

NEW DIRECTIONS IN CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC

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Abstract

Contrastive rhetoric examines differences and similarities in writing across cultures. Although mainly concerned in its first thirty years with student essay writing, the field of study today contributes to knowledge about preferred patterns of writing in many English-for-specific-purposes situations. This article discusses some of the new directions contrastive rhetoric has taken. First, the goals, methods, and accomplishments of research in contrastive rhetoric during the past thirty years will be briefly reviewed. Secondly, the paper will discuss how contrastive rhetoric has been pursued with varying aims and methods in a variety of EFL situations involving academic and professional writing. Finally, recent criticisms of contrastive rhetoric and their effects on changing directions in the field will be surveyed.

Introduction

Contrastive rhetoric examines differences and similarities in ESL and EFL writing across languages and cultures, as well as across such different contexts as education and commerce. Hence, it considers texts not merely as static products but as functional parts of dynamic cultural contexts. Although largely restricted thru much of its first 30 years to a fairly rigid form, student essay writing, the field today contributes to knowledge about preferred patterns of writing in many English-for-specific-purposes situations.

Undeniably, it has had an appreciable impact on our understanding of cultural differences in writing; and it has had, and will continue to have, an effect on the teaching of ESL and EFL writing.

Despite many developments in contrastive rhetoric in the past 30 years, and despite their contributions to ESL and EFL teaching, the field has become the target of negative criticisms by researchers with varied disciplinary affiliations. In two 1997 *TESOL Quarterly* issues, three papers criticized contrastive rhetoric for an alleged insensitivity to cultural differences (Scollon, 1997, Spack, 1997, Zamel, 1997). In other issues, Kubota (1999, 2001) has been critical of perceptions of a cultural dichotomy between East and West and the alleged resulting promotion of the superiority of Western writing. I believe that the criticisms have stemmed from a lack of understanding about the changes that have taken place in contrastive rhetoric in the last decade. Hence, instead of viewing the criticisms from an adversarial perspective (Belcher, 1997), I would like to see them as contributing to a more generous conception of the traditional contrastive rhetoric framework, especially regarding changing definitions of culture (Atkinson, 1999, Mauranen, 2001).

This article will survey some of the new directions contrastive rhetoric has been taking as well as address itself to some of the criticisms of the area of study. First, however, a brief history of the goals, methods, and major accomplishments of research in contrastive rhetoric during the past 30 years will be given. The field of study has expanded from its early beginnings as the analysis of paragraph organization in ESL student essay writing (Kaplan, 1966) to an interdisciplinary domain of Second Language Acquisition with theoretical underpinnings in both linguistics and rhetoric (Connor, 1996). Second, recent criticisms of contrastive rhetoric and their relations to changing directions in the field will be addressed. These new directions involve innovative views of culture, literacy, and critical pedagogy, and have a major impact on the research agenda of contrastive rhetoric.

Early History

Initiated 30 years ago in applied linguistics by Robert Kaplan, contrastive rhetoric is premised on the insight that, to the degree that language and writing are cultural phenomena, different cultures have different rhetorical tendencies. Furthermore, the linguistic patterns and rhetorical conventions of the first language often transfer to writing in ESL and thus cause interference. It is important to distinguish this concern from potential interference at the level of syntax and phonology. In contrastive rhetoric, the interference manifests itself in rhetorical strategies, including differences in content.

Kaplan's (1966) pioneering study analyzed the organization of paragraphs in ESL student essays and identified five types of paragraph development, each reflecting distinctive rhetorical tendencies. Kaplan claimed that Anglo-European expository essays are developed linearly while Semitic languages use parallel coordinate clauses; Oriental

languages prefer an indirect approach, coming to the point in the end; while in Romance languages and in Russian, essays include material which, from a linear point of view, is irrelevant.

Kaplan's early contrastive rhetoric was criticized for seeming to privilege the writing of native English speakers. It seemed as well to dismiss linguistic and cultural differences in writing among closely related languages. Kaplan himself (Connor & Kaplan, 1987) has referred to his early position as a "notion." He has also noted the underdeveloped nature of written text analysis at the time of his 1966 paper, which limited his own analysis of the sample student writing, and, significantly, he has further acknowledged as a primary influence the concept of linguistic relativity.

