferring this metaphorical feature from Persian writing. Questionnaire item 2 also shows that 78% of the participants support the use of flowery language in their essays. Saneh’s (2009) study also revealed that her participants’ perceptions could very well be “shaped by the historically valued poetic and persuasive quality of the Persian language” (p. 172). It is the above findings that shed light on the participants’ use of figurative language in Persian and also its application in their English essays.

However, it is noteworthy to mention that during the interview, all the students emphasized they had learned nothing with regard to organization, style and various genres of writing from Persian composition classes in school. As was mentioned earlier in chapter 4 (See 4.4 Interview), the students are in fact unconsciously transferring the use of flowery language from those Persian composition classes and Persian writing to their English argumentative essays.

In addition, although the Persian writing manuals advise students to avoid ambiguity while writing (Givi, Hakemi, Shokri, Tabatabaee, 2006; Solhjoo, 2008), they do recommend the use of figurative language to add to the beauty of the essays (Derakhshan, 1988; Taherkhani, 1995; Ghorbaniun, 2004; Solhjoo, 2008).

5.3 Teachers and Students’ perception of the Most Problematic Areas in English Writing (Research Question 3)

According to the findings of the present study, a mismatch was found between the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students and the Iranian EFL teachers’ perception of

the most problematic areas in English writing (See 4.3.2.1 The Students, and also 4.3.2.2 The Teachers). While the students ranked Grammar as the most problematic area (75%), Style was perceived to be the most problematic area (75%) in the eyes of their teachers. Each felt equally strong about their opinion which is a point of great concern.

Other studies (Golshan and Karbalaie, 2009; Rahimi, 2010) have also found that the Iranian students are mainly focused on and concerned about surface level errors. One factor influencing the obtained results can be what the teachers are emphasizing in their classes (Mohan and Lo, 1985). This means that, while the teachers are worried about the style the students are using in their writings, they are in fact mainly focusing on teaching surface level errors.

Of course one main concern here is that many EFL classes in Iran are restricted to the use of specific textbooks and those textbooks are generally more focused on surface level errors. Even Persian writing manuals generally focus on surface level errors (Derakhshan, 1988; Horri, 1991; Ghorbaniun, 2004; Yahaghi and Naseh, 2006; Solhjoo, 2008). This might be one reason why the students are unconsciously more drawn towards surface level errors. Recommendations and suggestions on how to decrease this discrepancy between the students and the teachers' perception will be provided later in this chapter (See 5.5 Practical Implications).

5.4 Traces of Myside Bias in the Persian and English Argumentative Essays (Research Question 4)

Myside bias was defined as the writer's tendency to only focus on his/her own point of view and not pay attention to counterarguments in an argumentative essay. This was

checked in both the Persian and the English essays the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students wrote. It was determined that both types of argumentative essays included myside bias. However, the English argumentative essays had a higher percentage (55%) of myside bias presence than the Persian ones (37.5%). This was also supported by the questionnaire responses and also the interviews the participants took part in (See 4.1.2.6 Myside Bias Feature). The implications on avoiding myside bias will be discussed in the next section (See 5.5 Practical Implications).

5.5 Practical Implications

The practical implications can be divided into 3 different sections namely- implications for teachers, implications for students, and implications for syllabus designers.

5.5.1 Implications for Teachers

Implications for teachers can be divided into 5 sections including the importance of preparation, the importance of correction, the importance of explicit teaching, the importance of listening, and the importance of guided class activities.

5.5.1.1 The Importance of Preparation

The findings of the present study can be very important in developing a more accurate curriculum based on the errors that cause problems for the students. It is also important for teachers to educate themselves regarding their students' needs and areas of difficulty (Johns, 1993). One way of doing so is to conduct research in their classes to find out more about the students' areas of difficulty in writing and then try to plan ahead in the

syllabus in order to meet these problems heads on (Storch and Tapper, 1997). This could be important for both the Persian language teachers and the EFL teachers.

