RHETORICAL AWARENESS AND JORDANIAN EFL STUDENTS' EXPOSITORY WRITING

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Abstract

This research aimed to investigate the transfer of Arabic rhetorical features into English by Jordanian Arab EFL students. It looked for differences in the transfer of two rhetorical features in relation to their gender as well as it explores the effectiveness of raising the students' awareness of the importance of rhetoric in writing – culturally and rhetorically. The subjects for this study were the second Secondary Graders in the scientific stream in two schools, one for boys and one for girls, in two districts in the Governorate of Amman. The students in Al-Lames school for girls wrote one composition in English and one composition in Arabic, and the students in Al-Shareef school wrote one composition in English and one composition in Arabic.

The results of the study showed that the rhetorical features were transferred intensively from Arabic into English. The study provided explanation for the rhetorical transfer in terms of the students' L1 and its culture. In addition, the results showed statistically significant differences in the use of the rhetorical features in relation to all of the variables investigated in this study, gender, and familiarity of rhetorical transfer. The results also showed that the treatment of raising the students' awareness of the importance of rhetoric in FL writing and of the cultural, rhetorical, and linguistic differences between Arabic and English had significantly reduced the transfer of all the rhetorical features. On the basis of the results, pedagogical implications were provided.

Keywords: Rhetorical Awareness, Expository Writing, Jordanian students

Chapter One
Introduction

Writing is the use of graphic symbols to represent specific linguistic utterances (Rogers, 2000, p. 2). A writer uses such representation to convey a message to a reader who should be able to grasp it. Thus, a writer has to use his language correctly in terms of grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. However, for a message to be conveyed and understood, it is not enough for the writer's language to be formally correct; his presentation of the ideas has also to be contextually appropriate. Hence, both correctness and appropriateness are significant in any piece of discourse.

During the sixties of the twentieth century, the focus of the linguistic theory, according to Chomsky (1965), was to "characterize the abstract abilities speakers possess and enable them to produce grammatically correct sentences" regardless of the context (cited in Richards and Rogers, 1987, p. 70). Language was viewed as the use of mathematical symbols to represent internal competence, without any concern about contextual appropriateness. Years later, in contrast to Chomsky's view of linguistic competence, Hymes (1972) introduced the notion of "communicative competence" (Canale and Swain, 1980, p. 4).

Hymes' notion of "communicative competence" refers to "the relationship and interaction between grammatical competence, or knowledge of the rules of grammar, and sociolinguistic competence, or knowledge of the rules of language use" (Canale and Swain, 1980, p. 6). Hymes's notion has been seen as more comprehensive than Chomsky's "linguistic competence" since it appeals, in addition to formal correctness, to appropriateness, which characterizes linguistic and social practices that are accepted by native individuals in a particular culture (Kramsch, 1998, p. 125). Thus, Hymes (1972) was one of the first to show that Chomsky's model (1965) "provides no place for consideration of the appropriateness of sociocultural significance of an utterance in the situational and verbal context in which it is used" (Canale and Swain, 1980, p. 4). Hymes' notion, therefore, has an intuitive appeal, for no one can deny the value of speaking and writing appropriately as well as correctly.

Contrastive rhetoric (CR) was founded on the basis of the insights that different cultures have their own rhetorical tendencies and that EFL writers transfer such rhetorical patterns from their L1s into their English writing (Connor, 1996, 2004; Kaplan, 1966, 1972, 1987; Ostler, 1987). Since Kaplan's seminal article (1966), several studies appeared trying to identify the rhetorical patterns prevalent in certain L1s, like Arabic (e.g. Al-Jarrah, 2001; Al-Jubori, 1984; Kaplan, 1972; Koch, 1983; Sa'Adeddin, 1989), Apachean English (e.g. Bartlet, 1983, 1992), German (e.g. Clyne, 1987), Indian (e.g. Kachru, 1987), Japanese (e.g.

