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Contrasting Rhetorical Patterns: Discovering Effects of First and Second Language Writing Conventions

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Abstract

Problem Statement: In this qualitative small-scale study, I aimed at investigating why students have difficulties in adjusting themselves to English writing conventions. I also examined the possible bilateral effects of Turkish and English writing conventions to determine whether engaging learners in contrastive rhetoric exercises can elucidate the phenomenon of transfer in rhetorical patterns.

Purpose of Study: The aim of this study was to discover whether bilingual writers with the same first-language background (i.e., Turkish) demonstrate similar composing patterns or whether these patterns diverge when writing in first or foreign language (i.e., English). Its broader aim was to describe whether transfer pertains to rhetorical patterns.

Method: To investigate the existence and transfer of rhetorical patterns, we examined four opinion essays—two in English, two in Turkish—written by each of six freshman students registered for an English composition course at an English-medium university in Istanbul, Turkey. Additional data came from students' reflective tasks and semi-structured interviews conducted with them.

Findings: The analysis of the essays demonstrated that the students placed thesis statements in the initial, middle, or final positions in their Turkish essays, indicating that some students used a deductive style of writing, a common US English writing convention, in their Turkish essays. This finding suggests that the students practiced aspects of English composition learned at the university level. Notably, students also used discourse markers more than typical Turkish essayists would, indicating

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that the students were able to transfer knowledge not only from their first to the foreign language. Other results reveal that it was somewhat challenging for students to write in their first language given their adjustment to English writing conventions.

Conclusion and Recommendations: This study's findings suggest that students initiated the construction of an academic discourse community identity and membership, implying that writing instructors can raise learners' awareness of academic environment and involve them with different academic conventions by engaging them in contrastive rhetoric studies. Contrastive rhetoric could also prompt students to think more critically, which would further assist them in writing process. Lastly, the findings suggest that engaging students in exercises of contrastive rhetoric can assist and empower them in their writing practices.

Keywords: Writing instruction, contrastive rhetoric, transfer, academic discourse community

Introduction

During writing classes and feedback sessions, I have observed students struggle with implementing English writing conventions. Knowing that culture heavily impacts how people think and organize ideas, at least according to the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis (Kay & Kempton, 1984), I have questioned whether frustration students feels when using different writing systems stems from differences in writing conventions in their first language (L1). I was also keen to examine whether the effect is mutual.

Early on, Kaplan (1966) suggested that teaching reading and writing to foreign students constitutes a different process from that of teaching native speakers given cultural differences inherent in rhetorical patterns of the various languages with which learners interact. Referring to personal communication with Kaplan, Matsuda (2001) reported that Kaplan admitted having been strongly influenced by the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis, the strong version of which maintains that speakers of different languages understand the world differently and construe meaning according to the worldview presented to them by their native language (Davies, Sowden, Jerrett, Jertett, & Corbett, 1998). By contrast, the weak version of the hypothesis, which argues influence but not determination, holds that language influences our thinking, and emphasizes the importance of the social context in which the language is used (Chandler, 1995). This weaker version of the hypothesis is considered to be foundational to contrastive rhetoric by suggesting that languages affects perception and thought in diverse ways (Connor, 1996, cited in Connor, 2002). According to Kaplan (1966), the contrastive analysis of rhetoric can help foreign language instructors to teach advanced learners how to write in another language.

Contrastive rhetoric studies have illuminated the written work of second and foreign language (L2) learners to reveal the effects of L1 and culture by drawing on

ample disciplines and areas, including anthropology, pedagogy, linguistics, and translation studies, among others (Quinn, 2012). Consequently, contrastive rhetoric has achieved considerable growth accompanied by the publication of many books, research articles, dissertations, and theses. Accordingly, contrastive rhetoric will be expected to continue to influence decisions regarding curricula and writing instruction (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996), as well as writing in English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) (Connor, 2002).

Leki (1991), Matsuda (1997), and Connor (2002) have posited that contrastive rhetoric studies in the 1980s involved linguistic text analysis as a data collection method that made it possible to quantify certain features—for example, cohesive devices and coherence and discourse of texts—in L1 and L2 writing. Citing studies she conducted with Lauer in 1985 and 1988, Connor (2002) referred to their creation of a system for counting not only linguistic but also rhetorical elements in any written text. In the following decade, the field expanded in such a way that contrastive rhetoric, once the analysis of spoken language or paragraph organization in ESL student compositions, became an interdisciplinary field of applied linguistics, originating largely from the work of Connor (1996; Connor, 2002; Kubota & Lehner, 2004). During this same decade, contrastive rhetoric began to focus more intently on exploring cognitive and social processes. The findings of these studies have revealed that writers can implement several writing types, though the patterns preferred often depended upon genre (Connor, 2002).