5.5.1.2 The Importance of Correction

How teachers respond to the students' errors can also be very important. If teachers try to encourage students to find the correct answers on their own instead of just giving the correct answer to them, students can have a more active role in their writing experience. Zamel (1985) also suggests that teachers need to look at the writings as "a work in progress rather than judging it as a finished product" (p. 79). Teachers also need to make sure that the students understand the feedback the teachers give their writings. Miscommunication in this area can prove to be very harmful to the students' learning experience. Zamel (1985) suggests that teachers need to "replace vague commentary and references to abstract rules and principles with text-specific strategies, directions, guidelines, and recommendations" (p. 95). It is also important to prioritize the types of correction and focus on the errors that can cause the most confusion for the students (Snively, 1999).

Roholamini (1986), Shokrpour and Fallahzadeh (2007), and Dahmardeh (2009) believe that Iranian EFL teachers mainly concentrate on correcting the compositions sentence by sentence and in doing so focus the students' attention on the product rather than the process. This is the kind of behavior that needs to be toned down on the part of the teachers in order to facilitate more effective writing by students. Truscott (1996) strongly believes that in EFL classes, the correction of surface level errors should be abandoned completely. He believes this type of correction has some harmful effects on the students' learning experience.

5.5.1.3 The Importance of Explicit Teaching

Teachers (both Persian Language and EFL teachers) need to focus on presenting the tasks explicitly to the students. The best way to avoid many mistakes such as myside bias and circularity in writing is for the teachers to directly explain the negative outcomes and help students avoid using it in their writings. This is also the case in removing the mismatch between the students and the teachers' perception of most difficult areas in English writing. Kobuta and Lehner (2004) assert that it is the teachers' responsibility in "making rhetorical differences explicit, raising students' awareness of such differences, and acculturating students through language exercises with concrete models that meet audience expectations" (p. 13). Lin's (2007) study also emphasizes the explicit instructions on rhetorical conventions in writing and believes this is the best way to help students in the process of language learning.

Teachers also need to make the students aware of the differences between Persian and English rhetorical features. It is important for students to realize that each paragraph in English should only consist of one main idea. The students should be informed regarding the use of literary language which generally makes the comprehension of a text more difficult. It is these details that help the reader to understand the written essay with greater ease.

It is very important to keep in mind that the instructions on myside bias need to be given explicitly to the students (Nussbaum and Kardash, 2005) and that passive teaching may not be effective. Wolfe, Britt and Butler (2009) found that initially 50% of the undergraduate research students they studied did not make any references to the other side argument; after reviewing a booklet on the importance of referring to arguments on

both sides of an issue they found that 33% of these participants still exhibited myside bias in their work. However, they found using pre-writing worksheets for students and going through the steps one by one can be of great assistance to the students. The pre-writing worksheets are designed to plan the key parts of the students' essays. Wolfe et al. (2009) found that by using such worksheets the students paid more attention to including counterarguments in their argumentative writings. In fact, while only 60% of their control group mentioned counterarguments, 90% the tutorial group focused on them. This shows how effective the use of pre-writing worksheets and explicit teaching can be.

The students need to be explicitly taught that the presence of myside bias in their writings can bring about several problems. Toplak and Stanovich (2003) believe that the presence of myside bias has a negative relationship with rational thinking. This means the less the presence of myside bias in an argumentative task, the more rational the writing would be to the reader.

Students need to be made aware that by bringing counter arguments into their writings they can create a more favorable impression of themselves and increase their credibility in the eyes of the readers (Wolfe and Britt, 2008). Also they can “minimize the impact of other side points by framing them in the best possible light” (Wolfe and Britt, 2008; p. 2). In addition to the above by including counterarguments into an argumentative text, the writer can assist the reader; since through this “readers are less likely to expend additional cognitive effort themselves generating counterarguments” (Wolfe et al., 2009; p. 188). According to Baron (1995) it is important to teach the students that “typically, no single argument is decisive, and we must consider the total weight of evidence and

the possibility of even stronger arguments on the other side” (p.3). This is both important for the EFL and also the Persian language classrooms.

