



Improving the Ability of Writing Argumentative Essays of Iranian EFL Learners by Raising Awareness of Rhetoric Transfer

Bahador Sadeghi^{1,*}, Maryam Maleki²

¹Assistant Professor, Islamic Azad University, Takestan Branch, Department of English Language, Takestan, Iran

²MA of TEFL, Islamic Azad University, Takestan Branch, Department of English Language, Takestan, Iran

Received: 01.02.2015; Accepted: 05.05.2015

Abstract. The aim of the present study was to examine the effect of raising awareness about rhetoric transfer on the ability of writing argumentative essays of Iranian EFL learners. One of the most important issues in EFL mainstream has been the effect of L1 on L2. In discussion of Error analysis, one of the errors with high frequency in the EFL classroom is caused by the interference of first language. It seems that making comparison between L1 and L2 rhetoric can reveal the patterns of negative cultural transfer in writings of EFL learners. The study was conducted with 30 female students of university who were supposed to take task 2 of IELTS writing sub-test. At first all students were asked to take a pretest in which they were required to write a composition about a controversial topic. This test intended to ascertain whether or not students have already gained the ability and techniques to compose argumentative essays. Within the next two weeks, they were taught how to write an argument kind of essay by an experienced IELTS teacher and then they took An IELTS Writing sub-test. The further step included teaching and negotiating contrastive rhetoric of Persian and English to students. After that, the subjects took the similar test. Their writings were analyzed in terms of cohesion and coherence which is one of four criteria that are employed in assessing IELTS writing test. The results of the present study indicated that there is a relation between raising awareness of rhetoric transfer from L1 to L2 and increasing the ability of writing argumentative essay of Iranian EFL writings.

Keywords: Cultural Transfer, Contrastive rhetoric, Argumentative essay, Cohesion, Coherence.

1. INTRODUCTION

This study aimed at investigating the effect of raising awareness about rhetoric transfer on the ability of writing argumentative essays of Iranian EFL learners.

It has been believed that culture is an inseparable part of language and language teaching. No one can deny the interrelationship between culture and Language. As a matter of fact, languages represent cultures. (Yule, 1996)

One of the most important issues in EFL mainstream has been the effect of L1 on L2. In discussion of Error analysis, one of the errors with high frequency in the EFL classroom is caused by the interference of first language. In other word, the vast numbers of L1interferece patterns have been detected in EFL writing (Abu Rass, 2010; A. Ridha, 2012). Since the publication of Kaplan Article (1966) numerous studies have been carried out to ascertain the role of negative cultural transfer as well as the role of awareness raising in improving writing skill (see, for example, Ming and Xing, 2008). Since so many factors such as geography, weather conditions, traditions and religion influence forms and meanings, and lead to varied languages with different and unique characteristics, taking into accounts these kinds of cognitive codes and complexity help researchers to gain more and clear insights into understanding languages. Noticing to various features of the language that is learnt is one of the

*Corresponding author. Email address: bahsad@gmail.com

effective ways to facilitate learning. The reason for this is that the learners' attention and concentration ability are enhanced through this process. Pondering the differences and similarity between two languages can increase noticing and as it was mentioned will maximize learning. In other word, raising awareness about rhetoric differences between L1 and L2 according to Hong (2014) is essential to effective learning. It seems that making comparison between L1 and L2 rhetoric can reveal the patterns of negative cultural transfer in EFL Iranian writing. As a few studies have been carried out to ascertain rhetoric difference between Persian and English, and their results have not put in practice, such attempts to discover it seems to help EFL teachers in teaching skills particularly writing.

There is widespread agreement among EFL teachers that one of the major flaws which is often seen in EFL writings is brought about by the interference of L1. It has been seen that many learners transfer their L1 rhetoric into L2. For example, Iranian learners are usually asked to write expository essays at school. They do not receive any training about argument writing. In addition, as they want to write in English they tend to write descriptive texts and won't be able to argue for and against controversial issues. Writing instruction in English classrooms has been neglected in Iran by both teachers and students. However, the increasing needs of students to communicate with people around the world through the internet, and also their urgent need to succeed in academic fields which usually require them to take proficiency test such as IELTS and TOEFL examinations have encouraged them to develop writing abilities. English teacher hardly ever assign writing tasks to be done in the classroom and even if they are done, no feed backs are given to improve writing skills of English students. As a result, the majority of English learners are not exposed to writing instructions until they need to write a research paper as a graduate student or take a proficiency test such as IELTS in order to continue their education in foreign countries particularly English speaking countries. As it was said not effective and useful instructions are given to write argumentative essays. On the other hand, no information is given to raise students' awareness on cohesion and coherence, and also the negative rhetorical of L1 to L2.

This study will show that how training students in writing argumentative essays can enhance their writing ability. Besides, further information about differences between writing styles in Persian and English can booster this skill too.

The study intends to investigate how raising awareness about difference between L1 and L2 rhetoric help learners to develop skills in writing argumentative essays in English. The results of the current study can help to generate methods and materials by which learners' awareness can be raised about negative cultural transfer and, as result, their writing skill will be improved.

2. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Numerous studies since first Kaplan's publication (1966) have been carried out to shed lights into contrastive rhetoric. However, the practical use of their findings in English classrooms has not been so remarkable for varied reasons. (See, for instance, Xing, Wang and spencer, 2008 Kuntjara, 2004 and Rida, 2012). The following is a summary of main issues related to studies on contrastive rhetoric and, cohesion and coherence:

2.1. Cultural Transfer

Cultural transfer appears when students of English begin to write in English. As a result, their writing is influenced by first culture. (Abu Rass, 2011) Since the publication of Kaplan (1966) a great deal of attention has been shifted to the importance of cultural transfer. He believes that diversity in languages is the result of different word views and cultures. In other words, languages represent and echoes culture.