In discussing early contrastive rhetoric (Connor, 1996), I claimed that "the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic relativity is basic to contrastive rhetoric because it suggests that different languages affect perception and thought in different ways" (1996, p. 10). This weak version of the hypothesis (language influences thought), rather than the once dominant strong version (language controls thought and perception) is, I now believe, regaining respectability in linguistics, psychology, and composition studies, resulting in a renewed interest in the study of cultural differences (Gumperz & Levinson, 1996).

In a recent article by Ying (2000), devoted to the exploration of the origins of contrastive rhetoric, it is argued that "the claim that the origin of contrastive rhetoric lies in the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is untenable because the latter is actually rooted in German ideas on linguistic determinism" (p. 260); and these ideas, according to Ying, are incompatible with Kaplan's (1966) view of rhetoric and culture. Ying claims that Kaplan

did not view language and rhetoric as determinative of thought patterns. Instead, Kaplan merely argued that language and rhetoric evolve out of a culture. According to Ying, Hymes's ethnography of communication (1962) can be seen as "an important historical antecedent for contrastive rhetoric" (p. 265); in Hymes's system, the framework is communication, not language, and is important in studying the patterned use of language, often across cultures.

Matsuda's response to Ying (2001) includes a personal communication from Kaplan (March 11, 2001), in which Kaplan admits not having been influenced by Hymes's work at the time of the writing but that he was very much into Whorf-Sapir. Matsuda concludes that the origin of contrastive rhetoric was a result of Kaplan's effort to synthesize at least three different intellectual traditions: contrastive analysis, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, and the emerging field of composition and rhetoric, especially Christensen's generative rhetoric of the paragraph. The latter influence encouraged Kaplan to extend contrastive analysis from the sentence level to the paragraph level.

No matter what its origin, Kaplan's earlier model, which was concerned with paragraph organization, was useful in accounting for cultural differences in essays written by college students for academic purposes. It also introduced the American linguistic world to a real, if basic, insight: Writing was culturally influenced in interesting and complex ways. Nevertheless, the model was not designed to describe writing for academic and professional purposes. Nor was it designed to describe composing processes across cultures.

Research Methods

In its earlier years, contrastive rhetoric was heavily based on applied linguistic and linguistic text analysis. In the 1980's, contrastive rhetoricians included linguistic text analysis as a tool to describe the conventions of writing in English and to provide analytical techniques with which to compare writing in students' first and second languages. Edited volumes in 1987 (Connor & Kaplan), 1988 (Purves), and 1990 (Connor & Johns) typically included several chapters with a text analytic emphasis, especially focusing on methods of analyzing cohesion, coherence, and the discourse superstructure of texts. A text analytic approach was also adopted in such large international projects of student writing as the International Education Achievement (IEA) study and the Nordtext project. The IEA study compared high school students' writing in their mother tongues at 3 different grade levels in 14 different countries (Purves, 1988). The Nordtext project (Enkvist, 1985; Evensen, 1986) involved linguists in the Nordic countries whose interest was in EFL writing. Each project was designed to create useful models for instructional practice, and each was heavily text-based.

In summing up the research paradigm of the 1980's, it is fair to say that more or less decontextualized text analytic models characterized the field of study. Despite the reliance on the textual analysis of cohesion and coherence patterns in much contrastive rhetorical research, however, some contrastive rhetoric researchers had early on questioned the adequacy of purely text-based analyses as a basis for conclusions that extend beyond the realm of textual features. For example, Hinds (1987) proposed a new phenomenon for analysis: the distribution of responsibility between readers and writers; that is, the amount of effort expended by writers to make texts cohere through transitions

and other uses of metatext. Thus, Hinds referred to Japanese texts as reader responsible as opposed to texts that are writer responsible. And in much of my own work on contrastive rhetoric in the 1980's, I was involved in building a comprehensive model of texts, one which integrated rhetorical analysis with linguistically-oriented analysis. For example, in a cross-cultural study of writing which compared argumentative writing in students' essays from 3 English-speaking countries, the rhetorician Janice Lauer and I developed a linguistic/rhetorical system that helped quantify both linguistic features in essays (such as cohesion, coherence, and discourse organization) and rhetorical features (including the 3 classical persuasive appeals - - logos, pathos, ethos - - and Toulmin's 1958 argument model of claim, data, and warrant [Connor & Lauer, 1985, 1988]).