The results from the present study show that the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students and their teachers have different perceptions regarding the most problematic areas in English writing. While the students put the limelight on surface level problems such as grammar, vocabulary, and spelling, their teachers are primarily concerned with the style the students are using in their writings. This mismatch between the two sides’ perception can bring about unsuccessful learning and teaching experiences. Therefore, in order to avoid such experiences and also help Higher-intermediate EFL students write more effectively, a distinction must be made between language accuracy and writing skills.

Language problems are not the only problems EFL students are confronted with when trying to write; the writing problems which go beyond surface level problems also need to be taken into account. It is the teachers’ responsibility to make the students aware of these different types of problems in order for them to write closer to the standards required on international exams. These results can demonstrate one area of difficulty which can in turn contribute to the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students’ low scores on the writing sections of international exams such as TOEFL and IELTS. Although students strive to write grammatically correct sentences on such tests, not paying attention to the overall style of their writing (formal vs. informal) might be the reason for not achieving favorable scores.

5.5.1.4 The Importance of Listening

Oftentimes during the language learning process, students identify the main difficulties they are facing (Storch and Tapper, 1997) and all they need is to be pointed in the right direction by teachers. By listening to the students' problems, many negative outcomes and unsuccessful teaching and learning experiences can be avoided. Storch and Tapper (1997) suggest that inviting the students to comment on their own writings can play "the dual roles of encouraging students to act as reviewers of their own work and of providing teachers with a means of responding to students' specific concerns" (p. 247). Fox (2003) found that when the tutors tried to listen to the description of difficulties provided by Ming (the participant), they were better able to give her the specific type of assistance she needed and in the long run helped her to have a more effective learning experience. This can also prove to be very helpful in the Persian language classes in schools.

Teachers (both Persian Language and EFL teachers) can also turn the class into a friendly and relaxed atmosphere in order to decrease the students' anxiety and increase their self esteem to learn as much as possible in classes (Vaezi, 2009). Also by having a friendly atmosphere, the students are encouraged to ask more questions and learn more effectively in the long run.

5.5.1.5 The Importance of Guided Class Activities

Guided class activities can help to liven up a classroom and encourage group activities. Also, students usually have common errors that can be addressed in more detail as a class. One recommendation could be for teachers to dedicate a part of class time to

analyzing poorly written English texts and making students aware of the problematic areas in the texts and proposing ways in which they can remedy these errors. This would also be a great opportunity to even analyze some of the students' written essays and have the whole class participate in the corrections.

This way, many shared errors among students can be resolved as a class and students can play a more active role in their language learning process. This would, of course, mean more time has to be allocated to writing in general and perhaps having writing classes as a separate skill. Having these classes can help students to write easier and with more accuracy (Golshan and Karbalaei, 2009).

It might also be a good idea to show the class samples of well written English essays along with detailed explanations to provide the necessary information to enable the students to write more native sounding prose which can in turn ensure better scores by evaluators. The same activity can also be used in Persian Language classes.

Another suggestion could be to allow the students to communicate with native speaker peers through letters, emails, or chat rooms (Yuan, 2003; Coniam and Wong, 2004). The only thing that needs to be avoided here is the overuse of informal language that could greatly affect the way the students write (d'Eça, 2003). Teachers could appoint native speaker pen pals for students and ask them to write different genres of writings for each other. By doing so both students can become familiar with the others' culture and at the same time it would be a great writing opportunity for the non native students to put into practice what they have learned. Of course, the teachers need to be present every step of the way to ensure the students are not reinforcing each others errors.

Teachers can also act as mediators to help with conveying expressions, grammar, and overall style of writing.

The results of the present study can aid teachers in realizing that the students are still very concerned with surface level errors. Teachers can assist students to see the bigger picture and help them to comprehend the importance of writing skills. Language accuracy alone, although very important cannot result in effective writing. Therefore, what the students need to practice more is writing skills. It is also very important for teachers to pay attention to the areas of concern their students have and try to bridge the gap between their own and their students' perceptions and expectations (Schulz, 1996, 2001).