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There are two kinds of transfer: positive and negative. Positive transfer facilitates learning while negative transfer hinders studying foreign Languages. With regard to the former type of transfer, EFL learners subconsciously use L1 rhetoric and feature in L2; as a result, the common patterns of two languages overlap and learning take places in an effective way. However, diversion in two languages regarding differences in two cultures lead to inference with language study. (Hong, 2014)

In a study (Abu Rass, 2011) the writing of 18 teacher trainees, who were Muslim, was analyzed. The results show the impact of Islam on writing in English. In other word, cultural transfer hinders improving academic writing skill.

In another study (Xing, Wang and spencer **2008**) which was focused on comparison between Chinese and English rhetoric, data analysis revealed that interaction through e-mails can raise cultural awareness of contrastive rhetoric in l2 writing. Consequently, their ability in writing in English has been significantly soared.

2.2. Contrastive Analysis of Discourse Markers

The importance of discourse organizers in communication and reading comprehension is undeniable. According to Ziahosseiny (2013) a contrastive analysis of L1 and L2 with regard to discourse features will shed light on similar and different ‘textual patterns’ in the two languages and underlines lexical items which are used to signal such patterns. Cohesion refers to such patterns and links between sentences and clauses and is achieved through employing different kinds of conjunctions and lexical clues. Alijanian and Dastjerdi (2012) Point out to pedagogical implications of comparisons of discourse markers between native and target language:

“Discourse organization which is part of culture is both implicit and explicit in the spreading of several forms such as teaching. From a pedagogical point of view, teachers should become aware of these discourse patterns in diverse languages and subsequently inform their students of such variations in the ways of thinking and standards of discourse organization in writing. For example, the L2 teachers and students can discuss the similarities and differences between the two traditions. Asking students to compare L1 and L2 textbooks with regards to the use of indirectness devices can be a strategy to familiarize students with different styles of writing. It is advisable for foreign language learners to see how English speakers enact their worldviews, rhetorical patterns, and values in mind. L2 teachers can steadily change their students` perceptions on how to write in English by helping them grasp the norms of rhetorical conventions, standards, and expectations in the target language.”(p.67)

2.3. Contrastive rhetoric

According to Kaplan (1966) rhetoric is the way by which speakers of a language think and see the world. Furthermore, their thoughts are reflected by “available means” in their language. In other words, “rhetoric is concerned with factors of analysis, data gathering, interpretation, and synthesis”. (p.11) He added that rhetoric is not a fixed universal phenomenon across languages, but varies from culture to culture. He gives two examples by which distinctive differences between two languages, The English and the language of Eskimos, regarding contrastive rhetoric will be appeared: while Eskimos believe in fatalism and say “he appears to

me "the English say "I see him" which confirms that English people takes for granted the will power and intention of human beings. These two examples clarify the role of rhetoric.

Kaplan also identified and depicted five different rhetorical patterns of languages which affect L2 writing: he showed English rhetoric as straight and vertical line which signifies linearity of organizational pattern in English. Other types of rhetoric include Oriental rhetoric like spiral, Arabic rhetoric which is like a series of zigzags. Roman and Russian rhetoric which are like some lines fluctuating downward. According to Conner(2002 as cited in Abu Rass, 2011,p.206) "the current approaches to contrastive rhetoric have explained that the differences in L2 writing derive from "multiple sources, including L1, national culture, L1 educational background, disciplinary culture, genre characteristics and mismatched expectations between readers and writers"

2.4. Types of errors

The occurrence of errors is bound to various causes in writing. Based on contrastive analysis and error analysis; errors are divided into 4 groups: "substance, lexicon, grammar and cohesion."(Hong, 2014) In another categorization, according to Wardhaugh (2000 as cited in Hong, L.2014) tree levels of language are influenced by different types of errors as follows: 'substance level, text level, discourses level'. Each level consists of five sub-categories: omission, redundancy, miss selection, disordering, and blends. "Substance refers to phonological and graph logical system, discourse refers to formulation or processing on the discourse level. The term text is sometimes used to refer exclusively to a unit of written language larger than the sentence for which paragraph might be a suitable term" (p.28&29).

2.5. Language awareness

Many researchers have placed emphasis on the role that awareness, noticing and attention play in language learning. Van Lier (1996 as cited in Cater and Nunan 2002) "defines it (language awareness) similarly as an understanding of the human faculty of language and its role in thinking, learning and social life."(p.160) Second language learners mistakenly use the vocabulary that due to their similarity to first language are inevitable. Van Lier (2002) believed that raising awareness about features of second language can enhance learning. In other words, "By making learning explicit, L2 learners' knowledge of their own language can be used to raise conscious awareness about features of the target language."(p.161) Lie concluded that some form and level of awareness rising is beneficial for learners.

2.6. The relationship between thought sequence and rhetoric

Paul Lorenzo has already identified the relationship between 'sequence of thought and grammar'. In addition many researchers such as 'Cicero, Brooks and Warren' have demonstrated the same relationship between thought sequence and rhetoric. (Kaplan, 2001)

Thought patterns that speakers of different languages are expected to realize in their communication are varied. For example, paragraph development in English is linear which means that English readers expect to read a thesis (central ideas) in an essay which is later supported with details, evidence and examples. This procedure due to cultural and thought patterns is different for other languages. The reverse procedure is also possible in English which means that details and examples are presented at first then the topic sentence appears. These two

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ways of presenting thoughts are called deductive and inductive approaches and are impossible in English (Kaplan, 2001) while Persian writers and readers mostly expect inductive and indirect approach of writing arguments (see, for example, **Nowruzi** Khiabani and Pourghassemian, 2009).

Drawing upon the above mentioned consideration Kaplan (2001) asserted that paragraphing is artificial thought. Each language has particular tendency to use these patterns in essay. Therefore, languages' patterns should be discovered and compared with patterns of English which he believes facilitate teaching writing essays to non-native speakers of English.