Yet, contrastive rhetoric has not been a field free of criticism. Kubota and Lehner (2004) indicated that the discipline has tended to create stagnant, uniform rhetorical patterns to characterize diverse languages. Other criticisms have included that contrastive rhetoric privileges English over other languages and early studies excluded L1 texts and discourse, as well as their examination (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996), though the practice has since ended. Kachru explains that since EFL writers from outer- and expanding circle countries outnumber native speakers of English, as well as given sociocultural differences, L2 and foreign language instructors in inner-circle countries should possess an understanding of different structures of rhetorical organizations used worldwide and not only teach Western rhetorical traditions (Kachru, 1995, cited in Bolton, 2015). By extension, within-subject instead of between-subject comparisons can yield more reliable results (Kubota, 1998; Kubota & Lehner, 2004). For instance, in an interesting study, Kubota (1998) examined student compositions written in Japanese, a language thought to exhibit an inductive style of writing that can negatively affect ESL writing. The participants at university level wrote one essay in Japanese and another in English, both of which the researcher analyzed by taking into account the organization and placement of main idea(s). After also evaluating the English versions in terms of language use, the researcher found that roughly 50% of participants used similar rhetorical patterns when writing in both languages and thus proposed that L1 writing ability, degree of L2 proficiency, and composition experience impact ESL writing. The author also revealed the lack of negative transfer from Japanese to English in terms of rhetorical patterns. In another study, using a within-subject comparison, Hirose (2003) found

that traditional deductive pattern of writing in Japanese surfaced in most students' L2 writing as well.

Kobayashi and Rinnert (2008) examined the impact of an intensive preparatory program for high-school composition in L1 or L2, Japanese and English respectively in university entrance exams. Concentrating on task response and structural features in L1 and L2 essays written by 28 first-year students at a Japanese university, these researchers demonstrated that L2 training encouraged the students to determine their position on the given topic and state it at the outset of their essays.

Recently, Crawford, Mora Pablo, Goodwin and Lengelin (2013) with the help of interviews and written discourse analysis, explored the rhetorical pattern development of two writers each of which wrote two essays, in academic English and Spanish. Their results showed that though the participants articulated strong identity with the English discourse community, their compositions were more in harmony with Spanish writing conventions.

In Turkish context, in 1991 Enginarlar (cited in Uysal, 2008) examined the expository essays written in both Turkish and English by Turkish high-school students. The experimental group consisted of bilingual writers attending an immersion program at the time of the study. The results demonstrated that when writing in Turkish, bilingual writers' introductions were much shorter and generally more concise than those of monolingual participants. To the researcher, this suggested a possible transfer from the target to the first language in terms of rhetorical patterns, which is consistent with results found by Akyel and Kamışlı (1996), who evaluated student essays before and after writing instruction. The two authors also mentioned that writers could transfer rhetorical knowledge to their first language.

In studying thought processes of writers of argumentative essays in both Turkish and English, Uysal (2008) concluded that the writers preferred some rhetorical patterns related to text organization and cohesive devices (e.g., transition markers) in both languages, though dissimilarities also emerged between the Turkish and English essays. In the Turkish essays, topic sentences were unclear, which was not the case in the English ones. The researcher suggested that the result could stem from the expectation of Turkish writers that readers are responsible to connect ideas presented in print, which is also a writing convention in other countries, including Japan (McKinley, 2013). Uysal (2008) noted, however, that the essays in her study had to be written in a very limited time (i.e., 50 minutes), which could have heavily abbreviated brainstorming, outlining, writing, and revision both during and after finishing writing.

In foreign language education in Turkey, since too few studies have focused on comparing L1 and L2 writing in terms of rhetorical patterns used, I sought to delve deeper into the issue by conducting the present study. My purpose was to assess the absence or presence of the transfer of specific elements of rhetorical patterns. I moreover aimed to examine to what extent cultural writing patterns affect Turkish EFL students in their writing. I thus posed the two following research questions:

1. What specific elements of rhetorical patterns, if any, are transferrable?
2. To what extent, do cultural writing patterns affect Turkish EFL students in their writing?

Method

Research Design

This study was a small-scale qualitative one in which students enrolled in an English composition course participated by writing four essays, completing reflective tasks, and attending semi-structured interview sessions.