Kobayashi, 1984), Polish (e.g. Golebiowski, 1998), and Spanish (e.g. Saez, 2001). These studies also attempted to determine the rhetorical patterns that EFL students transferred from these L1s into the English writing. The rhetorical features identified in these studies were found to be prevalent in the L1s and carried-over from the L1s into the English writings of the EFL students, and they were referred to as culture-specific features.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers of Jordanian Arab EFL students have always observed that even when students have learned to write correctly in English, in terms of grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics, their writings do not sound English. Even when formal errors are corrected, students' compositions, as Ostler (1987) maintained, remain foreign. Kaplan (1972) described the problem of the foreignness evident in the writings of EFL students as follows:

It is apparent but not obvious that, at least to a very large extent, the organization of a paragraph, written in any language by any individual who is not a native speaker of that language, will carry the dominant imprint of that individual's culturally-coded orientation to the phenomenological world in which he lives and which he is bound to interpret largely through the avenues available to him in his native English, many Jordanian Arab EFL students translate the content from Arabic into English, but retain the rhetorical structure of Arabic (see Eggington, 1987). This is what makes students' English writings sound more like Arabic, rendering them strange, out of focus, incoherent, inappropriate, and misleading.

There has not been enough concern with pedagogical implications in the surveyed studies. These studies, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, have not examined ways to eliminate such transferred rhetorical features from Arab EFL students' writings. In other words, the transferred rhetorical features were portrayed as something stable in the writings of the students.

Certain issues are important to consider if one wants to study the problem of rhetorical transfer in a more comprehensive way and contribute to its solutions. Of these issues is the influence of the gender of the Arab EFL students, mode of writing, and familiarity of the students with the content of the compositions and with the form of the English discourse. Surprisingly, the impact of each of these variables on rhetorical transfer has not been investigated in any of the reviewed studies.

Significance of Study

This research is an attempt to fill some of the gaps in previous research. It explores the transfer of a wider range of Arabic rhetorical patterns into English. It also attempts to explain transfer in the light of the L1, including its spoken and written forms, and its culture.

Additionally, it explores the effectiveness of raising the students' awareness of the importance of rhetoric in writing and the cultural, rhetorical, and linguistic differences between L1 and FL, in an attempt to investigate the influence of familiarity of students with the form of the English discourse on rhetorical transfer. Furthermore, the study examines the influence of gender, and familiarity with the topics of compositions on the transfer of each of the Arabic rhetorical features into English.

Investigating the effect of gender on rhetorical transfer is particularly important. Flynn (1990) remarked that "women and men have different conceptions of self and different modes of interaction with others as a result of their experience" (p. 298). Cultural anthropologists have highlighted the significance of differences between females and males in the acculturation and the use of language in a society, and pointed out that this is rarely reflected in applied linguistic studies (Connor, 1996, p. 173). Therefore, it is expected that gender differences may lead to rhetorical differences.

The modes the researcher considered in this study were the expository writing, which is the most commonly used by EFL students (Silva, 1990, p. 13).

Additionally, it is highly significant to look into how students' background in L1 and FL interacts with rhetorical transfer. According to schema theory, when EFL learners read a text in the FL, they bring the background knowledge, or schema, acquired in the L1 to decode meaning in the text they read (Reid, 1993, p. 62). Since readers bring their background in their L1 to read a text in FL, EFL writers are expected to use their background in their L1 and FL when they write in the FL.

The study will provide a more comprehensive view of the sources of rhetorical deviations in the English writings of Jordanian Arab EFL students which will lead to a better understanding of the problem of rhetorical transfer and will help to state important implications for FL pedagogy. It is expected that this research will provide language teachers with more information about rhetorical transfer from Arabic into English, which will, hopefully, allow them to deal with the Jordanian Arab EFL students' writing problems. Another advantage that could be obtained from this research is to draw researchers' attention to the issue of rhetorical transfer, which has not received much attention, especially with regard to the Arab EFL students.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the rhetorical features that Jordanian Arab EFL students transfer in their expository writings in English. The influence of gender and

effectiveness of raising the students' awareness of the importance of rhetoric in writing and the cultural, rhetorical.

Questions of the Study

1. Are there differences in the transfer of each of the Arabic rhetorical features due to the influence of gender, and the effectiveness of raising the students' awareness of the importance of rhetoric in writing and the cultural, rhetorical?

