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Editor-in-chief: **Iga Maria Lehman**

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Squaring the Circle between Perceived Rhetorical Norms in Academic Writing and Developing an Individual Academic Writer Identity

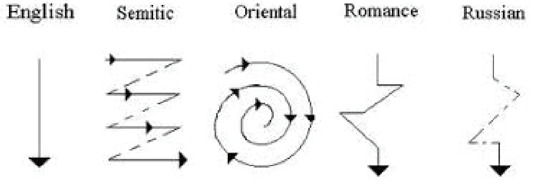
Abstract
This paper sets out to examine the issues around the influences on academic writing practices and to what extent these influences are culturally, socially, institutionally or disciplinarily determined and whether multi-cultural, tertiary level academic writing classes can be effective in developing a student's unique academic writer identity in English. Contrastive rhetoric (CR) studies and discourse studies have long since pointed to the existence of an internationally recognised style in academic writing and this, due to the indisputable dominance of global English, is the Anglophone rhetorical model. In this paper we set out to briefly analyse this model and to challenge some of the traditionally held views about the nature of the model and some of the notions held about its importance and use. Finally we propose some ideas as to how to tackle some of the notions and difficulties we raised in our study.

Key words: contrastive rhetoric, global english, academic writing, discipline specific rhetorical norms, third space pedagogy

Introduction

Kaplan (1966) was one of the earliest scholars to attempt to identify how different cultures represent their different thought processes in varying written rhetorical styles, graphically in his diagrams called 'doodles';

Figure 1. Inherent cultural rhetorical patterns



Source: Kaplan (1966)

This initial discussion of culturally diverse writing styles gave rise to a wealth of studies and became known as the study of contrastive rhetoric (CR), or contrastive rhetoric analysis (CRA) and its current incarnation is known as intercultural rhetoric.

Historically, cultural and intellectual endeavours moved from oral to written discourses, transforming human consciousness from situational, homeostatic and aggregative orally-based thought to a literate mindset that relies on analytical, abstract and individualistic thinking patterns (see Lehman, 2018). As Ong observes, "[w]ithout writing, the literate mind would not and could not think as it does, not only when engaged in writing but normally when it is composing its thoughts in oral form" (Ong, 2002, p. 92).

So over time different cultures developed their own standards and traditions for structuring written discourse and presenting content. Galtung (1981), for example, argues that varying levels of linearity in academic texts result from the differences between four major writing conventions: linear (Anglo-American, "Saxonic" style), digressive (German, "Teutonic" style; languages such as Polish, Czech, and Russian), circular (Oriental, "Nipponic" style) and digressive-elegant (Romance languages, "Gallic" style). As Connor points out CR "is premised on the insight that, to the degree that language and writing are cultural phenomena, different cultures have different rhetorical tendencies" (Connor, 2002, p. 498).

A brief overview of CR issues

Numerous studies were carried out to exemplify the diversity of writing styles and text features among different languages; such as the relationship between writer and reader (Mauranen, 1993; Schröder, 1988), overall text coherence (Blumenthal, 1998), text structure (Schröder, 1988), metalanguage (Hutz, 1997; Mauranen, 1993), and paragraph structure (e.g. Trumpp, 1998).

With the growth of English as the dominant global language, CA was often employed to compare and contrast world languages with English and often had a pedagogical motivation. And so non-native writers of English were measured to the perceived rhetorical norms of native English users and deviations from these were often attributed to the writer's first language/culture (L1/C1). Smakman and Duda-Osiewacz point out that when writing in English "non-native speakers inevitably apply a written style which incorporates their own cultural habits" (2014, p. 29). By the second half of the 20th century English was established as the dominant language for academic publication. For example SCOPUS, the world's largest database for peer-reviewed journals with titles from 5,000 publishers, has a publishing policy that a journal published in a language other than English must at the very least include English abstracts (Anderson, 2019). Scientists who want to produce influential, globally recognized work will most likely need to publish in English, however many are asking whether this might result in "the great cost of losing (...) unique ways of communicating ideas" (Lo Bianco, 2007).