Research Sample

The sample consisted of students from my first-year English composition course at an English-medium university during the 2013–2014 academic year. No data collection procedure was mandatory, and six students, all women, volunteered to participate. All six participants were native speakers of Turkish. Four participants had previously received writing instruction in the intensive preparatory program of the Department of English Language Teaching, while the remaining two students, who could document their level of English proficiency, had waived enrollment in the preparatory class. As shown, participants in most aspects were quite similar. In terms of Turkish writing instruction, all participants stated that they had taken Turkish courses before beginning their university educations and had learned the basics of Turkish writing conventions in the curriculum designed by the Ministry of National Education. As such, I was able to eliminate any contamination due to recruiting participating students with heterogeneous characteristics that the literature has indicated likely impact outcomes—for example, level of L2 proficiency.

Research Instruments and Procedure

I used multiple data collection tools with concerns related to reliability and triangulation. Initially, I was unsure of the topic of the study at its outset, yet for the entire semester had observed the participants, especially in feedback sessions, and recorded notes along with the papers that received my feedback. These data suggested that I clarify the focus of my investigation since I had observed that the participants struggled with the writing process. The primary data for the study came from participant-generated essays, their reflective writing tasks, and follow-up semi-structured interviews with them.

Essays. I asked participants to write four opinion essays—two in English and two in Turkish. Instead of writing on the same topic, which would have encouraged the participants to translate their essays, participants voted on four topics from a range of predetermined ones (Table 1). Participants were particularly interested in these topics, most of which were hotly debated at the time of the study, though others resulted from brainstorming performed at the beginning of each class. I collected essay data during four sessions with participants. In each meeting, I requested the participants to write essays and did not impose a time limit, largely to minimize anxiety that could have otherwise influenced results, yet also to allow participants to

brainstorm, outline, write, and revise throughout the process, provided they desired to do so. Also to minimize anxiety, this time from limited vocabulary knowledge, I allowed participants to use print dictionaries.

Table 1.

Topics for English and Turkish opinion essays

English essay topics	*Turkish essay topics*
Couples can live together before getting married.	In public schools, instead of wearing uniforms, students should be able to wear what they want.
Being ethical has its limits.	Private courses preparing students for the university entrance exam should be shut down.

Reflective writing tasks. For Petrić (2005), reflective writing as an exploratory task is of specific significance in contrastive rhetoric in foreign language classrooms since it affords students the opportunity to share their thoughts during the process. The purpose of reflective activities is thus to raise writers' awareness of the nature of their writing and rhetorical patterns. In the present study, I informed participants about what reflective activities normally require and requested them to write reflectively; I also conducted a sample for them during class time (i.e., 1 hour) to serve as a model. Since I gathered only two English and two Turkish essays from each participant, to collect more in-depth data I had the participants also complete two reflective writing tasks. Immediately following essay composition, I asked participants to write about how they felt, about what they found stress-free or challenging while writing, and how they would compare essays written in English and Turkish once completed.

Follow-up semi-structured interviews. Matsuda (1997) argues that the contrastive analysis of written work may be inadequate. Therefore, to gain a better understanding of what transpires in the minds of writers and of their mental representation of the writing context, Matsuda (1997) suggests integrating into discourse analysis data collected via interviews. Xinghua (2011) has similarly stated that a combination of data collection tools such as class observation and discourse analysis can yield more enlightening outcomes, particularly with the help of the within-subject approach. My aim was to more thoroughly explore what participants experience while writing essays in Turkish and English, their feelings, perceptions, and ideas regarding the process after given additional time to reflect, and their preferences, if any, about the rhetorical patterns and related elements. Therefore, after the essays were completed, I conducted semi-structured interviews with the students. I opted for this sort of interviews due to their common applications in the literature as a means of unveiling cognitive processes studied in contrastive rhetoric

research (Crawford et al., 2013; Gao, 2012; Hirose, 2003; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2008; Kubota, 1998; Uysal, 2008).

For the follow-up semi-structured interviews, I consulted experts, academics in the department, about the interview questions. Then, I invited the participants individually to respond to questions that I had prepared based on relevant findings in the literature. Each interview session lasted 15–20 minutes.

Throughout the data collection process, the participants preferred to speak in Turkish. I therefore transcribed each interview and shared it with the respective participant for their confirmation.

Validity and Reliability

After transcribing the follow-up interviews, I received help from a doctoral student as a coder in identifying common patterns. We separately analyzed the data and grouped common patterns that surfaced in the interviews (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For the patterns on which we disagreed, we deliberated until reaching a consensus bearing high inter-coder agreement (94%).