Therefore, "foreign language teachers should be foreign culture teachers, having the ability to experience and analyze both the home and target cultures" (Byram, Morgan et al., 1994: 73 as cited in Thanasoulas, 2001).

2.7. Awareness of cultural differences

A good number of studies have been carried out to show the effect of raising cultural transfer on language learning. According to Kachru (1995 as cited in Kuntjara, 2004), it is completely logical to make ESL writers aware of rhetorical patterns of English writing which on whole can enhance cultural understanding between languages. In a study conducted by (Kuntjara, 2004) an attempt was made to see whether there has been any cultural transfer in writings of Indonesians students. The study suggested that analyzing rhetoric of a language is complicated process though the findings confirmed the effect of raising awareness on increasing cultural understanding. Rida (2012) examined English writing samples of 80 college students and grouped their errors. He concluded that awareness about linguistics differences can decline the interference of mother tongue.

2.8. Argumentation across L1 and L2

The level of cohesion and coherence in students' writing is different from one language to another based on rhetoric style of them. In other word, "an effective argument is culturally driven and L1 argument patterns may influence written argumentation in a second language". (Uysal, 2012, p.133)

In a study by Hong (2014) made one point clear that the negative influence of L1 on L2 writing is unavoidable and has multiple aspects. In this study 178 subjects in three levels were asked to write a composition on a topic. The analysis of writing errors and its reasons revealed that the main problem of students' errors is due to misapplication of words in composition.

In another study conducted by Uysal (2012), participants were asked to write Argumentative essays in L1 and L2. The texts were analyzed based on Tolmin's model of reasoning. The findings revealed that 'common patterns' employed in L1 and L2 writings were influenced by cultural as well as some other factors such as "audience, L2 level, disciplinary background and previous reading experiences."(p.146)

2.9. Contrastive Features/structural and rhetorical patterns

The two outstanding categories are the followings:

A. The five contrastive features are based on the research of “Ballard and Clanchy (1991), Cho (1999), Connor (1996), Cortazzi and Jin (1997), and Schneider and Fujishima (1995)”. (As cited in Xing, Wang and Spenser, 2008):

Linearity vs. circularity

Many researchers have found Anglo-European expository essays follow linear expansion while some Asian languages develop essays in circular fashion which means that the former group puts the topic sentence (thesis) first and by adding supporting sentences develop their paragraph but later group use many topic sentences and keep changing them. (Kaplan, 1966)

Explicitness vs. implicitness

According to Bialystok (1982 as cited in Johnson and Johnson, 1998) “when linguistic knowledge is implicit it is unanalyzed, i.e. consists of formulas of single words representing whole utterances. When linguistic knowledge is explicit it is analyzed, i.e. consists of grammatical and lexical units which can be productively combined to produce novel utterances.” On the other hand explicit discourse markers are employed by writers to synthesize sentences and create unity. Furthermore, the total numbers of these discourse markers reflect coherence and unity of essays. (Burstein, Kukich, Wolff, Lu and Chodorow, 1998) According to Xing, Wang and Spenser, (2008), as EFL learners bring first language cultural aspects into second language learning, it is completely beneficial for learners to get familiar with differences and similarities between L1 and L2.

Inductivity vs. deductivity

In deductive approach the thesis statement which includes the central idea is placed at the beginning of the essay while in inductive essays the topic sentence comes at the end of essay. “It is possible to judge whether an essay is inductive or deductive by looking at the presence and placement of the thesis statement.” (Megging, 1996 as cited in Xing, Wang and Spenser, 2008)

Metaphorical vs. straightforward nature

Metaphor is a departure from literal meaning which makes comparison between two distinctive nouns. For example, John is a pig. In this example John eating habits are assumed to be similar to pigs. Metaphors are mostly used to emphasize on ‘stylistic vividness’. (Abrams, 2005)

The use of metaphor and other figures of speech and fixed organizational patterns are valued in Chinese while English teachers consider these formulaic language patterns old-fashioned and ‘cliché’. (Xing, Wang and Spenser, 2008)

Likewise Chinese, Persian readers appreciate stylistics features too:

“Generally speaking, indirectness in Persian writing is considered an artistic style with the aim of achieving respect and indicating harmony in human communication. Persian readers are more patient in reading compositions; they are expected to realize the connotation of a text and work hard. Even it can be suggested that stating the points too clearly is disrespecting the readers; the writer is expected to give room to his interlocutors for

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interpretation. Traditionally, Persian literature is dynamic and the ideas of reflective thinking, open mindedness, making meaning, and quest for inquisition and exploration are what Persian writers are perusing".(Alijanian and Dastjerdi,2012, p. 67)

Introduction-body-conclusion vs. start-sustain-turn-sum

An argument led-essay in English usually includes introduction, body and conclusion and emphasis is placed on form. In some languages like Chinese, though, the learners tend to pay more attention to meanings. (Xing, Wang and Spenser, 2008)“Chinese writing places the emphasis more on the whole: it is more synthetic, more changeable, and there is no clear-cut separation between the parts. Also, Chinese rhetorical style is not very strict about the need for coherent links between parts. It relies more heavily on the reader's interpretation.” (Xing, Wang and Spenser, 2008, p.74)

B. In another study to compare rhetorical differences between Japanese and English language, Kubato (1992) employed 3 types of analysis as follows (as cited in Rashidi and AlimoradDastkheyr(2009, p.137):

- (a) The location of main idea(s)
- (b) The macro-level rhetorical pattern
- (c) The presence or absence of a summary statement

2.10. IELTS

IELTS stands for International English Language Testing System. It has got two modules namely General and Academic. The general Module is usually taken by those who wish to immigrate to countries such as Australia or Canada. However, people who tend to pursue their education, as a part of entry requirement of most of reputable universities across the globe have to take the test. The IELTS examinations consist of four parts designed to measure listening, reading, writing and speaking skills of Candidates. Each part employs a set of criteria to demonstrate testees' proficiency with regard to the four skills.