5.5.2 Implications for Students

The findings of the present study can help EFL students realize that they need to write more objectively in English; and this in turn can aid them to write closer to the standards required by international conventions and the academic community and achieve higher scores for their efforts. They can find out about the negative outcomes of myside bias and try to avoid one-sided arguments in their writing.

One important outcome of the results of the present research is that the Higher-Intermediate Iranian EFL students who believe they have 'individual inadequacies' (Leki, 1991; p. 138) can now be made aware of rhetorical traditions of their native language. These students can see that some of the trouble they experience in English writing is actually related to the cultural differences between Persian and English

writing. This realization can be very beneficial especially in boosting the students' motivation to write more effectively (Dörnyei, 2005).

Students also have to realize the importance of using outlines in order to plan their ideas before writing (Silva, 1993; Whalen and Menard, 1995; Grenville, 2001; Mu and Carrington, 2007). The results from the interview in the present study revealed that half the students do not believe in using outlines and this factor alone can contribute to ineffective and disorganized writing. Not using outlines is a concern even for Persian writing and that is why Persian writing manuals also encourage students to use outlines for their writings (Derakhshan, 1988; Ghorbaniun, 2004).

Also, students need to focus on using more than one draft to plan their writings. Most interviewees mentioned they only used one draft for their writings. Kirkpatrick (1995) believes that while Japanese students tend to often use one draft for their writings, the English preference is to have many drafts. He believes writing is a creative process that should be reviewed and revised many times before calling it a finished product.

Another area of difficulty is that many Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students plan their writings in Persian and this increases the use of translation in their English writing (Zia Hosseini and Derakhshan, 2006; Abdollahzadeh, 2010). This can cause a great hindrance in the coherence of the writing. Students have to be made aware of the disadvantages of planning in their mother tongue while trying to write in a second or foreign language. After realizing the disadvantages, it is the students' responsibility to try to plan their writing in English so as to avoid transfers from Persian vocabulary, prepositions and expressions into English.

5.5.3 Implications for Syllabus Designers

Although the Iranian students study English for 7 years from guidance school onwards, they still have difficulty communicating in English in general. It is with this in mind that researchers are now turning their attention to the textbooks these students study. Dahmardeh (2009) concludes that “some of the problems teachers and learners encounter can be traced to the textbooks” (p. 46). Baleghizadeh and Pashaii (2010) believe one main area of difficulty with the national textbooks used to teach Persian language in schools is the lack of examples, activities and exercises. These books are used to teach Persian reading and writing to the Iranian students, but have not been very successful thus far (Taherkhani, 1995; Ghorbaniun, 2004; Dahmardeh, 2009); however, it should be mentioned that the English textbooks used in Iranian schools are also riddled with the same problem. Hence, this is a clarion call to the syllabus designers to address such problems in order to help students learn the features of effective writing.

The results from the present study can assist syllabus designers to generate some guidelines for EFL programs used for teaching Iranian students. Syllabus designers can use the results to make possible changes to the already existing syllabuses for English or the Persian language textbooks used to teach at language institutes or in schools. They can try to add some pointers that help EFL students become aware of the presence of myside bias and its harmful effect on their composition and the differences between Persian and English style differences in writing. It is with the collaboration of teachers and syllabus designers that the students can be made aware of the effects of myside bias and the contrasting features between Persian and English styles of writing.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

With the growing number of Iranian students studying abroad, it is necessary to conduct more in depth studies regarding the differences between these students' native language and English. Unfortunately, up to now there is a great gap when it comes to Persian resources regarding the Persian rhetorical cultural norms. There is a specifically wider gap when we get to the structure of Persian argumentative style of writing. There is very scant literature in this regard. This gap needs to be filled with more studies in the future in order to create more effective techniques which are required in order to better communicate in English and be able to share ideas.