Data Analysis

I primarily employed literature addressing contrastive rhetoric that compared monolingual and interlingual essays, interviews, and reflective tasks by taking into account different criteria during analysis. This literature clearly shows that some norms are preferable to others. For example, the placement of the thesis statement is the most common measure in research, followed by cultural influences and discourse markers. Since the literature suggests that combining different criteria in analyzing written work can yield more trustworthy results (Matsuda, 1997; Uysal, 2011; Xinghua, 2011), I used the most common criteria—namely, placement of the thesis statement, discourse markers, and cultural influences. However, the results of preliminary data analysis prompted me to also include the number of paragraphs, as done by Xing, Wang, and Spencer (2008). The following list highlights the data collection tools and procedures for data analysis.

1. I counted the number of paragraphs in each essay.
2. Based on the placement of thesis statement, or main idea, I sought to determine whether participants developed their essays deductively or inductively. The literature holds that placing the thesis statement in the introductory paragraph indicates a deductive style of writing, which is a UK and US writing convention, whereas waiting to clarify the thesis at the end of the essay indicates an inductive style (Kubota, 1998; Xing et al., 2008). By extension, this difference is also thought to demonstrate the effect of culture in writing (Uysal, 2008). Similarly, Kubota (1998) explained that if the thesis statement appears in the introductory paragraph, then the location can be labelled *initial* and, if in the body, *middle*. By contrast, if the thesis statement appears in the final paragraph

of the essay, then the location is clearly *final*. Lastly, *collection* refers to circumstances in which the thesis statement appears in multiple places.

3. Discourse markers, also known as transition signals or signposts, help readers to make logical connections among different parts of written texts, and their presence or absence can directly affect the flow of reading. The frequency of these devices should reveal differences in terms of rhetorical patterns in participants' written work, as well as signal cultural impact upon writing style (Uysal, 2008; Xing et al., 2008).
4. I considered cultural influences to manifest in the use of other criteria taken into consideration during analysis (Uysal, 2008; Xing et al., 2008). Thus, either alone or in combination, these criteria provided me information about the impact of culture upon writing.

Results

Results of Essay Analysis

I analyzed the essays according to the criteria shown in Figure 1.

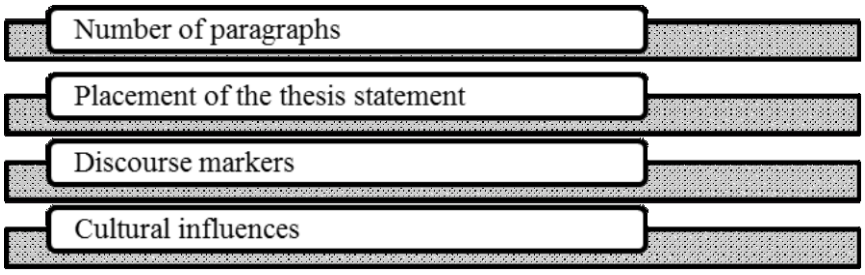

Figure 1. Criteria for essay analysis

Figure 1 and Table 2 reveal the criteria used to evaluate participants' essays written in both languages. I also used these criteria as themes for grouping categories and codes determined from the students' interviews and reflective tasks.

Table 2.

Results of analysis and exemplary excerpts

Themes, categories, and codes	Exemplary excerpts
1. Number of paragraphs	
• Reason for writing different numbers of paragraphs	
- Lack of practice in Turkish classes	In our Turkish composition classes, we didn't have the chance to practice writing as much as I'm having right now. After I had finished writing the Turkish essays, I realized that I followed the typical five-paragraph essay that I have practiced a lot at university (Participant 1, follow-up semi-structured interview).
- To include more ideas in a coherent way	I wasn't sure whether I had to write three paragraphs or more in Turkish essays. At the university, I have been writing essays consisting of at least five paragraphs. I wanted to include more ideas, but I wasn't satisfied with a big body paragraph containing different ideas. Due to this problem, I added an additional paragraph (Participant 6, follow-up semi-structured interview).
- Having numerous rules to follow	I should admit that there are many rules that need to be considered while writing in English. However, I did not focus much on the rules when I was writing in Turkish. This practice is partly due to the fact that I don't know much about them (Participant 1, reflective writing task).
2. Placement of the thesis statement	
• Reason for placing it incorrectly	
- Lack of knowledge	I didn't know where to place my main idea while I was writing the essays in Turkish. I thought that I had to state them in the introductory paragraph because this is the way I am accustomed to following in English compositions (Participant 4, follow-up semi-structured interview).