Contrastive studies of academic and professional genres and of the socialization into these genres of second-language writers were a natural development in L2 writing research. Following the lead of L1 writing research and pedagogy, where the 1970's were said to be the decade of the composing process and the 1980's the decade of social construction, empirical research on L2 writing in the 1990's became increasingly concerned with social and cultural processes in cross-cultural undergraduate writing groups and classes (Atkinson & Ramanathan, 1995; Carson & Nelson, 1994, 1996; Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Nelson & Carson, 1998), about the initiation and socialization processes that graduate students go through to become literate professionals in their graduate and professional discourse communities (Belcher, 1994; Casanave, 1995; Connor & Kramer, 1995; Connor & Mayberry, 1995; Prior, 1995; and Swales, 1990), and, finally, about the processes and products of L2 academics and professional writing in English as a second or foreign language for publication and other professional

purposes (Belcher & Connor, 2001; Braine, 1998; Connor et al., 1995b; Connor & Mauranen, 1999; Flowerdew, 1999; and Gosden, 1992).

Major Findings of the Past 30 Years

The past 30-plus years have seen significant changes as contrastive rhetoric has benefited from insights drawn from text linguistics, from the analysis of writing as a cultural and educational activity, from classroom-based studies of writing, and from contrastive genre-specific studies. The genres involved include journal articles, business reports, letters of application, grant proposals, and editorials. Several published papers, including Connor (in press) describe studies in these domains. Figure 1 lists other studies in the above four domains.

Insert Figure 1 here

What major lessons have we learned about the writing of second language students in the first 30 years of contrastive rhetoric research? First, all groups engage in a variety of types of writing, while preferred patterns of writing are, of course, genre dependent. We have also found that reader expectations determine what is perceived as coherent, straightforward writing. Thus, Kaplan's 1966 diagram of the linear line of argument preferred by native English speakers may well represent what such speakers *view* as coherent, though speakers of other languages may disagree.

Recent Research in Academic and Professional Writing Across Cultures

According to Atkinson (2000), "The contrastive rhetoric hypothesis has held perhaps its greatest allure for those in nonnative-English-speaking contexts abroad, forced as they are to look EFL writing in the eye to try to understand why it at least sometimes looks 'different' – often subtly out of sync with that one might expect from a

‘native’ perspective” (p. 319). Enkvist, in his 1997 article “Why we need contrastive rhetoric,” recommends that contrastive rhetoric be pursued according to varying aims and methods within different institutions at universities and in EFL situations. In fact, this is what we see in many university programs catering to training in foreign language skills in the small country of Finland. Finnish universities, of course, have language departments that teach language, literature, linguistic and literary theory, and applied linguistics. Additionally, however, Finland has had language centers at universities that teach languages for specific purposes as well as provide translation and editing services for the past 25 years. Other types of educational institutions interested in contrastive rhetoric include departments of business and intercultural communication.

There have been major developments in contrastive studies in many parts of the world since my survey of 1996 and the articles in a special issue of Multilingua. Journal of Cross-cultural and Interlanguage Communication (1996, 15, 3). The review that follows is not intended to be exhaustive; its examples will highlight some major directions contrastive rhetoric research relevant to academic and professional setting has been taking in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

Europe

In their research on EFL writing in Finland, which studies cultural differences between Finnish and English-speaking researchers, Ventola and Mauranen (1991) have shown the value of text analysis in a contrastive framework. Revising practices by native English speakers of Finnish scientists’ articles written in English were investigated, and the writing of Finnish scientists was also compared to the writing of native English-speaking scientists. It was found that Finnish writers used connectors less frequently and

in a less varied fashion than native English speaking writers. The Finnish writers had difficulty using the article system appropriately, and there were differences in thematic progression. Moreover, Mauranen (1993) found that Finnish writers wrote less “text about text,” or “metatext,” and that they also placed their main point later in the text than native English speakers. Connor, Helle, Mauranen, Ringbom, Tirkkonen-Condit, and Yli-Antola (1995b) found that Finnish writers had the same difficulties when writing grant proposals.