This study used the Five Contrastive Features Framework to analyze the Persian and English argumentative essays of participants. Similar researches should be conducted with other genres of writing in order to gather more data in this area. In doing so, a better and more complete picture of the students' errors could be drawn.

One important issue that went beyond the scope of the present study is the cause of errors made by the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students. Hence, it is highly recommended that future studies be undertaken to improve our understanding of the roots of such errors in order to be able to better address the issues.

The limited number of participants can also be considered a limitation. 40 Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students served as the participants in the present study. Further studies with more participants should be conducted in order to generalize the findings. Also, not having direct access to the classes could be a possible limitation.

More precision could be used if the classes were taught by the researcher. However with that, the idea of subjectivity could prove to be an issue.

Finally, in the present study, the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students were initially asked to write in Persian and then in English. This was done in order to see what the participants might transfer from L1 (Persian) to L2 (English). Although this order of language task presentation has been adopted by previous studies (Reid, 1984; Kubota, 1998; Kobayashi and Rinnert, 2008; Saneh, 2009), other researchers can consider whether the results would change if the order of language in the given tasks were to be reversed. Also, future researches can be conducted on students at other levels of English proficiency, specific age groups, or even with the same gender in order to see if similar results can be obtained.

5.7 Final Remark

In the end it is the researcher's strong opinion that contrastive rhetoric can in fact be an avenue through which teachers can better understand their students and the students' needs and therefore be able to teach them how to write more effectively for the academic environment and the internationally renowned exams.

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Appendix 1: Student Questionnaire

Part 1: Please fill in the background information section below.

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Age:

Field of Study:

Mother tongue:

Languages I speak: ☐ English ☐ Persian ☐ Turkish
☐ German ☐ Italian ☐ Other.....

How long have you studied English?

Have you lived abroad? ☐ Yes..... ☐ No
(If you answered yes, where and how long?)

Academic qualifications:

☐ Diploma ☐ Bachelor or Bachelor student
☐ Master or Master student ☐ PhD or PhD student

Have you had formal training in English writing (such as report writing, essay writing, formal letter writing,...)? ☐ Yes..... ☐ No
(If you answered yes, where and how long?)

Part 2: Please check (✓) the response that best describes your opinion about your English writing.

	Completely Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Completely Agree
1. I think VOCABULARY is the most problematic area in English writing.					
2. I think STYLE (formal v. informal) is the most problematic area in English writing.					
3. I think SPELLING is the most					

problematic area in English writing.					
4. I think GRAMMAR is the most problematic area in English writing.					
5. I think PUNCTUATION is the most problematic area in English writing.					
6. I think HANDWRITING is the most problematic area in English writing.					

Part 3: Please check (✓) the response that best describes your opinion.

	Completely Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Completely Agree
1. Before I write in English, I arrange my thoughts in Persian.					
2. I use quotes, proverbs, and idioms to strengthen my point of view when writing in English.					
3. I make a Persian outline for my English texts.					
4. I focus on proving my point of view in English argumentative writing					
5. I believe that English and Persian argumentative styles of writing are the same.					
6. I think it is unnecessary to formulate counter arguments in English argumentative writing.					

Appendix 2: Student Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a study of EFL learners' English writing techniques. We hope to learn about the contrastive features and techniques used by Iranian EFL learners in their English writings. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because of your English language proficiency.

If you decide to participate, we will use two of your writing activities from class as data and ask you to fill out a questionnaire regarding the techniques and process of composition. In addition, you might be asked to take part in a short interview regarding the same matters above. The overall participation will not take more than 4 hours of your time.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relation with the College of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. If you have any additional questions later, please contact Atiyeh Kamyabi at a.kamyabi@siswa.um.my who will be happy to answer them.

You will be offered a copy of this form to keep.

You are making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate. You may withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you may be entitled after signing this form should you choose to discontinue participation in this study.