The writing section is also divided into two tasks. Task 2 is the same for both Academic and general modules. Nevertheless, task 1 differs in terms of content and question for academic and general types: while the general one requires the candidate to write a letter, for instance, a letter of complaint to the manager of a shop, the academic module tests the abilities of prospective universities students to describe different kinds of diagram.

Examiners on the one hand apply a band score descriptors, on the other hand, four criteria to measure candidates ability to write a unified text.

As it was mentioned, to do task two, candidates need to write an essay of 250 words during a limited given time. The four criteria which are considered to measure writing skill are as follows: Cohesion and coherence, lexical Resources, Grammatical Accuracy and Task Response. (For further information see www.IELTS.org)

2.10.1. Coherence and Cohesion

A theoretical framework developed by Canale and Ewain(1980 as cited in Cotton and Wilson,2008) and Canale (1983,1984 as cited in Cotton and Wilson,2008) they proposed that

“Communicative competence includes four key areas: grammatical competence, socio-linguistic competence, strategic competence and discourse competence.” (p.6)

Canale (1983, as cited in Cotton and Wilson, 2008) also indicated that “discourse competence, an aspect of communicative competence, referred to the means whereby a text develops unity through the use of both cohesion and coherence. He indicated that cohesion refers to the connectedness provided by structural cohesive devices such as pronouns and synonyms, while coherence refers to the way in which the relationships between different semantic meanings unify a text.”(P, 6)

Shaw and Falvery(2008 as cited in Cotton and Wilson, 2008) state that coherence refers to logical relationships between sentences within a paragraph whereas cohesion refers to the use of linking expressions and connectors to achieve unity in a text.

2.10.2. Coherence

Coherence is believed to be more difficult to be defined in comparison with cohesion. However, according to Halliday (2004 as cited in Cotton and Wilson, 2008), ‘thematic progression’ can be used to analyze coherence of a text. Like School of Linguistics, he saw a text as a mix of clauses which follows a particular theme which is an indication of coherence in a text. Another method to determine coherence is ‘Rhetorical Structure Analysis’ proposed by Mann and Thompson (1989 as cited in Cotton and Wilson, 2008). They stated that “The text is analyzed in terms of hierarchical relations between nuclei and satellites, each nucleus being the key proposition and the satellite being the way in which this nucleus is supported.” (P.6)

“The third approach is called Topic Structure Analysis (TSA) which is an approach to analysing coherence building on the work of Halliday and the Prague School of Linguistics. TSA has been used to identify different categories of thematic progression, the most common being sequential progression where the theme of one sentence becomes the theme of the next (a-b, b-c, c-d), and parallel progression where the theme of one clause becomes the theme of the next or subsequent clauses (a-b, a-c, a-d). Alternatively, in extended parallel progression, the first and the last topics of a piece of text are the same but are interrupted with some sequential progression (a-b, b-c, a-d)”. (Cotton and Wilson, 2008, p.7)

Finally, the introduction-body-conclusion structure of essays which is based on the Toulmin measure of logical progression, which identifies ‘claim–data–warrant’ can be applied to measure coherence. (Conner, 1990)

2.10.3. Cohesion

The elements which make up cohesion can be easily ascertained within a text. They include explicit lexical and grammatical items. The most influential approach to cohesion to date was developed by Halliday and Hasan (1976 as cited in Cotton and Wilson, 2008) who “ identified five distinct categories:

“Reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion. Reference chains are created largely by the use of personal and demonstrative pronouns, determiners and comparatives, linking elements within a text through anaphoric, and to a lesser extent cataphoric, relations. Conjunction establishes logico-semantic cohesive ties through the use of conjunctive ‘markers’ which ‘move the text forward’ (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004, p 535). Ellipsis and substitution allow for parts of

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a sentence to be omitted in referring to an earlier verbal or nominal element (for example: *I told you SO; I've got ONE*). Lexical cohesion is produced through the use of repetition, synonymy, metonymy and collocation. These grammatical and lexical means of creating cohesion Halliday refers to as 'cohesive devices.' (p.7)

2.10.4. The Role of the Band Descriptors

Descriptor of each scale level is crucial in assessment of coherence and cohesion and the validity of assessment lies in the accuracy of band score descriptors. Examiners should take stick to precise wording of band score descriptors to rate coherence and cohesion accurately. It is believed that more research is required to be carried out to ensure the validity of assessment (North and Schneider 1998; Turner and Upshur 2002 as cited in Cotton and Wilson, 2008). One such empirical study is that by Knoch (2007 as cited in Cotton and Wilson, 2008) who developed a scale for measuring coherence.

2.11. Previous Studies

Based upon various cultural devices a language differs from other languages. In other words, none-native speakers of, for example, English may retain some specification of L1 and apply methods to convey meanings which might cause breakdowns in communication. Alijanian and Dastjerdi (2012) have shown in their studies how these devices are deciding factors in shaping a language. The study was an attempt to compare the use of 6 devices namely thesis statement, rhetorical question, irony, hedges (lexical and possibility), passive voice, and conditional structures in writing Persian and English argumentative essays. The finding reveals that Persian speakers are more cautious in using direct devices to express their views in writing. On the other hand, English writers prefer to use more explicit approach to communicate meanings. The researcher concluded that teachers and students are required to be familiar with these norms.

Rashidi and AlimoradDastkhezr (2009) studied organizational patterns in the argumentative writing of Iranian EFL students. They tried to ascertain similarities and differences in Persian and English argument-led essays of Iranian EFL learners in terms of organization scores and overall quality."(p.13) Students' reflections on their L1 and L2 writing were also investigated. The results revealed that a) students preferred deductive approach than inductive in both L1 and L2 though using deductive approach than inductive not necessarily lead to higher quality of texts. b) No significant correlations were found in organizational scores of L1 and L2. c) Overall l2 composition scores were different in both L1 and L2. However, more variations were seen in L1 and L2. The reason for this can be spontaneous and unconscious writing process in L1.d) some students could not create a well organized composition both in L1 and L2. The researchers concluded that the differences in writing styles are the results of conventions and instructions that are thought at schools in Iran.