The studies by Ventola and Mauranen and Connor et al., cited above, and by Moreno on cross-cultural differences (1997), show that the contrastive rhetoric framework, originally developed for ESL settings in the U.S., can be helpful in analyzing and teaching writing in EFL in academic and professional contexts. Moreover, researchers and teachers in EFL situations other than professional are also finding the contrastive rhetoric framework useful for a variety of second language contexts. Thus, a great many English-Polish contrastive studies have appeared in the past few years in journals such as Text and Journal of Pragmatics. For example, Duszak (1994) analyzed research article paper introductions in Polish and English academic journals, while Golebiowski’s (1998) study dealt with psychology journal writing, finding many textual and stylistic differences. These findings showed that the English texts used more direct, assertive, and positive positions.

Middle East

Research in contrastive rhetoric is, of course, not exclusively Euro-American. In addition to numerous empirical studies of Arabic-English contrasts, contributions to contrastive rhetoric theory have been produced by Hatim and Hottel-Burkhart. Hatim,

whose disciplinary interest is on translation studies, made a major study of Arabic-English discourse contrasts (1997). Hatim's contribution deals with the typology of argumentation and its implication for contrastive rhetoric. The author is critical of previous contrastive rhetorical research of Arabic, which he describes as being "characterized by a general vagueness of thought which stems from over-emphasis on the symbol at the expense of the meaning," or as analyzing "Arabic writers as confused, coming to the same point two or three times from different angles, and so on" (p. 161). Hatim admits, however, that there are differences between Arabic and English argumentation styles and underscores the importance of explaining why these differences occur, rather than just relying on anecdotal reporting about the differences.

According to Hatim, orality has been suggested as identifying the differences between Arabic and Western rhetorical preferences by researchers such as Koch (1983). Koch has claimed that Arabic speakers argue by presentation, by repeating arguments, paraphrasing them, and doubling them. Hatim admits that Arabic argumentation may be heavy on "through –argumentation" (heavy on presentation with thesis to be supported, substantiation, and conclusion) unlike Western argumentation that, according to Hatim, is characterized by counter-arguments (thesis to be opposed, opposition, substantiation of counter-claim, and conclusion). Yet, the key is that for Arabic speakers, Arabic texts are no less logical than texts that use Aristotelian Western logic. To quote Hatim,

It may be true that this [Arabic] form of argumentation generally lacks credibility when translated into a context which calls for a variant form of argumentation in languages such as English. However, for Arabic, through-argumentation remains a valid option that is generally bound up with a host of socio-political factors and

circumstances, not with Arabic *per se*. It is therefore speakers and not languages which must be held accountable. (p. 53)

Hatim's contribution to text analysis of Arabic and English contrasts is significant. He explains observed differences from an empirical text analytic point of view. Yet, in well-meaning explanations, meant to show the legitimacy of different styles of argument across cultures, Hatim ends up generalizing about preferred argument patterns. And, like Hinds (1987), who analyzed Japanese – English contrasts, Hatim can become an easy target for those who object to cross-cultural analysis because of the danger of stereotyping.

Another significant contribution to the study of non-European contrastive rhetoric has been made by the rhetorician Hottel-Burkhart (2001). Hottel-Burkhart writes that “rhetoric is an intellectual tradition of practices and values associated with public, interpersonal, and verbal communication – spoken or written – and it is peculiar to the broad linguistic culture in which one encounters it” (p. 94). What is considered an argument in a culture is shaped by the rhetoric of that culture. Hottel-Burkhart refers to the well-known interview of the Ayatollah Khomeini and the Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci, analyzed by Johnstone (1986). In the interview, Fallaci used a logical argument supportable by verifiable facts. Khomeini offered answers based on the words of God, in a tradition in which, according to Hottel-Burkhart, he was schooled. Not only in the content of an argument, but also in the arrangement and style of argument, differences were found between the two styles of argumentation.