Signature

Date

Signature of Researcher

Appendix 3: Teacher Questionnaire

Part 1: Please fill in the background information section below.

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Age:

Field of Study:

Mother tongue:

Languages I speak: ☐ English ☐ Persian ☐ Turkish
☐ German ☐ Italian ☐ Other.....

How long have you studied English?

Have you lived abroad? ☐ Yes..... ☐ No
(If you answered yes, where and how long?)

Academic background:

☐ Diploma ☐ Bachelor or Bachelor student
☐ Master or Master student ☐ PhD or PhD student

How long have you been teaching English professionally at language institutes?
Have you taught English at schools before?

Part 2: Please check (✓) the response that best describes your perception of your students' performance on English writing.

	Completely Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Completely Agree
1. I think VOCABULARY is the most problematic area in English writing.					
2. I think STYLE (formal v. informal) is the most problematic area in English writing.					

3. I think <i>SPELLING</i> is the most problematic area in English writing.					
4. I think <i>GRAMMAR</i> is the most problematic area in English writing.					
5. I think <i>PUNCTUATION</i> is the most problematic area in English writing.					
6. I think <i>HANDWRITING</i> is the most problematic area in English writing.					

Appendix 4: Teacher Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a study of EFL learners' English writing techniques. We hope to learn about the contrastive features and techniques used by Iranian EFL learners in their Persian and English writings. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because of your experience in teaching English as a foreign language.

If you decide to participate, we will ask you to fill out a questionnaire regarding your students' most difficult areas in English writing. The overall participation will not take more than 20 minutes of your time.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relation with the College of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. If you have any additional questions later, please contact Atiyeh Kamyabi at a.kamyabi@siswa.um.my who will be happy to answer them.

You will be offered a copy of this form to keep.

You are making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate. You may withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you may be entitled after signing this form should you choose to discontinue participation in this study.

Signature

Date

Signature of Researcher

Appendix 5: Interview Questions

1. What do you think are the main stages in writing an English argumentative text?
2. When planning a text, which language do you use? Do you use mix languages? If yes, does it help or hinder you?
3. Do you use outlines? How many drafts did you use for your writing? What kind of changes did you make between drafts in your English texts?
4. Do you concentrate on both sides of an argument or do you just address your point of view in argumentative writing? Why?
5. How much do you rely on what you have learned from Persian composition classes in school?
6. Do you think argumentative writing in English is different from Persian argumentative writing? If so, how?

Appendix 6: English and Persian Essay Samples

English Argumentative Sample Essay (essay 5)

Development of every country is related to the level of education . In other words one of the major concerns in every community is to provide a qualified education system . IT is obvious that tutoring and training begin in the first years of one's life and even during the embryonic period .

Elementary school is the basis of complete educations and hence it sounds very critical . In addition to teaching literacy and numeracy it is important that students learn some social skills for their future lives ; in order to help them lead a successful life in the real world .There are some religious and traditoinal believes in our country , which make authorities seperate female and male students from the early ages .

Having coeducational classes in elementary school is a controversial issue in our Muslim community , which arises many strong objections . Not only the authorities but also many parents who have been brought up with such wrong believes , will protest against it . It sounds that these thoughts have penetrated in to their minds deeply . However I believe there are some advantages related to having coeducatoinal classes and also some problems .

In the posetive side , if elementary classes are coeducational, like kindergartens , children realize that there is no important difference between boys and girls . On the other hand seprating two sexes may well have a destructive effect on chidren because they think there is something mysterious in the opposite sex and they become more and more eger to discover it . Besides, in coeducational schools children learn how to get along with each others . They could be real friends and even help and support eachothers. It could be a valuable experience for their future lives when they are going to live and work together in the community . It also affects their matrimony .

So, all in all, I think it would be a great idea to calculate the most suitable method in a gradual manner in Iran.