Table 2. Continued

3. Discourse markers	
• Reason for using different numbers of discourse markers	
- Lack of knowledge	I wasn't much aware of the significance of words like *however*, *in conclusion*, and *on the contrary* before I started my university education. I didn't pay attention to these words when writing in Turkish. At the same time, when I write anything, particularly in school assignments, I try to use these words to make the meaning clear to readers (Participant 2, follow-up semi-structured interview).
4. Cultural influences	
• Reasons for influences	
- Being used to writing in English but not Turkish	While I'm writing, I find myself thinking in English. I ask myself, *If this topic were in English, then how I would write about it?* It was difficult for me to write in Turkish because I am now used to writing in English (Participant 1, reflective writing task)
- Lack of knowledge in Turkish essay writing	I had difficulties with writing the Turkish essays. I realized that I know how to write an essay in English better when I compare Turkish and English writing. For instance, I couldn't decide how I should connect the ideas and paragraphs in Turkish essays, but I was quite comfortable with it when I was writing in English (Participant 4, reflective writing task)
- Being more confident in writing English essays	I became aware of the fact that I was trying to translate the organization of the opinion essay in English to Turkish. When I compare the essays that I wrote in Turkish and English, I can tell that I found the essays that I wrote in English to be better than the Turkish ones. I understood that my self-confidence has increased with writing in English (Participant 6, reflective writing task)

For the first criterion in comparing essays written in Turkish and English, the expected result was three paragraphs for Turkish essays and five for English ones. However, the results did not bear out this expectation in some participants, as illustrated in Table 2. When these participants were asked why the number of paragraphs differed, they explained by referring to their lack of practice in Turkish classes and the rules that they had learned in English composition classes.

Notably, the participants wrote their essays by following the framework recommending an introduction, body, and conclusion. The interviews clarified that participants had learned this organization in both Turkish and English classes, though one participant memorably commented during the reflective activity that she "was not much informed about Turkish writing conventions."

Concerning the placement of the thesis statement in essays written in English, there were no exceptions, as all participants placed it in the introductory paragraph. More specifically, 12 thesis statements in English essays were in the initial position, thereby making the writing style deductive, which indicates a UK and US writing convention (Kubota, 1998; Xing et al., 2008).

Within-subject analysis of essays written in Turkish, however, showed that Participants 1 and 2 stated their opinions in the middle position in both essays. Participant 3 was confused about where to place the thesis statement; in the first essay, she preferred a final position, whereas in the second Turkish essay her thesis statement appeared in the initial position. By contrast, Participant 4 placed her thesis statements in the initial position, explaining that this was how she was used to doing it (Table 2).

In addition to number of paragraphs and placement of the thesis statement, discourse markers were also of concern. In all essays, participants used discourse markers, and both within- and between-subject analyses clarified that the frequency of markers in English essays was much greater than in Turkish essays.

Lastly, though I expected to observe signs of Turkish culture's effect upon the students' writing, following data collection I noticed that the students attached strikingly little importance to Turkish writing conventions taught in the Turkish education system. Yet, there was one important finding. Including the personal emails and messages that the participants sent to me daily, without exception all cited the influence of English writing conventions while writing, even when writing in Turkish. Significantly, this result suggests that participants initiated the process of becoming members of their academic discourse community.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results highlight individual differences among participants, especially regarding the number of paragraphs used in their English and Turkish essays. Differences also manifested in terms of the placement of the thesis statement in Turkish essays. By contrast, all participants placed their thesis statements in an initial

position in their English essays. They also mostly organized their essays following the introduction–body–conclusion format in both languages.

In this study, the participants preferred to state their opinions or main ideas in all positions when writing in Turkish. However, within-subject analysis showed that five out of the six participants were consistent in placing their thesis statements across their essays. This finding complements what Kubota (1998) found in her study, in which some participants used an inductive style while writing in their L1 and a deductive style in L2. In a similar vein, some participants in this study used a deductive style also in L1, which also occurred in Hirose's (2003) study. In that study, the author found that some participants preferred a deductive style of writing in L1 as well.

In this study, the participants' placement of the thesis statement in the initial position of their English essays possibly demonstrated the effect of L2 training that they had received in their writing coursework. This result corroborates a finding of Kobayashi and Rinnert (2008), who also identified the effect of L2 writing instruction upon freshman university students' writing.