In another study conducted by Pishghadam and Attaran(2012),an attempt was made to discover the rhetorical patterns of argumentation in Persian, English and interlanguage. 90 articles on teaching English language which were written by English and Persian writers were analyzed. The results indicate in line with other studies (see, for example, Hinds, 1987) that due to characteristics of English language, rhetorical patterns in argumentative writing of native speakers are direct and explicit. On the other hand, Persian language is high context language (Hidu, 1987) which means readers are more responsible in comparison with English readers. It can be seen that they read between lines. Due to this feature emphasis is placed more on process that product in Persian language which makes it an implicit language.

Finally, the researchers concluded that despite of the fact that Iranians writers apply argumentative speeches in their articles; the influence of first language in interlanguage can be seen.

Furthermore, a group of 22 advanced learners were asked to take a cloze test which was designed to reveal learners' rhetorical awareness. Based upon the results, two groups were formed namely aware and unaware group. Later four learners (two from each group) were randomly chosen to think aloud about different strategies while composing in English.. Data analysis revealed that rhetorical awareness had a significant effect on the strategies applied by EFL learners. In other word, learners of aware group applied much wider variety of writing strategies in their texts. (Ghanbari, 2014)

In another study carried by Nowruzi Khiabani and Pourghassemian(2009), 120 students wrote an article in L1 and with one interval week they composed about the same topic but in English. The article was analyzed based on the location of main ideas and macro level rhetorical patterns in both Persian and English writings. In other words, do the writers use whether inductive or deductive approach? Furthermore, with regard to audience writers do better job when they write for native speakers of English. The results indicate no significant difference between organizational patterns between L1 and L2.

Given five contrastive features namely linearity vs. circularity, explicitness vs. implicitness, inductivity vs. deductivity, metaphorical vs. straightforward nature, and introduction-body-conclusion vs. start-sustain-turn-sum, Ahmad Khan Beigi And Hamed Ahmadi (2011) investigated differences and similarities between argumentative essays written by Persian and English writers. The results revealed that there are significant differences between Persian and English argumentative essays in terms of rhetorical patterns.

To evaluate the effect of raise awareness of cultural differences between and Chinese and English writings on creating an interactive learning atmosphere for Chinese students to improve their English writing, Xing, Wang and Spenser (2008) conducted a study:

“The study was based on a comparison of Chinese and English rhetoric in academic writing, including a comparison of Chinese students' writings in Chinese with native English speakers' writings in English and Chinese students' writings in English with the help of an e-course and Chinese students' writings in English without the help of an e-course.”(p.71)

The experiment confirms the potential impact of e-course on increasing students' awareness of rhetoric differences and creating communicative environment which result in better academic writing.

3. METHOD

In order to answer the questions and test the hypotheses, an experimental study was conducted. The aim of the present study was to examine the effect of raising awareness of negative rhetoric transfer from L1 to L2 on increasing the ability of writing argumentative essay of Iranian EFL writing. The characteristics of the participants, the materials, and the procedure are described in this chapter.

3.1. The Design of the Study

A Michigan proficiency test was applied to identify students' language proficiency. All students were asked to take a pretest in which they are required to write a composition about a controversial topic in Farsi. This test was aimed at ascertaining whether or not students have already gained the ability and techniques to compose discursive essay. The students were also interviewed to make sure they do not know how to write argumentative essays. Two guidebooks were designed; one of which provides adequate instruction and practice to teach discursive writing, the other provided students with information on negative rhetoric differences between L1 and L2. Indeed, the latter pamphlet included some studies conducted by some Iranian researchers such as Pishghadam and Attaran(2012), Ahmad Khan Beigi And Hamed Ahmadi (2011) and so on which shed light on contrastive rhetoric between L1 and L2. In addition, some parts of a book entitled "Contrastive Analysis of Persian and English and Error analysis" written by Zia hosseiny that are related to written discourse, cohesion, discourse organizer and language transfer and so on were taught to students. Two previous sample IELTS writing task 2 questions were used after first and second treatment.

3.2. Participants

The study was conducted with 30 female students of university who had participated in advanced writing course as part of their studies to fulfill requirements of obtaining bachelor degree. To pass the course, the students were supposed to take task 2 of IELTS writing subtests. All students were at intermediate level. This level was chosen because some upper and advanced students might have already learned how to argue for and against controversial topics. A pretest was planning to be given so as to make sure that they have not acquired the essential methods and techniques to write argument type essays. In addition, the age of participants is ranged from 18 to 35.

3.3. Instructors

The instructor is an experience university lecturer who specializes in teaching IELTS preparation course too. The researcher has attended all sessions in which the instructions were taught.

3.4. Materials

A Michigan proficiency test was applied to identify students' language proficiency. Two guidebooks were designed; one of which provides adequate instruction and practice to teach discursive writing, the other provided students with information on negative rhetoric and differences between L1 and L2. Indeed, the latter guidebook included some studies conducted by some Iranian researchers such as Pishghadam and Attaran(2012), Ahmad Khan Beigi And Hamed Ahmadi (2011), Ziahosseiny(2013),Keshavarz(1994) and so on which shed light on contrastive rhetoric between L1 and L2. In addition, some parts of a book entitled "Contrastive Analysis of Persian and English and Error analysis" written by Ziahosseiny and Keshavarz(1994) that are related to written discourse, cohesion, discourse organizer and language transfer and so on were taught to students. Two previous sample IELTS writing task 2 questions were used after first and second treatment.