It is generally accepted that Central and Eastern European countries follow the 'Teutonic' style of writing (see Connor, 1996), whose writing conventions typically allow for digression and extraneous content in the text. The focus is on content over form and the author's display of her/his intellect, so much so that the articulation of the main purpose of the text may even be delayed until later on in the work (see Čmejrková, 1994, p. 307; Duszak, 1997). In her 2003 study, Reichelt found that in 'Teutonic' academic writing the thesis statement is often missing and there is little emphasis placed on introductions and conclusions (Reichelt, 2003). In Teutonic texts "it may be more acceptable or expected for a writer to exhibit his/her intellectual prowess by writing obscurely (...) it is the readers who have to make the extra effort in German-speaking countries so that they can understand the texts, especially if the author is an academic" (Reichelt, 2003, p. 107). Duszak agrees and states that in order for the reader to process such texts "[i]ntellectual effort is required, and readiness for deep processing is taken as an obvious prerequisite for engagement" (Duszak 1997, p. 18). Whereas Anglophone writers are "expected to convey information in a way that is as clear as possible (...) that texts should be transparent (...) readers would be able to interpret texts for themselves" (Reichelt, 2003, p. 107).

Saxonic conventions follow a linear development of ideas and employ deductive and analytic reasoning in their writing and this linear organizational pattern of academic writing demands no prior knowledge of the propositional content of the writing on behalf of the reader as it is the writer's responsibility to provide the structure and the meaning of the discourse, by way of an introduction, explicitly identifying the purpose of the essay, identifying and clarifying the main points which are then developed and supported in the main body and a final section which restates the main points and concludes the piece.

As Lehman points out, "this type of organization contrasts with the structure of other writing conventions, including Polish written discourse, where, academic writing is rather impersonal in style and reader-friendly devices such as advance organizers, signposting (the use of transitioning words), careful and logical paragraphing and the use of precise and concise vocabulary are rare" (Lehman, 2018). Therefore, as Lehman concludes what are of "high importance to one writing culture (...) are not necessarily perceived as being so relevant to author writers who belong to other writing traditions" (Lehman, 2018, p. 55).

So as we have stated briefly above, tertiary level students studying their academic discipline in English may not be familiar with the way knowledge and ideas are presented and as a result may find themselves unable to process academic texts as efficiently as they may be required to do so. What is more, this view of academic writing as necessarily following well-defined stages, can also present a clash between cultures as these discourses "embody a typical worldview [that] speaks through an academic persona who is objective, trying to prevent emotions or prejudices from influencing the ideas in the writing" (Bizzell, 2002, p. 2) and in this way serve to create, mark and build relations of affinity and inclusion but also of distance and exclusion across social groups (see Buell, 2004). In fact in Poland where from 1975 to 2000, the percentage of academic articles published in Polish fell from 65% to 10% (Ball, & Tunger, 2005) and these changes are not without their negative consequences; Duszak and Lewkowicz write of this tension between national cultural elements and the "supranational community" (2008, p. 109).

However, while it is accepted that a writer's native culture exerts an important influence on how texts are composed, it is not the only influence and when non-native writers are required to write in English we need to be aware of other influences which may determine the writer's choice of rhetorical features (see Grabe, & Kaplan, 1996; Clyne, 1987).