The present study's participants also underscored that they transferred their knowledge from English to Turkish in terms of rhetorical elements (e.g., discourse markers). This trend was also the case in studies conducted by Kobayashi and Rinnert (2008) and Uysal (2008), both of which demonstrated that students could transfer their knowledge not only from L1 to L2, but from L2 to L1 as well.

One of this study's most significant results is that all participants reported struggling with writing in Turkish because they were used to writing and, to some extent, even thinking in English, which could indicate their initiation into constructing an academic discourse community identity. This finding parallels what Crawford et al. (2013) found, though those authors reported analyses indicating that participants' L2 did not influence their L1 writing. In the present study, participants were clearly under the influence of L2, as they transferred rhetorical organization and elements from L2 to L1. This transfer trend is moreover consistent with findings articulated by Akyel and Kamışlı (1996) and Enginarlar (cited in Uysal, 2008).

As mentioned earlier, though this study's participants were largely unaware of discourse markers (i.e., transition signals) in their native language, they used them in their Turkish essays as well as in their English ones. During the interview, one participant said that she could not remember the Turkish versions of some discourse markers and needed to consult a bilingual dictionary in order to translate the English ones into Turkish. Transfer also occurred in terms of rhetorical organization, as it did in Uysal's (2008) study as well. Yet, whereas the thesis statements in the present study's Turkish essays were as clear as in the English ones, Uysal's (2008) participants created rather obscure, unclear topic sentences. This contrasting result might have derived from the fact that those participants were required to write their essays in a highly limited time (i.e., 50 min), which could have partially prevented participants from stating their opinions in the most desirable way. By contrast, in the

present study, participating students received adequate time to brainstorm, outline, compose, and revise.

During this study, I observed no negative transfer from students' L1 (i.e., Turkish) to their L2 (i.e., English). Put differently, no inhibiting effects of the native language in terms of writing conventions occurred, particularly regarding rhetorical organization and its elements. Some participants wrote their thesis statements in the initial and some in the final position while writing in Turkish. Although the participants remained unaware as to why they had followed these two patterns, Turkish writing convention imposes stating one's position either in the introductory paragraph, if using a deductive writing style, or in the final paragraph, if using an inductive writing style. By contrast, in their English essays, participants knew without a doubt to state their positions on the topic in the introduction paragraph (i.e., in the initial position) and thereafter write deductively.

Clearly, English writing style impacted the writings of participants both negatively and positively. To their detriment, for instance, some participants experienced confusion about where to place their thesis statements. On the plus side, however, they included more transition signals in their Turkish essays than a typical Turkish essay would, and when asked why, they argued that doing so clarified the meaning and made the text more understandable. From my perspective, this admission was a significant result, for the participants recognized their being under the direct influence of English, for they had not felt the need to use these markers until they started writing in English. This actually suggests that problems students experience in writing in a foreign language may not be originating from their native language. In fact, this trend indicates that the participants have begun to construct an academic discourse community identity and to pursue membership. This phenomenon could importantly imply for writing instructors that engaging students in contrastive rhetoric studies can help to raise their awareness and encourage them to feel that they are part of the academic context in which they currently study and could further work in the future.

Another implication of the study is that instructors teaching composition may ask their students about their backgrounds in relation to the writing practices to which they have been introduced earlier in their academic careers. If students are aware of this tacit knowledge, then they can use it to their benefit.

As a final implication, contrastive rhetoric studies in composition classes can prompt students to think more critically while engaging academic writing, since critical thinking plays an important role throughout the composition process. Having students perform these kinds of exercises could benefit them by underscoring interlingual differences and similarities at both micro and macro levels. Accordingly, employing contrastive rhetoric studies in writing classes could help, motivate, and empower learners in the process.

Nevertheless, this study has limitations. First, the small number of participants makes the generalizability of the results somewhat difficult. Second, patterns revealed in this study cannot be considered to completely encompass all Turkish (or

English) cultural conventions. Third, the participants wrote opinion essays, meaning that this study's findings cannot be generalized to other types of rhetorical organization. Lastly, because no men participated in this study, results based on gender differences cannot be drawn. These limitations may also enlighten strategies for future research. For one, researchers can conduct studies involving other essay types, as well as include men to reveal differences and similarities, if any, between genders. Further research could also concentrate on multiple groups of participants and compare learners with different L1 backgrounds and levels of language proficiency.