Interest in contrastive rhetoric in Arabic-speaking countries has been confirmed by the biennial International Conference on Contrastive Rhetoric at the American

University of Cairo, Egypt. In a volume of selected conference papers (Ibrahim, Kassabgy, & Aydelott, 2000), 13 chapters discuss studies that deal with distinctive features of Arabic, Arabic and English contrasts, and contrastive rhetorical studies of Arabic-speaking students' writing in English. The second Cairo Conference, held in March 2001, attracted presenters from Europe, Asia, and, of course, from neighboring countries.

Asia

Chinese-English and Japanese-English contrasts have been analyzed in several recent contrastive rhetoric studies. The Chinese-English studies deal with writing for professional purposes, namely newspaper writing and the writing of sales and request letters. Three are reviewed here.

Scollon and Scollon (1997) compared the reporting of the same news story in 11 Hong Kong newspapers and 3 Peoples' Republic of China papers. Four were English language papers, the rest were written in Chinese. The researchers focused on structural features and point of view as well as the attribution of content to sources. They found that both the classical structure "qi-cheng-zhuan-he" and inductive and deductive organizational structures were found in the stories, written in either language, concluding that "there is nothing inherent in the linguistic or cognitive structures of either Chinese or English which determines the use of these structures" (p. 107). A difference was found, however, in the practice of quotations across languages. According to the authors,

Concerning the question of quotation, our clearest finding is that quotation is at best ambiguous in Chinese. No standard practice has been observed across newspapers in this set and even within a newspaper, it is not obvious which

portions of the text are attributed to whom. In contrast, the English newspapers present a face of clear and unambiguous quotation. (p. 107)

Scollon and Scollon are careful to point out that the finding should be interpreted carefully. The seemingly rigorous Western journalistic standard, with rigid conventions for the attribution of authorship, does not necessarily translate into more scrupulous journalistic practice.¹

Zhu (1997) analyzed sales letters written in the People's Republic of China using a rhetorical moves analysis (Swales, 1990). The article contains a great deal of discussion on arguments over a linear versus a circular structure of Chinese discourse and finds that the 20 letters in the sample followed a linear development. Kong (1998) used 2 analytic frameworks, a move structure approach and Mann and Thompson's rhetorical structure analysis (1988) to examine Chinese business request letters written in companies in Hong Kong, English business letters written by native speakers, and English business letters by non-native speakers whose first language was Chinese (Cantonese). Differences were found in the occurrence and sequencing of the moves as well as the rhetorical structure between the Chinese letters and the English letters. The theoretical explanation in the article is rich and draws on theories of politeness and face systems. Differences are attributed to different face relationships involved in business transactions rather than inherent rhetorical patterns of the languages. According to Kong:

In English routine business request letters written by native writers, the expectations of the roles of the writer and reader are more simple, that is, an information seeker and information giver, on a more or less similar social footing. The mutual assumption seems to be that both sides are very busy and do not want

to spend time on speculation. If the price is right for both sides, they will make a deal. This is perhaps why the English letters are more direct, as they put greater emphasis on the ideational content of making the request and tend to make more face-threatening moves. On the other hand, in the Chinese samples, the symmetrical deference system (marked by delayed pattern of the request, the absence of face-threatening moves, and a greater emphasis on the interpersonal elements of 'justifying' the request throughout the whole text) is a result of their different social expectations and considerations. (p. 138)

Each of these studies disagreed with Kaplan's 1966 characterization of Chinese texts as circular. Explanations for differences in the texts studied were found, not in the structure of the texts per se, but in other contextual factors. It is also worth noting that the studies take the analysis of texts beyond student essays (Kaplan's sample).

With the extensive globalization of business and professional communication, writing in such genres as letters, résumés, and job applications for readers from disparate language and cultural backgrounds is becoming a reality for more and more people. It has been found that in these contexts, too, second language writers transfer patterns, styles, expectations, and contexts from the first language to the second, third, or fourth. Predictably, differing reader expectations cause misunderstandings. For example, requests in letters can be interpreted as being too direct when directness is differently valued in the first language than in the second. Hence, there is an increasing need for intercultural communication and understanding, as Mauranen has recently emphasized (Mauranen, 2001, p. 53).