2. Criticisms of traditional CR positions

CRA is not without its critics and two major accusations are that traditional CRA a) presents national writing styles as homogeneous and static and b) reinforces the superiority of the perceived English rhetorical style, as being, linear, direct and logical and therefore any deviation from this style is perceived as being non-linear, indirect and less logical (see Connor, 2002). The static, homogeneous nature of academic writing has been challenged by a number of researchers recently; from a traditional perspective an academic writer is expected to remain hidden and to function as an anonymous medium in the transmission of knowledge and information. However, more recently researchers have challenged the conventional understandings of the role of the academic author in the writing process noting the existence of a wide array of influences on the academic writer, such as the cultural and disciplinary resources available, writer expectations of reader response and writer agency and intentionality (see Cherry, 1988; Ivanič, 1998; Vassileva, 2000; Lillis, 2001; 2003; Hyland, 2002; 2012a; Kowalski, 2015). These studies have led to the reconception of academic writing as a dynamic combination of relations which make each academic text a manifestation of writer identity.

To reinforce this challenge to the notion of stasis and heterogeneity in academic texts, CR studies also found that in contrasting two languages the findings may not always produce the same results. In two studies in Poland Duszak concludes that the difference between English and Polish is in the focus on what is presented in Polish texts as opposed to the how in English (1994), whereas Golebiowski (1998) argues that the main difference between Polish and English academic texts is in the way the paper's goals and objectives are presented. Therefore, it seems clear that "Culturally and linguistically influenced thought patterns cannot by themselves account for differences in rhetorical patterns and features" (Severino, 1993, p. 51).

Another area where there will be differences in how writers compose and organize their texts will be within the academic discipline itself; writers with different disciplinary backgrounds will attempt to highlight their own views and attitudes in accordance with the practices of the discipline they feel part of. "The literacy practices of a disciplinary community embody different orientations to knowledge constructions" and rhetorical features have significance in that they reflect "the writer's beliefs and values, and thus provide an indicator of disciplinary difference in professional academic writing (North, 2005, p. 435). These rhetorical features then are ways in which authors "intrude to stamp their personal authority onto their arguments or step back and disguise their involvement" (Hyland, 2005, p. 176).

The final area to consider in the considering potential influences on the rhetorical choices of student academic writers is their previous or current writing instruction. As Severino points out, "There is a complex relationship between cultural ways of thinking and that culture's literacy instruction" (Severino, 1993, p. 51). Ling Yang and David Cahill argue that "While culture as a whole may have an important impact on students' rhetorical patterns, the influence of school education, which is direct and immediate, is non-negligible" (2008, p. 121). As stated previously, traditionally CR studies point out that 'Teutonic' academic text patterns differ culturally from 'Saxonic' because they do not employ a thesis statement in the beginning of the text (see Reichelt above); however, what this finding overlooks is the fact that in German academic writing classes thesis statements are simply not taught. Researchers are beginning to ask CR to take into account how both culture and education affect the writing situation, believing that the scientific aspect of how cultural influences may or may not affect the rhetorical patterning of texts has been adequately considered but not enough focus has been put on the pedagogical influences (see Connor, 2008; Matsuda, & Atkinson, 2008).

3. Pedogocial considerations for English writing instruction

Today many universities in non-English speaking countries have been compelled to provide courses in the global lingua-franca, English. According to Knight, "[I]nternationalisation must be taken as one of the main reasons for using English as a medium of instruction across universities in Europe" (Knight, 2008, p. 24). And for many scholars and practitioners this internationalization of educational settings and the dominance of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) and "the internalization of reductive notions about rhetorics of different languages and cultures, (...), can lead to skewed, simplistic expectations and interpretations of ESL students and their writing and an ethnocentric, assimilationist pedagogical stance" (Severino, 1993, p. 53). The challenge for writing instructors as we see it, is not to eradicate C1/L1 rhetorical habits, but to enable academic student-writers to recognise the function of those typically recurring English rhetorical devices present in discipline-specific academic texts and to choose whether to adopt/adapt them in their own writing in order to develop their own unique writer identity.

Therefore the premise from which we begin looking at some broad pedagogical issues regarding teaching writing is that academic writing is not homogeneous and static and that the rhetorical styles in academia are not only affected by C1/L1 issues, but are very often also discipline-specific, adopting the typically recurring, disciplinary accepted rhetorical norms. What is more, traditional views of academic English as being impersonal and non-reader inclusive have long been proven simplistic in their conception (see North, 2005; Hyland, 2005) and that students' "writing 'styles' do not come in neat packages; they are as complex and varied as the personalities and life experiences of each individual" (Fox, 1994).