Persian Argumentative Sample Essay (essay 5)

برای پاسخ به این سوال بهتر است کمی در مورد زمینه های فرهنگی سیاسی و اجتماعی مردم ایران صحبت کنیم. کشور ایران کشوری است مذهبی که در آن سنت و مدرنیته در تعارض و تقابل همیشگی است. از سویی از تریبون های رسمی مانند صدا و سیما روزنامه ها و منابر تکیه بر اصول و عقاید مذهبی با شدت هرچه تمام تر تبلیغ می شود. از سوی دیگر به علت اینکه مرز کشورها به سادگی توسط اینترنت و ماهواره ها درنور دیده شده و دسترسی به اخبار سایر نقاط جهان امر بدیهی به شمار می رود.

مقایسه بین شرایط موجود در سایر نقاط دنیا و یک کشور خاص مثل ایران به راحتی برای مردم آن کشور ممکن شده است. بنابراین اکثریت جامعه به سمت نوعی از ظاهر سازی و در واقع ایجاد یک شخصیت دوم برای خود می رود که در اجتماع خود را آنگونه نشان می دهد که از او خواسته شده و در خلوت "آن کار دیگر می کند."

در چنین شرایطی ایجاد مدارس مختلط در مقاطع ابتدایی به نمایان شدن این شکاف کمک می کند زیرا کودکان در این سن توانایی ظاهر سازی کمتری دارند و اغلب به سادگی آنچه را که فکر می کنند بیان می کنند و یا اجرا می کنند. این امر ممکن است منجر به ایجاد تنش های وسیعی در سطح مدارس شود که برای والدین و معلمینی که از عهده پاسخ دادن به سوالات ابتدایی جنسی کودکان خود نیز بر نمی آیند معضل بزرگی به شمار خواهد آمد. چرا که از یک سو باید در چارچوب قوانین و قواعد نظام آموزشی حرکت کنند و از دیگر سو رفتارهای نامتعارف و نابهنجاری که تا قبل از این سابقه نداشت را کنترل کنند.

این در شرایطی است که دولت برای تفکیک جنسیتی در همه مقاطع و اماکن اعم از دانشگاه بیمارستان و..... برنامه ریزی کرده و آرام آرام به سمت آن حرکت می کند که به نظر این جانب امری ضروری می باشد.

Appendix 7: E-mail Reply from Dr. Xing

From: THA090004 student [mailto:a.kamyabi@siswa.um.edu.my]

Sent: 06 July 2011 11:44

To: Minjie Xing

Subject: Request

Dear Dr. Xing,

My name is Atiyeh Kamyabi Gol and I'm a PhD student At University Malaya in Malaysia. I was reading your article entitled "Student Awareness of Cross-Cultural Contrastive Rhetoric". First of all, I must say I really enjoyed reading it and the results were fascinating. In fact, I want to use the contrastive features you have mentioned in this article to label some of the writing samples I have collected. I would greatly appreciate it if you could help me with a problem I am having.

On Page 74 where you talk about Circular vs. Linear, it is mentioned that "Circularity can be measured by looking at the frequency of topic changes in paragraphs where topic sentences are used. Linearity can be indicated by a low frequency of topic changes or a low average number of topic sentences in a paragraph". However, it is never mentioned how many topic changes per paragraph would make a text circular.

On Pages 74 and 75 it is the same case with Metaphorical vs. Straightforward. How many literary figures need to be present in a text in order for it to be labeled metaphorical?

I know you have counted the overall cases in general, but I want to label each written sample separately. I would really appreciate it if you could clear up the matter for me.

Thank you in advance.

Best regard,

Atiyeh

On Wed, Jul 6, 2011 at 8:57 AM, Minjie Xing <Minjie.Xing@manchester.ac.uk> wrote:

Dear Atiyeh,

Thanks for showing interest in my article and glad to know you are doing similar analysis. In my study, the topic changes twice or more is regarded as circular while if a paragraph sticks to one topic, it is linear. If two or more than two metaphors or proverbs and such are used in a text, it is regarded as metaphorical while no metaphor or one is used is regarded as straightforward. My students' essays were between 400 and 500 words, so there won't be too many features in one text. Hope that helps.