Criticisms of and Advances in Contrastive Rhetoric

Despite these new developments in contrastive rhetoric and their contributions to teaching in ESL and EFL settings, the discipline has become the target of adverse criticism. In 1997, for example, 3 papers criticized contrastive rhetoric for an alleged insensitivity to cultural differences. Spack (1997), who works with ESL students in the U.S., was concerned about the practice of labeling students by their L1 backgrounds, and Zamel (1997) disapproved of the tendency of contrastive rhetoric to view cultures as “discrete, discontinuous, and predictable.” Scollon, in the same issue of the TESOL Quarterly as Zamel, criticized contrastive rhetoric research for being too focused on texts and for neglecting oral influences on literacy, and thus being unable adequately to consider EFL situations like the one in Hong Kong (Scollon, 1997).

Both Spack and Zamel invoke changing definitions of culture which juxtapose the forces of heterogeneity and homogeneity and seriously question the latter. This is not surprising, for the whole concept of culture has been intensely interrogated in applied linguistics with relevance to field such as contrastive rhetoric in the last few years. Atkinson (1999) usefully provides a comprehensive review of competing definitions of culture as they relate to TESOL. According to Atkinson, two competing views are the “received view” and alternative, nonstandard views. The received view conceives of culture as based largely on distinct geographical and national entities, which are presented as relatively unchanging and homogeneous (e.g., “the Japanese culture”). The alternative views stem from postmodernist-influenced perspectives and have evolved from critiques of the traditional, received view. In connection with the latter, Atkinson

discusses concepts such as “identity,” “hybridity,” “essentialism,” and “power,” all of which appear in criticisms of the traditional views:

So used, these terms indicate the shared perspective that cultures are anything but homogenous, all-encompassing entities, and represent important concepts in a larger project: the unveiling of the fissures, inequalities, disagreements, and cross-cutting influences that exist in and around all cultural scenes, in order to banish once and for all the idea that cultures are monolithic entities, or in some cases anything important at all. (p. 627)

From this point of view, it can be argued that contrastive rhetoric in the past largely adopted the notion of “received culture.” For example, I once defined culture as “a set of patterns and rules shared by a particular community” (1996, p. 101). Traditional contrastive rhetoric has often viewed ESL students as members of separate, identifiable cultural groups and, as pointed out by Tannen (1985), therefore is susceptible to the same critical judgments which are currently directed at any research on cross-cultural communication. Thus, Tannen notes that “some people object to any research documenting cross-cultural differences, which they see as buttressing stereotypes and hence exacerbating discrimination” (p. 212). She goes on to argue, however, that to ignore cultural differences leads to misinterpretation and “hence discrimination of another sort.” (p. 212)

However, although contrastive rhetoric has often defined national cultures in the “received” mode, researchers in contrastive rhetoric have certainly not interpreted all differences in L2 writing as stemming from first language or interference from the national culture. Instead, they have explained such differences in written communication

as often stemming from multiple sources including L1, national culture, L1 educational background, disciplinary culture, genre characteristics, and mismatched expectations between readers and writers. Contrastive rhetoric is thus in a position similar to that of intercultural research on spoken language or intercultural pragmatics analysis. In this regard, Sarangi (1994) suggests the term “intercultural” to refer to migrants’ fluid identities. He recommends that we consider language proficiency, native culture, and interlocutors’ mutual accommodation or lack thereof in explaining miscommunication between native and non-native speakers in immigrant language situations.²

A related question deals with an ideological problem regarding which norms and standards should be taught, since teaching norms invokes the danger of perpetuating established power hierarchies. This has been raised as an issue in postmodern discussion about discourse and the teaching of writing (Kubota, 1999; Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999). The discussion has been in the forefront in contrastive rhetoric; recent critics of contrastive rhetoric have blamed contrastive rhetoricians for teaching students to write for native English-speaker expectations instead of expressing their own native lingual and cultural identities.

At any rate, researchers and others working in the current contrastive rhetoric paradigm have adhered to the position that cultural differences need to be explicitly taught in order to acculturate EFL writers to the target discourse community. Teachers of English and others such as consultants in grant proposal writing need to educate students or clients about reader expectations. For example, at workshops for Finnish scientists who were learning how to write proposals in English, a “Western style” of grant proposal writing was taught. This employed a set of rhetorical moves adopted from Swales (1990)

(Connor et al., 1995b), validated by independent empirical research. If the Finnish scientists wished to get European Union (EU) research grants, they needed to follow EU norms and expectations; and these, at the time, were based on Anglo-American scientific and promotional discourse. On the other hand, when Finnish scientists wished to write grant applications in Finnish, it was suggested that it would be advantageous to follow the expectations of the Finnish agencies. Although such a decision about rhetorical choice seems straightforward, as in the case of grant proposals in the project described above, it may be more complex in the case of college writers.