Limitations of the Study

1. The subjects in this study did two tasks, which may have been tedious and exhausting for them. Each of the subjects in Al-shareef School one task in English and one tasks in Arabic, as well as Lamees school.

2. The subjects of this study are from two schools in Amman, so the results of the study can be generalized only to the subjects and other similar subjects with similar conditions.

3. Due to the huge amount of compositions, they were read and rated only by the researcher. The rating would be more reliable if other raters, in addition to the researcher, were involved in judging the compositions.

Chapter two

Review of the studies on the rhetorical differences between Arab and English reveals that English, stylistically, prefers subordination, whereas Arabic tends to favor parallelism. Arab speakers tend to overuse complex series of parallel structures due to the existence of a large inventory of devices for parallelism and to the influence of classical Arabic and the Holy Koran. Parallelism in Arabic can be achieved through using coordinate conjunctions and identical grammatical structures (Kaplan, 1972). Ostler (1987) referred to this feature as balance or rhythmical coordination between related items. She also reiterated that this is one of the rhetorical features that show how the structure of written Arabic is bound to the Koran. Another important rhetorical feature of Arabic, according to Ostler (1987), is formulas and commonplaces. Ong (1972) maintained that the common use of sayings came as a result of the influence of ancient oral cultures (cited in Ostler, 1987, p. 176),Furthermore, a paragraph in English, it is believed, develops linearly. It starts with a topic sentence, followed by a series of supporting sentences, where everything in the paragraph contributes to the main idea directly. The ideas come in a straight line (Kaplan, 1972). Even transitions have to be provided by the writer. Thus, This division depends on "the amount of effort writers expend to make texts cohere through transition and other uses of metatext" (Connor, 2002, p. 496).

Rhetorical differences between Arabic and English lead to the transfer of the Arabic rhetorical features into the English writings of the Arab ESL students. Many studies were conducted to investigate rhetorical transfer into English from various L1s, such as Apachean English (e.g. Bartlet, 1983, 1992), German (e.g. Clyne, 1987), Indian (e.g. Kachru, 1987), Japanese (e.g. Kobayashi, 1984), Polish (e.g. Golebiowski, 1998), and Spanish (e.g. Saez, 2001), in addition to other studies investigating the transfer of Arabic rhetorical features into English (e.g. Al-Jarrrah, 2001, Fakhri, 1994, Inani, 1998, Karma, 1985, Mgableh, 1992, and Ostler, 1987).

Golebiowski (1998) investigated the structure of introductions to articles in the field of psychology. Specifically, she discussed issues related to form and content, linearity and digressiveness, and reader- writer- reciprocity on the basis of her analysis of the discourse of ten introductions written in English by Polish scholars and eight introductions written in Polish. She did this to find the rhetorical approaches adopted by the Anglo-American scholars and Polish authors.

With regard to form and content, Golebiowski (1998) found that content, rather than form, was highly valued for the Polish in the Polish intellectual system. When The Polish writers wrote in English, they preserved the native style, but they followed the conventionalized style of scientific articles, like subsectioning. For the Anglo-American writers, form and content are both highly valued. In addition, the Polish style was digressive, but the Anglo-American style was found to be linear. The Polish scholars tended to preserve digressiveness when they wrote in English. Further, the Polish writers "do not explicitly lead the reader through the text, leaving the main conclusions for the reader to draw" (Golebiowski, 1998, p. 84). These writers also tended to carry over this style when they wrote in English. The Anglo-American writers, on the other hand, were found to "signal their presence, summarize their arguments, and tell the reader what to anticipate and how texts segments relate to each other" (Golebiowski, 1998, p. 84). Golebiowski argued that the rhetorical patterns are culturally influenced.

Chapter Three
Methodology
Population and Subjects

The population for this study was the second Secondary Graders in the scientific track in two schools, one schools for boy and one school for girls The distribution of the population in each of the four schools is given in Table (1) below.