There have been a number of CR studies which have focussed on specific aspects of an academic text and this paper argues that we are therefore well placed to construct and tailor academic writing courses in order to heighten the awareness non-native academic writers of English to the Anglophone rhetorical devices, while constantly bearing in mind that different disciplinary communities have also evolved their own preferred literacy practices and that L1/C1 influences will and can persist.

In order to briefly investigate how this might be done we want to quickly look at a study on academic publications by both Anglophone and non-Anglophone (Polish) academics by Smakman and Duda-Osiewacz in 2014. At the global, textual level, they focused on the presence or otherwise of the Introduction-Method/Materials-Results-Discussion (IMRD) pattern, a structure which is typical to many scientific journals (Swales, & Feak 2009) but which Duszak observed was lacking in many Polish scientific texts speaking instead of the 'flow of consciousness' in Polish academic writing (Duszak, 1994, p. 302). The next area for analysis was on the introductory section of the academic text, referred to as Create-A-Research-Space (CARS), and typically consisting of three moves; 1) the acknowledgement of the importance of this and previous research 2) indicate research gaps and 3) state the purpose of the present research (Swales, & Feak, 2009). Smakman and Duda-Osiewacz found that this section does not "necessarily occur, presumably since the Polish scientific style does not know of any such schema" (2014, p. 34). The other 3 features Smakman and Duda-Osiewacz (2014) consider are 'reciprocity', 'linearity' and 'referencing'.

Reciprocity refers to the balance between what the writer expects the reader to know and what the reader expects from the text (Nystrand, 1986, p. 53). As has been stated previously, Teutonic texts tend to include as much academic information and theory as possible and it is the reader's task to understand the messages conveyed; while the Anglo-Saxon style outlines the goals of the paper and continues to guide the reader through the process of understanding.

Linearity is created by logical argumentation and development of the themes previously introduced; unlike traditional Teutonic academic texts, which tend to be digressive and allow for additional, extraneous information (see Clyne, 1987; Duszak, 1994; Golebiowski, 1998).

Referencing is a way of citing other authors in the field and in doing so, strengthening the academic argumentation of the text. Golebiowski (1998) found that in Saxonic texts, referencing was tied to individual themes or points, while in Polish scientific texts the references seemed to have no particular pattern and often "resemble abbreviated statements on all available knowledge on the topic" (Golebiowski, 1998, p. 82).

4. Practical approaches

Most writing has some kind of global patterning, McCarthy argues studies have shown three types of common patterns; 1) problem-solution 2) claim-counterclaim and 3) general-specific (1991, p. 157). The problem-solution pattern, consists of four basic elements: the situation, within which there is a complication/problem, the problem which requires a response, the response or solution to the problem and finally, the evaluation or result of the response/solution (see Hoey, 2001, p. 124).

Below is a graph which I have used in class order to train students to look for patterns in texts;

Figure 2. Example of textual patterns

PROBLEM – SOLUTION PATTERN
Step 1
Students read and identify the Problem/Difficult situation.
Step 2
Students read and identify the possible solution(s) to the situation
Step 3
Students read and identify the methods employed to resolve/change the situation
Step 4
Students read and identify the methods employed to resolve/change the situation
Step 5
Students read and identify the results/outcomes of methods employed to resolve/change the situation
Step 6
Students read and identify the evaluation of results/outcomes

With such activities students can be sensitised to the existence of global textual patterning and this kind of activity can also be carried out on discipline specific texts, even by simply asking students to underline or highlight the 4 sections of the *Introduction-Method/Materials-Results-Discussion* (IMRD) pattern.