In the EU project described above, we became aware of yet another issue facing contrastive rhetoric: that there may not be an English-language norm for the writers of EU grant proposals to follow. Because the raters of grant proposals for the EU in Brussels are not solely native speakers of English but are scientists from all EU countries with many different first languages and many different rhetorical orientations, changes in the standards of English-language grant proposals have taken place. In fact, something like a “Eurorhetoric” may have emerged. This blurring of standards and norms in written language is consistent with recent developments in spoken language. Crystal (1997) suggests that a new kind of English, World Standard Spoken English (WSSE), may be arising in situations requiring communication in English with people from non-Anglophone countries for purposes of business, industry, and diplomacy.

Conclusion

Major changes are taking place in contrastive rhetoric in terms of its impact as well as its goals and research methods. In regard to the former, there has been an expansion of the influence of contrastive rhetoric theories beyond the teaching of basic

ESL and EFL writing, as the examples given in this paper show. The growing influence of contrastive rhetoric in the teaching of such skills as business and technical writing is obvious not only in L2 situations overseas but also in the teaching of “mainstream writing” in the United States. A recent edited volume by Panetta (2001), for example, recommends the uses of contrastive rhetorical theory in the teaching of business and technical writing in non-ESL U.S. classrooms.

In regard to methods of research, contrastive rhetoric has been influenced by new approaches. While adhering to its now well-tested premises (the cultural resonance of rhetorical patterns and the influence of L1 on L2 acquisition), and continuing to rely on text analysis, and while retaining its traditional pedagogical applications, it is becoming more responsive to new currents in literacy research. It is embracing research-situated reflexivity and is becoming more sensitive to the social context and the local situatedness and particularity of writing activity. The increasingly context-sensitive research approach often involves studying the talk that surrounds text production and interpretation as well as writing processes and written products themselves (Connor, Halleck, & Mbaye, 2002).

Further, in regard to methods, there has also been a call for studying how writing in given cultures is tied to the intellectual history and social structures of these cultures (e.g., Scollon, 1997; Mauranen, 2001). Of course, it may be difficult to show how the patterns of a given culture’s preferences in areas such as music, architecture, and literature (high culture areas suggested by Scollon and Mauranen) or social interactions of everyday life are played out in writing. Yet, at the very least, contrastive rhetoric research could look for patterns across text genres in a given culture. In other words, are there identifiable, similar textual patterns across genres such as essays, grant proposals,

and letters of request in a given culture? For example, Finnish writers have been found consistently across genres to delay the introduction of a topic and to use relatively little metatext (Connor, et al., 1995b; Ventola & Mauranen, 1991; Yli-Jokipii, 1996).

Finally, because cultures and genres are viewed as dynamic and fluid, contrastive rhetoric would be well-advised to study texts diachronically to identify the evolution of patterns and norms. For example, in a corpus of letters of application covering a 10-year period (Upton & Connor, 2001), a stylistic change has been observed. Letters in the earlier years showed greater differences between the cultural groups (Finnish, Flemish, and U.S.), while letters in the later years show fewer differences. A more “homogenized” style of letters has been observed. We have speculated that in the global business environment, there may be a universal form of a letter of application in progress. Further research needs to be conducted for a definitive answer, and contrastive rhetoric provides a useful framework.

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Footnotes

¹A similar point about sensitivity to understanding reasons behind surface level difference has been made by Bloch (2001) and Pennycook (1996) who have studied the way Chinese students' cite from sources.

² The notion of "interculture" is suggested by Sarangi to describe the migrants' fluid identities of native and target cultures in immigrant situations, reminiscent of Selinker's (1972) concept of interlanguage, which refers to shared features of a speaker's native and target languages.

Figure 1. Summary of contrastive rhetoric studies in applied linguistics

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