3.5. Procedures

University Students were supposed to take IELTS examination writing task 2 as a final test of their course. At first all students were asked to take a pretest in which they were required to write a composition about a controversial topic in Farsi. This test was aimed to ascertain whether or not students have already gained the ability and techniques to compose discursive essay. The students were also interviewed to make sure they do not know how to write argumentative essays. They were asked to write in Persian as the researcher intended to exclude other aspects of well organized essays such as lexical resources and grammatical accuracy which students are usually worried about. The reason for this was that students of English compose essays without any effect of being under stress. Their writings were analyzed in terms of cohesion and coherence which is one of four criteria that are employed in assessing IELTS writing test. The other criteria include lexical resource, grammatical accuracy and task achievement. Within the next two weeks, they were taught how to write an argument kind of essay by an experienced IELTS teacher who is university lecturer too. After adequate instruction and preparation for IELTS writing test, the subjects took part in IELTS writing task2. The question was similar to first essay question because it was intended to again exclude the stress that might be caused by the vocabulary limits that students might suffer from.

The further step included teaching and negotiating contrastive rhetoric of Persian and English to students. To do so, some studies conducted by some Iranian researchers such as Pishghadam and Attaran(2012), Ahmad Khan Beigi And HamedAhmadi (2011) and so on which shed light on contrastive rhetoric between L1 and L2 were talked about in the class. In addition, some parts of a book entitled “Contrastive Analysis of Persian and English and Error analysis” written by Ziahosseiny that are related to written discourse, cohesion, discourse organizer and language transfer and so on were taught to students. The aforementioned materials provided the learners with comparative analysis of Iranians students’ compositions and some arguments essays written by the native English too. With two interval weeks, all subjects of the groups took IELTS writing task 2. Their writings were be graded and scored by 2 experienced examiners.

3.6. Method of Analyzing Data

After the data were collected, a one-way repeated ANOVA procedure was used to find out about the effect of raising awareness about negative rhetoric (cultural) transfer on the ability of writing argument kind essays of Iranian EFL learners. However, the focus was placed on the five contrastive features, which form cohesion and coherence criterion of IELTS writing examination, based on the research of Ballard and Clanchy (1991), Cho (1999), Connor (1996), Cortazzi and Jin (1997), and Schneider and Fujishima (1995). (As cited in cited in Xing, Wang and Spenser, 2008) however, some features were not considered in assessing students IELTS writing test. They are as follows:

1. Linearity vs. Circularity
2. Explicitness vs. Implicitness
3. Inductivity vs. deductivity
4. Metaphorical vs. straightforward nature
5. Introduction-body-conclusion vs. start-sustain-turn-sum

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In other words, data collected by the post-test were compared and the results indicated the impact of raising awareness of negative rhetoric transfer on the ability of writing argument kind essays of Iranian EFL learners.

4. RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The data collection procedure was carefully performed and the raw data was submitted to SPSS (version 19.0) to compute the required statistical analyses in order to answer the research questions of the current study.

4.1. Reliability Statistics

IELTS Writing Task 2 that was used as the Pre-test, Post-test 1, and Post-test 2 in the current study were piloted with 25 intermediate EFL students who share similar features with the main sample of this study to assess their reliability. The results of this piloting in Table 4.1 shows that the inter-rater reliability of pre-test, post-test 1 and post-test 2 were assessed 0.86, 0.83 and 0.84 respectively through Pearson Correlation Coefficient, which are a very good indicator of reliability index.

Table 4.1. Reliability Statistics for IELTS Writing Task 2 (Pre-test, Post-test 1, and Post-test 2)

Test	No. of Items	Reliability Index (<i>r</i>)	Reliability Method
IELTS Writing Task 2 (Pre-test)	1	0.86	Inter-rater
IELTS Writing Task 2 (Post-test1)	1	0.83	Inter-rater
IELTS Writing Task 2 (Post-test2)	1	0.84	Inter-rater

4.2. Results of the Two Raters

Before discussing the results of inferential statistics, the cohesion and coherence raw scores of the all 30 students scored by the two raters on pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2 are presented in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2. Cohesion and Coherence Scores by Two Raters on Pre-test, Post-test 1, and Post-test 2

Student	Pre-test		Post-test 1		Post-test 2	
	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 1	Rater 2
1	5.0	6.0	6.0	7.0	6.0	6.0
2	3.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	5.0
3	5.5	6.0	5.5	6.5	6.0	6.0
4	6.0	7.0	6.5	7.5	7.0	7.0
5	6.0	6.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	6.0
6	5.0	4.0	4.5	4.5	5.5	4.5
7	5.5	5.5	6.5	5.5	6.0	6.0
8	7.0	6.0	6.5	6.5	8.0	8.0
9	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	7.0	5.5
10	6.5	6.5	6.5	5.5	6.0	6.0
11	5.0	5.0	6.5	6.0	7.0	6.0
12	5.5	5.0	6.0	6.0	6.5	6.0
13	5.0	4.0	6.5	6.0	6.5	6.5
14	4.5	4.0	5.0	5.0	6.0	5.0
15	5.0	4.0	6.0	5.0	5.5	5.5
16	6.0	6.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0
17	3.0	3.0	5.0	4.0	5.0	5.0
18	6.0	6.0	6.5	6.5	7.0	7.0

19	7.0	7.0	7.5	7.5	8.0	8.0
20	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
21	4.0	4.0	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5
22	4.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	6.0	6.0
23	6.0	6.0	6.5	6.5	7.0	7.0
24	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.5	5.5
25	6.5	6.5	5.5	5.5	6.0	6.0
26	5.5	5.0	6.5	6.0	7.0	6.0
27	6.0	5.0	6.0	6.0	7.0	6.0
28	5.0	4.0	6.0	6.0	6.5	6.5
29	4.0	4.0	5.5	5.0	7.0	7.0
30	5.0	4.0	5.0	5.0	5.5	5.5

The descriptive statistics of participants' performance on the pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2 of writing test scored by two raters were computed and are set forth in Table 4.3. As obvious in Table 4.3, the mean score of the two raters' scoring in each test are not far from each other. In addition, Table 4.3 reflects that the Pearson Correlation between the first and second rater's scores is 0.86, 0.83 and 0.84 on the pre-test, post-test 1 and post-test 2 respectively.