Table (1) . Distribution of population in the four schools

School	Number of Students
The Secondary School of Al-Shreef for Boys	25
The Secondary School of Al-Lamees for Girls	25
Total	**50**

The population was seventeen years old and they have been learning English as a foreign language for seven years

Samples

The subjects wrote one composition in English on expository topics one about a more familiar topic (Their best friends) Then, the subjects were asked to do the same tasks in Arabic and in the same order.

In the quasi-experimental research, the treatment was manipulated with the students in the Secondary School for Boys and the Secondary School of for Girls. The treatment was manipulated by the English teachers of these classes at the schools, in coordination with the researcher. The students were provided with the major cultural, rhetorical, and linguistic differences between L1 and FL. The teachers also pointed out the misconception held for a long time that writing is only writing correct sentences, in terms of grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics.

After manipulating the treatment, prompts were given to the students to write one English compositions similar to the topics of the compositions the students wrote before manipulating the treatment on expository topics. The tasks given before and after manipulating the treatment were in the same order. In addition, the degree of familiarity of the topics was decided by the researcher in consultation with the teachers in the schools where the data were collected.

The Investigated Features

The Arabic rhetorical features that the researcher investigated in the Arabic and English samples are defined and illustrated below. These rhetorical features are not exclusive to Arabic. They are used in many languages, like English, but they are favored in Arabic and characterize the rhetoric of Arabic. Indeed, they have been selected based on the literature reviewed, as mentioned above. That is, there is a consensus on their prevalence in the Arabic discourse.

a- Pattern Repetition: Using words that are identical or that have similar morphological patterns (Al-Jubori, 1984, p. 101), as in (1), where the words having similar morphological patterns are underlined:

1- يدرسونو يلعبون.

yadrusuuna wa yalCabuuna

(They study and play)

b- Root Repetition: Using words of the same root (Al-Jubori, 1984, p. 102), as in (2), where the instances of Root Repetition are underlined:

2- أثمرتثماره.

?athmaratthimaarahu.

(Its fruit fruited)

Data Collection Procedures

The study was conducted during the second semester of the academic year 2010/2011. The descriptive data were collected two weeks after the beginning of the semester. The subjects in all of the schools were given the first task in English, which was writing an expository essay about a more familiar topic (Their best friends).

In the descriptive research, the data collected before the treatment from the compositions written in Arabic and English were used to examine and compare the occurrence of the rhetorical features in the Arabic and English compositions in order to determine the features that were transferred from Arabic into English. In addition, the data obtained from the compositions written by the males and females were used to examine the influence of gender on rhetorical transfer.

As for the experimental data, the English teachers who teach the subjects in the Secondary School for Boys and the Secondary School for Girls, which participated in the quasi-experimental research, manipulated the treatment, described above, with their students, in coordination with the researcher. After that, four tasks in English, similar to the English tasks given to the students before the treatment, were given to each of the students in these schools. The compositions that the students in Al-Qaser schools wrote in English before and after manipulating the treatment were used in the quasi-experimental research to investigate the influence of the familiarity of the subjects with the form of the English discourse.

The descriptive and quasi-experimental data collected and analyzed in the current study came from the compositions that the students wrote as home assignments. The students were told in advance that their compositions would be used for the purposes of research, but in order to guarantee a high degree of seriousness on the part of the students, they were told that

their compositions would be read and evaluated, and they would be rewarded based on their seriousness in their work.

The Arabic rhetorical features that occur in the Arabic and English samples written by subjects before the treatment and in the English samples the subjects wrote after the treatment constitute the descriptive and quasi-experimental data in the present research. The samples were rated by the researcher through reading the samples and recording the frequency of each of the nine rhetorical features in each sample.

Data Analysis

T-test was used to look for differences in the transfer of each of the rhetorical features in relation to gender. In other words, the researcher looked for statistically significant differences at the level ($p \leq 0.05$) in the transfer of each of the features between the males and females, in the expository modes, T-test was also used to analyze the quasi-experimental research data. To find out if familiarity with the form of the English discourse had any influence on the transfer of each of the rhetorical features, the researcher looked for statistically significant differences at the level ($p \leq 0.05$) in the transfer of each of the features in the samples obtained before and after the treatment.