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Retorik Desenleri Karşılaştırma: Anadil ve İkinci Dil Yazı Yazma Düzenlerinin Etkilerinin Ortaya Çıkarılması

Atıf:

Incecay, V. (2015). Contrasting rhetorical patterns: Discovering effects of first language and second language writing conventions. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, *61,* 137-154. http://dx.doi.org/10.14689/ejer.2015.61.8

Özet

Problem Durumu: Öğrencilere kendi anadillerinde ve yabancı dilde kompozisyon yazdırarak iki dil arasındaki olası karşılıklı etkileri araştıran küçük ölçekli bir çalışma yapmanın yararlı olabileceğini düşündüm. Öğrencileri karşılaştırmalı retorik desen çalışmalarına dâhil ederek retorik desen seviyesinde diller arası transfer olup olmayacağını görmek istedim.

Araştırmanın Amacı: Aynı anadile sahip (Türkçe) iki dilli bu öğrencilerin yazım sürecinde Türkçe ve İngilizce'ye ait benzer retorik desenleri takip edip etmediklerini veya bu desenlerin anadilde ya da yabancı dilde (İngilizce) birbirinden ayrılıp ayrılmadığını araştıran niteliksel küçük ölçekli bir çalışma yapmayı amaçladım.

Araştırmanın Yöntemi: Çalışmada İstanbul'da bulunan ve eğitim dili İngilizce olan bir vakıf üniversitesinde İngilizce kompozisyon dersine kayıtlı altı birinci sınıf öğrencisi yer aldı. Bu altı öğrenciden farklı konularda görüşlerini tartıştıkları iki Türkçe iki İngilizce kompozisyon yazmalarını istedim. Kompozisyonların konusunu öğrencilerin görüşleri doğrultusunda belirledim. Türkçe olarak öğrencilerin üniforma giyme zorunluluğu ve dershanelerin kapatılıp kapatılmaması konuları seçildi. İngilizce kompozisyonlar içinse çiftlerin evlilik öncesi beraber yaşayıp yaşayamayacağı ve etik olmanın sınırlarının olup olmayacağı konuları öğrenciler tarafından belirlendi. Amacım yazılan kompozisyonlarda bu iki dile ait retorik desenlerin var olup olmadığı ve diller arasında bu desenlerin transfer edilip edilmediğini araştırmaktı. Çalışmada kullanılmak üzere öğrencilerin yazdığı kompozisyonlara (N=24) ek olarak reflektif (yansıtıcı) ödevlerden ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelerden de veri elde ettim.

Alanda konu ile ilgili yapılmış araştırmalarda kullanılan analiz yöntemlerini incelediğimde yazılan paragraf sayısı, ana fikrin ifade edildiği cümlenin metin içerisindeki yeri, kullanılan bağlaçlar, kültürel etkiler, retorik desenler, ve deyim ile metafor kullanımı gibi kriterlerin ön plana çıktığını gözlemledim. Sıklık açısından ise bahsedilen bu ölçütlerden ilk dördünün daha yoğun kullanıldığını ve çalışmanın amacına daha uygun olduğunu gördüm.

Araştırmanın Bulguları: Verilerin analizi sonucunda ortaya çıkan sonuçlar öğrenciler arasında kompozisyonlarda fikirlerin ifade edildiği paragraf sayısı açısından farklılıklar olduğunu gözlemledim. Benzer şekilde ana fikir cümlesinin

pozisyonunda Türkçe yazılan kompozisyonlarda da farklılıklar olduğunu ortaya çıkardım. Bazı katılımcıların Türkçe yazdıkları kompozisyonlarda ana fikir cümlesini kompozisyonun başında yazarak tümdengelim tarzını bazı katılımcıların da ana fikri sonda yazarak tümevarım tarzını benimsediklerini gördüm. Yansıtıcı ödevler ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelerde elde edilen bulgular bu durumun öğrencilerin İngilizce yazma alışkanlıklarının etkisinde olduğunu ortaya koyarken aynı zamanda akademik söylem topluluğunun bir üyesi olma yolunda ilerlediklerini gösterdi. İngilizce yazılan kompozisyonlarda ise bu bulguyu destekler biçimde öğrencilerin tamamı tümdengelim tarzını benimsediklerini gördüm. Bu araştırmada aynı zamanda öğrencilerin üniversite birinci sınıf eğitimlerinde edindikleri yazma bilgilerini örneğin bağlaç kullanımını ana dildeki yazma tarzları ile bütünleştirdiklerini gördüm. Bu sonuçların alanda yapılan diğer çalışmalar ile de tutarlı olduğunu gözlemledim. Araştırmanın önemli sonuçlarından biri de katılımcı öğrencilerin özellikle İngilizce yazım geleneklerine daha alışkın ve hâkim oldukları için Türkçe kompozisyon yazarken zorlandıklarını ifade etmeleri idi. Bu durum da öğrencilerin anadillerinin yabancı dil etkisi altında kaldığını ve akademik söylem topluluğunun üyesi olma sürecinde olduklarını gösterme açısından önemliydi. Örneğin bağlaç kullanımı açısından bir öğrenci kendisini Türkçe yazarken her ne kadar bağlaç kullanma açısından zorunlu hissetse de kelimelerin Türkçe'sini hatırlayamadığı için sözlüğe baktığını ifade etti.