Table 4. 3. Descriptive statistics for the Cohesion and Coherence Scores on Pre-test, Post-test 1, and Post-test 2 by Two Raters

Group	Rater	N	Range	Mean	SD	Pearson Correlation
Pre-test	Rater 1	30	4.0	5.300	.9879	0.86
	Rater 2	30	4.0	5.133	1.1214	
Post-test 1	Rater 1	30	3.5	5.800	.8263	0.83
	Rater 2	30	3.5	5.733	.9260	
Post-test 3	Rater 1	30	4.0	6.300	.9154	0.84
	Rater 2	30	3.5	6.067	.8683	

4.3. Testing Assumptions

Three assumptions of interval data, independence of subjects and normality should be met before one decides to run parametric tests (Field, 2009). The first assumption is met because the present data are measured on an interval scale. Bachman (2005, p. 236) believes that the assumption of independence of subjects is met when —the performance of any given individual is independent of the performance of other individual.

The third assumption concerns the normality of the data which is tested through One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test. The normality test results as shown in Table 4.4 indicated that the three sets of cohesion and coherence scores on pre-test, post-test 1 and post-test 2 of writing test are normally distributed since the *Sig.* associated with was pre-test, post-test 1 and post-test 2 scores was .83, .30 and .52 respectively, which are all higher than .05. Therefore, One-way Repeated Measures ANOVA, which is parametric, was conducted to compare the mean performance of the participants obtained on the pre-test, post-test 1 and post-test 2 of writing test, otherwise Friedman Test, which is nonparametric, could be applied.

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Table 4.4. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of Normality for Cohesion and Coherence Scores on Pre-test, Post-test 1, and Post-test 2

Test	N	Mean	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	Sig.
Pre-test	30	5.21	.621	.836
Post-test1	30	5.76	.969	.304
Post-test2	30	6.18	.812	.525

4.4. Investigation of Research Questions 1 and 2

The first research question of this study examines the relation between raising awareness of cohesion and coherence and the ability of writing argumentative essay of Iranian EFL writing, and the second research question deals with relation between raising awareness of rhetoric transfer from L1 to L2 and increasing the ability of writing argumentative essay of Iranian EFL writing.

A One-way Repeated Measures ANOVA was conducted to answer these research questions.

Before presenting the results of ANOVA, it should be noted that the averages of the two raters' scores were calculated for the main analysis. Table 4.5 below provides us with the cohesion and coherence average scores of the all 30 students on pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2.

Table 4.5. Cohesion and Coherence Average Scores by Two Raters on Pre-test, Post-test 1, and Post-test 2

Student	Pre-test	Post-test 1	Post-test 2
1	5.50	6.50	6.00
2	3.00	4.00	4.50
3	5.75	6.00	6.00
4	6.50	7.00	7.00
5	6.00	5.50	6.50
6	4.50	4.50	5.00
7	5.50	6.00	6.00
8	6.50	6.50	8.00
9	5.00	5.00	6.25
10	6.50	6.00	6.00
11	5.00	6.25	6.50
12	5.25	6.00	6.25
13	4.50	6.25	6.50
14	4.25	5.00	5.50
15	4.50	5.50	5.50
16	6.00	7.00	7.00
17	3.00	4.50	5.00
18	6.00	6.50	7.00
19	7.00	7.50	8.00
20	6.00	6.00	6.00
21	4.00	4.50	4.50
22	5.00	5.50	6.00
23	6.00	6.50	7.00
24	5.00	5.00	5.50
25	6.50	5.50	6.00
26	5.25	6.25	6.50
27	5.50	6.00	6.50
28	4.50	6.00	6.50
29	4.00	5.25	7.00
30	4.50	5.00	5.50

The mean and standard deviation of the scores on pre-test, post-test 1 and post-test 2 of writing test were computed and presented in Table 4.6. A quick look at the table reveals that the participants' cohesion and coherence scores increased noticeably from the pre-test ($M = 5.21$, $SD = 1.01$) to post-test 1 ($M = 5.76$, $SD = .83$), and again they enhanced considerably from post-test 1 to post-test 2 ($M = 6.18$, $SD = .85$).

Table 4.6. Descriptive statistics for the Cohesion and Coherence Scores on Pre-test, Post-test 1, and Post-test 2

Condition	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test	30	5.2167	1.014
Post-test1	30	5.7667	.8328
Post-test2	30	6.1833	.8533

Figure 4.1 below is a line chart that graphically demonstrates the results as appeared in Table 4.6 above.

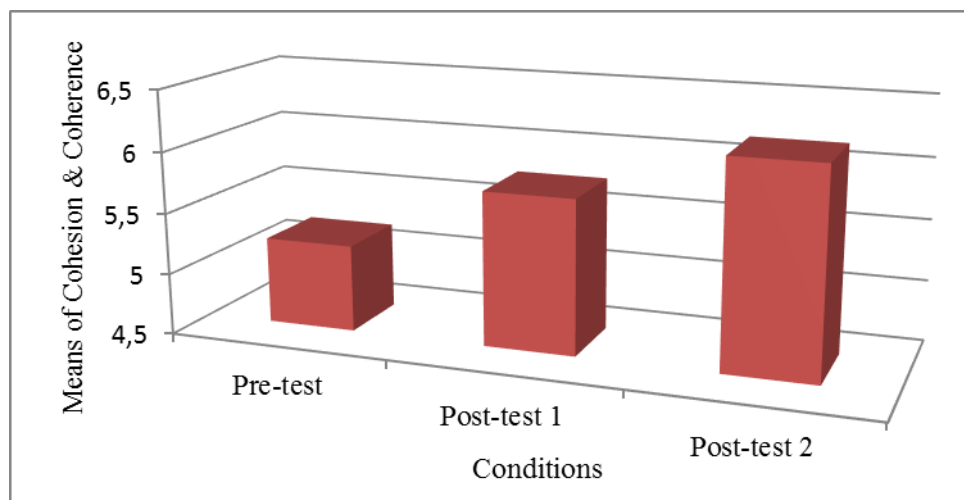


Figure 4.1. Cohesion and coherence scores on pre-test, post-test 1 and post-test 2

The results of Repeated measures ANOVA, Multivariate Tests (Table 4.7) indicated that there is a significant effect for *Factor*, Wilks' Lambda = .35, $F(2, 28) = 25.72$, $p = .000$, $p < .05$, Partial eta squared = .64 representing a large effect size based on Cohen's guidelines (1988, pp. 284-7).