Good luck for your research

Minjie

Appendix 8: Fraser's Taxonomy of Discourse Markers and its Persian Translation

Contrastive Markers

although, but, contrary to this/that, conversely, despite (doing) this/that, however, in comparison (with/to this/that), in contrast (with/to this/that), in spite of (doing) this/that, instead (of (doing) this/that), nevertheless, nonetheless, on the contrary, on the other hand, rather (than (do) this/that), still, though, whereas, yet.

نشانه های مقابله ای

اگرچه، گرچه، هرچند_ولی، اما، لیکن، جز، مگر، به استثنای، فقط، نه تنها، به طور محض، بی، بدون _بر خلاف، مخالف_ به طور معکوس، معکوس، بر عکس، بالعکس_ بااین که، با توجه به اینکه، باوجوداین که، بلکه _در قبال، در مقایسه با _درمقابل، دربرابر _باوجود، علی رغم_در عوض، بجای_ با این وجود، باز، هنوز _از سوی دیگر، ازطرف دیگر_بازهم، هنوزهم، معذک _ به هرجهت، ولو_از آنجایی که، بادر نظر گرفتن این که، نظر به این که، در حالی که، درحقیقت_تا آن زمان، تا کنون، تا آن وقت، تابه حال، درعین حال

Synonymous ideas in Persian

Nevertheless=nonetheless

Contrary to this/that= conversely

Rather than = instead of

But=however

Elaborative Markers

above all, also, analogously, and, besides, better yet, by the same token, correspondingly, equally, for another thing, further(more), in addition, in any event, in any case, in particular, I mean, likewise, more to the point, moreover, namely, on top of it all, or, otherwise, similarly, to cap it all off, too, well, what is more.

نشانه های افزایشی

مخصوصا، مهمتر از همه، از مهمترین، به ویژه_نیز، همچنین، همین طور، به علاوه، گذشته از این، علاوه بر این، همچنان، به همچنین، هم_مانند، قابل مقایسه، متشابه، مشابه_ و غیر از_ بهتر_یکسان، یکنواخت، همسان_به همان نسبت، همانطور، همانگونه، متقابلا_به طور مساوی، به طور برابر، به همان اندازه_علاوه بر، دیگر، مجدد، اضافی، بیش از_در هر صورت، درهر حال_ منظورم، مقصودم، هدفم _مربوط به موضوع _ یعنی، برای مثال، به عنوان مثال، به عنوان نمونه، به طور مثال، مثلاً، یا این که، یا آن که _ به طور دیگر، وگرنه، والا، درغیراین صورت_نهایتا_

Synonymous ideas in Persian

For another thing= further (more)

In addition= moreover=too=well=likewise= what is more=also

In any event= in any case

Similarly= analogously

On top of it all=in particular=above all

Inferential Markers

accordingly, all things considered, as a (logical) consequence/conclusion, as a result, because of this/that, certainly, consequently, hence, in any case, in this/that case, it can be concluded that, of course, on that condition, so, surely, then, therefore, thus, if so

نشانه های استنتاجی

بنابراین، از این رو، از این منظر، از همان قرار، بر طبق آن، نتیجتاً یا در نظر گرفتن همه جوانب _
در نتیجه، در پی آمد، در پایان، در نهایت، در فرجام، در اختتام، در انتها، بدین دلیل، به این دلیل، به واسطه _
همانا، حتماً، مطمئناً از این جهت، پس از این _ در هر حال، به هر حال در صورت، به شرط، پس، می
شود نتیجه گرفت، پس، آن گاه، در آن هنگام، در آن وقت، در آن زمان، آن وقتی، برای آن (منظور)، بدلیل آن،
در مجموع، در نهایت به آن شرط، به شرط آنکه اگرچه

Synonymous ideas in Persian

As a (logical) consequence/conclusion= as a result= consequently

It can be concluded that=therefore=then=thus= so

Certainly= surely=of course