Ana fikir cümlelerinin hem de İngilizce hem de Türkçe yazılan kompozisyonlarda doğrudan gözlemlenebilir pozisyonda idi. Durumun böyle olmadığı çalışmalarda aradaki farkın katılımcı öğrencilere yazmaları için yeterince süre verilmediğinden kaynaklanmış olabileceği düşünülmektedir. Bu çalışmada ise beyin fırtınası, plan ve yeniden inceleme yapmaları için öğrencilere herhangi bir süre sınırlaması getirmedim.

Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Önerileri: Bu çalışmada öğrencilerin anadillerinden yabancı dile herhangi bir olumsuz transfer gözlemlemedim. Diğer yandan İngilizce'nin Türkçe üzerinde hem olumlu hem de olumsuz etkisini ortaya çıkarmış oldum. Örneğin, katılımcı öğrenciler Türkçe yazarlarken ana fikir cümlesini nereye yazacakları konusunda karışıklık yaşadılar. Öbür taraftan Türkçe kompozisyonlarda tipik bir Türkçe yazının içerebileceği bağlaçtan daha çok bağlaç kullandılar. Bunun sebebini sorduğumda ise öğrencilerin yanıtı öne sürdükleri fikirleri okuyucunun daha net bir şekilde anlaması şeklinde oldu. Öğrencilere bu araştırmadakine benzer karşılaştırmalı retorik çalışmalarında yer vermek hem öğrencilerin konu ile ilgili farkındalık seviyelerinin artırılmasına hem de eğitim sürecinde içinde bulundukları ya da çalışma hayatlarında içinde bulunabilecekleri akademik söylem topluluğunun özellikleri konusunda bilgi sahibi olmalarına sebep olabilir.

Çalışmadan elde edilen bir diğer uygulanabilir sonuç ise karşılaştırmalı retorik araştırmalarının öğrencileri akademik yazma süreçlerinde önemli rol oynayan eleştirel düşünmeye daha fazla sevk edebileceğidir. Bu tip çalışmalar ayrıca öğrencilere mikro ve makro düzeyde diller arası benzerlikleri ve farklılıkları anlama açısından yararlı olabilir. En önemlisi de yazma derslerine karşılaştırmalı retorik

çalışmalarını dâhil etmek öğrencilere süreçte onları motive ederek, kendilerine güven duymalarını sağlayarak yardım edebilir.

Yine de bu çalışmanın birtakım sınırlılıkları bulunmaktadır. Öncelikle, her ne kadar bu çalışma nitel de olsa az sayıdaki katılımcı çalışmanın sonuçlarının genellemesini kısıtlamakta. İkinci olarak, çalışmada üstünde durduğum olguların Türkçe ve İngilizce'ye ait kültürel yazım geleneklerinin tamamını temsil ettiği söylenemez. Üçüncü olarak, bu çalışmada öğrencilerden retorik desen olarak sadece fikir kompozisyonu yazmalarını istedim. Bu nedenle diğer retorik desenler çalışmanın kapsamı içinde değildi ve sonuçlar diğer desenlere genellenmemelidir. Ek olarak bu çalışmada hiç erkek öğrenci yer almadı ve bu yüzden cinsiyet farklılıklarına ait herhangi bir sonucu ortaya koymadım.

Bu sınırlılıklar gelecek çalışmalara yol göstermesi açısından önemli sayılabilir. Araştırmacılar diğer retorik desenleri içeren çalışmalar tasarlayabilirler. Gelecekteki çalışmalar her iki cinsiyetten öğrencileri içererek bu sayede cinsiyete ilişkin benzerlikleri ve farklılıkları ortaya çıkarabilir. Bunlara ek olarak gelecekte yapılacak çalışmalar farklı yabancı dil düzeylerine ve farklı anadillere sahip olan öğrencilere yönelebilir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Yazma eğitimi, karşılaştırmalı retorik, transfer, akademik söylem topluluğu.