Table 4.7. Repeated Measures ANOVA; Multivariate Tests

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Pillai's Trace	.648	25.72	2.000	28.00	.000	.648
Wilks' Lambda	.352	25.72	2.000	28.00	.000	.648
Hotelling's Trace	1.838	25.72	2.000	28.00	.000	.648
Roy's Largest Root	1.838	25.72	2.000	28.00	.000	.648

Since Multivariate Tests do not tell us the exact location of the differences among the three times of cohesion and coherence scores, post hoc pair-wise comparisons were run to compare each two sets of scores separately. The results of this analysis are laid out in Table 4.8 below.

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Table 4.8. Post Hoc Pair-wise Comparisons for Cohesion and Coherence Scores on Pre-test, Post-test 1, and Post-test 2.

(I) factor1	(J) factor1	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Pre-test	Post-test1	-.550*	.115	.000	-.843	-.257
	Post-test2	-.967*	.134	.000	-1.308	-.625
Post-test1	Post-test2	-.417*	.086	.000	-.635	-.198

The results of Post hoc Tests as appeared in Table 4.8 revealed that there was a statistically significant increase in cohesion and coherence scores from the pre-test ($M = 5.21$, $SD = 1.01$) to post-test 1 ($M = 5.76$, $SD = .83$) with ($p = .000$, $p < .05$), in which p value, .000 was less than .05, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -.84 to -.25; consequently, the first null hypothesis of the current study as ‘There is no relation between raising awareness of cohesion and coherence and the ability of writing argumentative essay of Iranian EFL writing’ was rejected. Therefore we could claim that there is a relation between raising awareness of cohesion and coherence and the ability of writing argumentative essay of Iranian EFL writing.

Besides, Post hoc Tests (Table 4.8 above) detected a statistically significant increase in cohesion and coherence scores from the post-test 1 ($M = 5.76$, $SD = .83$) to post-test 2 ($M = 6.18$, $SD = .85$) with ($p = .000$, $p < .05$), in which p value, .000 was below .05, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -.63 to -.19; as a result, we were quite safe to reject the second null hypothesis that reads ‘There is no relation between raising awareness of rhetoric transfer from L1 to L2 and increasing the ability of writing argumentative essay of Iranian EFL writing’. So it was asserted that there is a relation between raising awareness of rhetoric transfer from L1 to L2 and increasing the ability of writing argumentative essay of Iranian EFL writing.

5. CONCLUSION

The results of data analysis revealed that the subjects performed better after receiving instructions on how to compose a cohesive and coherent essay, which means students of English successfully employed the intended lay-out on one hand and linking expressions on the other hand to write a well organized essay. The first treatment that the subjects received was what IELTS Candidates usually go through when they take an IELTS preparation course.

Firstly, at sentence level, they learn how to synthesize sentences through connectives such as “moreover, in addition, while and so on”. At Paragraph level they are taught to first present their main ideas as topic sentence and then support them by giving example, details, statistics and facts and also anecdotes (Arnaudet and barrett, 1990). The IELTS teachers then move on to the next step which make students familiar with different types of essay including thesis-led, argument led, cause and effect and problem solution essays.(O’Connel, 2010 and Hawllows, Lisboa and Unwin, 2013) To write an argumentative essay, IELTS candidates are supposed to brainstorm for a list of ideas. Then, the ideas are divided into two sets as arguments for and arguments against the topic that they are writing about. The popular form of lay out which is often decided at drafting step comprises of one introductory paragraph, two body paragraphs: the first one presents the points that the write disagree with and the second one contents the ideas that the writer is in favor of. The conclusion paragraph is a summary of both sides of argument and the thesis that the writer reveal as his/her final conclusion. The whole process is in line with the criteria and definition of coherence presented by Halliday (2004), Mann and Thompson (1989) and the Prague School of Linguistics and Cohesion by Halliday and Hasan (1976). The findings of the study show that cohesion and coherence of students’ writings are significantly improved through first set of instruction. Moreover, the results of the present study

are consistent with the study (Canale, 1983, as cited in Cotton and Wilson, 2008) which emphasized on ‘cohesive devices such as pronouns and synonyms’ and logical relations among sentences that a text employs to develop unity.

As it was mentioned, There are two kinds of transfer: positive and negative. Positive transfer facilitates learning while negative transfer hinders studying foreign Languages. The current study identifies the latter influence. The results also corroborate the findings of other studies Abu Rass(2011),Hong (2014) Uysal (2012) in which the influence of L1 on L2 have been discovered.

The second part of instruction which includes the impact of raising cultural awareness of students about rhetorical differences between Persian and English on Cohesion and coherence of their writings reveal findings that are in line with the following studies: Xing, Wang and spencer (2008); Kuntjara (2004); Rida, (2012); Raimes,(1991) and Kachru (1995 as cited in Kuntjara, 2004). Ostler, 1996; Leki 1991 (as cited in Matsuda, 1997) state that the insights gained by research on contrastive rhetoric have not rendered into the practical use teaching and learning in the EFL/ESL classrooms. However, the findings of this study have revealed the fact that raising awareness of coherence and coherence on one hand, and similarities and differences between two languages can benefit writing ability of Iranian Students of English.

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