In the introduction to an English academic text we typically find the CARS pattern; Create-A-Research-Space, which usually consists of three moves; 1) the acknowledgement of the importance of this and previous research (in bold), 2) indicate research gaps (in italics) and 3) state the purpose of the present research (Calibri light 9). Once more, we begin by sensitising student academic writers by asking them to recognise these 3 different sections;

> **Because negotiating academic identity is an integral part of tertiary students' learning process our purpose in this paper is to look at both 'institutional possibilities for selfhood', which offer participants opportunities to enrich their academic identities within the context-sensitive, instructional environment, as well as 'institutional constraints on selfhood', which draw attention to the ways in which possibilities for selfhood are institutionally limited.** *To achieve this objective we build on Clark and Ivanič's conceptualization of writer's voice seen as both 'voice as form' and 'voice as content' (Clark and Ivanič 1997). These conceptualizations are represented by the concepts of 'the discoursal self', which refers to the social notion of voice and is constructed by a "writer's affiliation to or unique selection among existing discourse conventions" (ibid.) and 'the self as author', which refers to "writers' expression of their own ideas and beliefs" and reveals an individualistic, expressive and assertive voice (ibid.). Since cultural context is both reflected in and constituted by discourse we call for the development of 'multivoiced classrooms' (Dysthe, 1996) which overcome the constraints of a homogeneous, institutionalised discourse. Such an approach to culture in pedagogical contexts will foster the formation of a third space (Kramsch, 1998), a place in which the intercultural speaker (ibid.) is competent in negotiating and mediating discourse, but not necessarily with a native speaker's competence* (adapted from Anderson, & Lehman, 2018).

Typically, an Anglo-Saxon rhetorical style outlines the goals of the paper and continues to guide the reader through the process of understanding, balancing what the writer expects the reader to know and what the reader expects from the text (Nystrand, 1986, p. 53). For van Dijk, this notion of reciprocity or sharedness is information which the writer assumes to be known to the reader; either situational/cultural, or textual, that is, having been brought into the discourse earlier (van Dijk, 1997, p. 207). There are many lexico-grammatical features which function in the text to create this reciprocity, which can be focussed upon in order to train academic student writers with the skills to both understand and create this rhetorical function. For example, exophoric references direct the reader out from the text for the information, they assume that the reader will have this information in their pre-knowledge, that they will be able to refer to this knowledge and determiners are often used in this way;

The government are to blame for unemployment.

McCarthy suggests that it would be odd for someone to ask 'Which government?' that, "It is assumed by the speaker that the hearer will know which one, usually 'our government' or 'that of the country we are in / talking about" (McCarthy, 1991, p. 39). As Halliday and Hasan (1976) point out, referencing exists in all languages and so second language learners can usually transfer this discourse knowledge from L1 to L2, however, the specific grammatical cohesive features that are employed in English, pronouns, articles and demonstratives, may cause decoding problems for second language students. As McCarthy points out, in languages where the definite article is not employed in this way, may lead to non-reciprocity; "'Do you like the folk music?' the listener thinks, 'Which music is he referring to, I can't hear anything?'" (McCarthy, 1991, p. 41). When the referent is a proper noun and the writer assumes pre-existing knowledge of the referent, then no determiner is used; 'the biggest of which is Coca Cola', 'a combined wage bill that would not even hire Tom Cruise'. But when the writer feels that there is no shared knowledge a brief definition or explanation is offered; 'Atlantic Records, a label from Warner Music Group', 'Richard Parsons, AOL Time Warners co-chief'. Therefore there is a case for lexico-grammatical cohesive devices to be explicitly taught. As we have stated earlier many CR studies have pointed to the aspect of linearity in Anglophone texts as opposed to other cultures which are typically digressive. We argue that in working on typically recurring textual patterns, this will help student writers develop an awareness of this rhetorical style, but also certain grammatical items such as pronouns, demonstratives and articles can be used to give the text cohesion (see Beaugrande, & Dressler, 1981). Halliday and Hasan (1989) identified two major types of grammatical cohesive devices; co-reference and co-classification. Co-references can refer either forward in a text (cataphoric references) or backwards, (anaphoric reference). Francis calls cataphoric references advance labels as they function to introduce new information and anaphoric references as retrospective labels as they re-state given information (Francis, 1994). Anaphoric referencing is generally much more used in English, the examples found are; 'It will be right up there with the Star Wars franchise', 'Now that is power'. Anaphoric references 'this' and 'that' can be used to refer back to large parts of text, or to information which is not located in only one place, as opposed to a single referent and in so doing can make it difficult for student writers to retrieve or paraphrase the information being referred to. As stated earlier (Halliday, & Hasan, 1976), referencing occurs in most languages, but difficulties can still arrive at the lexico-grammatical level, where the reader fails to identify how certain pronouns, demonstratives and articles are functioning to provide textual cohesion, by means of intertextual linking and referencing. Once more the case for explicit teaching of these rhetorical devices seems evident.

As regards the citation of other authors in the field academic writing teachers need to counsel prudence and control, restricting the number of references cited for each theme/point. The tendency for non-English writers to over-use references, often as a demonstration of being widely read in the field, needs to be challenged.

5. Discussion

As we have tried to point out in this paper, CR studies, discourse studies and identity studies have all pointed to the rich variation in styles employed by academic writers; however, we have also pointed to the dominance of English as a lingua franca in the world of academia. Smakman and Duda-Osiewacz ask "whether there is an actual need for an internationally recognised style" in academic writing (Smakman, & Duda-Osiewacz, 2014, p. 43) and the answer is clearly no, and yes. For us the 'yes' refers to the indisputable dominance of English in academia and we have briefly shown how academic writing classes can address this by awareness raising activities. The 'no' is a far more complex answer and involves whether maintaining English as the gatekeeper to scientific discourse comes with "the great cost of" other cultures "losing their unique ways of communicating ideas" and of "gradually lose their own voice" (Lo Bianco, 2007). The fear is that the dominance of English will result in the scientific vocabularies of many languages failing to keep pace with new developments and concepts. In fact Duszak and Lewkowicz point to changes in the way Polish academics compose their texts more in line with the typical Anglophone rhetorical style (Duszak, & Lewkowicz, 2008). Jenkins points out that there is variation among Anglophone writers which is tolerated, pointing out stylistic differences between US and UK academic writing and asks why this tolerance can't be extended to other cultures. She goes on to ask why variation should be seen as a hindrance and suggests that non-native academic writers may eventually "have significant influence on the spread of English" (Jenkins, 2003, p. 42).

Smakman and Duda-Osiewacz in their concluding remarks repeatedly suggest that academic writers have choice as to what extent they do or do not accept Anglo-Saxon rhetorical strategies, pointing out that this choice "to a degree lies with the authors themselves" (Smakman, & Duda-Osiewacz, 2014, p. 45). We would disagree with this on two counts, both of which are touched upon in this paper; firstly, it is difficult to see a diminishing of the hegemony of English as the language of academia, if anything recent changes in the world of publishing are tightening this hold, with ever-more monopolistic control of academic publishing and secondly, it is debatable how conscious academic and would be academic writers are of the lexico-grammatical and text features which help create a particular rhetorical style. Hence the great importance this paper has given to addressing awareness raising classes for writers on these rhetorical features.

Adapting Kramsch's third culture pedagogy approach (see Kramsch, 2009), tertiary level academic writing classes (and indeed in-house classes for practising academics), need to provide a context in which non-native participants are taught to be aware of the ‘imposed’ imposed rhetorical norms of the discipline-specific discourse and are then encouraged to create meaning on the margins or in the interstices of these conventional features. We believe that with such an approach non-native, academic writers can be given the possibility to recognize and understand the meaning-making function of the discipline’s rhetorical features and to be encouraged to use, adapt or reject these conventional linguistic tools in order to create their own academic identity.

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