Chapter Four
Results and Discussion

T-test was used to look for statistically significant differences in the transfer of each of the features between males and females, expository mode, at the level ($p \leq 0.05$). T-test was also used to find out if there were statistically significant differences in the transfer of each of the features between the compositions that the subjects wrote before and after the treatment at the level ($p \leq 0.05$). The results are discussed in the light of the students' L1, its culture, mode of writing. Familiarity with the form is dealt with here in terms of the students' awareness of the importance of rhetoric in FL writing and of the cultural, rhetorical, and linguistic differences between L1 and FL.

The Rhetorical Features from Arabic into English

The results are presented in Table (1).

Table (1).The frequency of occurrence of the Arabic rhetorical features in the Arabic and English compositions

		Frequency in Arabic		Frequency in English	
		Sum	Percentage 100%	Sum	Percentage 100%
1-	Pattern Repetition	2321	29.6%	2106	33.28%
2-	Root Repetition	609	7.8%	256	4.1%
	Total	**3930**	**36.14%**	**2362**	**37.29%**

Table (2) shows that the frequency of occurrence of the two rhetorical features is quite high in the English compositions of the students. Such features are known in the literature to be the landmarks of the Arabic rhetoric, yet they were used in the English compositions as if they were features of the English rhetoric. This widespread use of the Arabic rhetorical features in the English compositions can be seen from comparing the total of occurrences of the rhetorical features in the Arabic compositions (3930) and the English compositions (2362) and from comparing the percentage of use of each of the rhetorical features in the Arabic and English compositions. As can be observed in Table (2), the frequencies in Arabic and English compositions came quite similar for most of the features: Pattern Repetition (Arabic = 29.6%, English = 33.28%), Root Repetition 7.8%, 4.1%),

Table (3).The order of use of the rhetorical features in the Arabic and English compositions

The Order	Arabic Compositions		English Compositions	
	Feature	Frequency/ Percentage100%	Feature	Frequency/ Percentage100%
1-	Pattern Repetition	29.6%	Pattern Repetition	33.28%
2-	Root Repetition	7.8%	Root Repetition	4.1%

The Pattern Repetition feature is the most frequently used feature in both Arabic and English compositions which have been taken from the students' English and Arabic compositions,

Pattern Repetition is one manifestation of the general category of repetition. Repetition is exhibited, according to Al-Jubori (1984), through Pattern Repetition and Root Repetition at the morphological level, through Word Repetition at the word level, and through parallelism at the chunk level. An examination of the frequency of occurrence of each of these manifestations of repetition in the English compositions compared to the Arabic compositions shows that all of the manifestations have been transferred from Arabic into English.

This difference may be because of the students' limited knowledge of English words of the same root.

The findings in this study that repetition was transferred from Arabic into English concur with other reviewed studies, like Al-Jarrah (2001), Inani (1998), Kaplan (1966, 1972), and Sa'Adeddin (1989). However, this study, similar to Al-Jubori (1984), examines the transfer of repetition from Arabic into English at the morphological level, represented by Pattern Repetition and Root Repetition, the word level, exhibited by Word Repetition, and

chunk level, manifested by Parallelism. None of the studies reviewed investigated the transfer of repetition at all of these levels. Al-Jarrah and Inani studied the transfer of Lexical Repetition from Arabic into English. Kaplan (1966, 1972) looked into the Arab EFL students' carry over of the features of repetition, in general without referring to the levels at which this feature appears, and Parallelism, which was not dealt with as a feature related to repetition. Sa'Adeddin (1989) investigated the transfer of repetition into English by Arab EFL speakers, without specifying the levels at which this feature appears. He found that this feature, among other textually oral features, was favored by the students because it indicated harmony and common cultural beliefs.

The Effect of Gender on the Use of the Rhetorical Features

Table (4) below presents the means, standard deviations, and t-test values for differences between Males and Females at level ($p \leq 0.05$) in the means of each of the rhetorical features.

Table (4).The results of t-test of the differences between Males and Females in the use of each rhetorical feature

No	Feature	Gender	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	Sig
1-	Pattern Repetition	Males	13.0750	4.43740	-.262	.793
		Females	13.2500	3.98891		
2-	Root Repetition	Males	1.2000	.83287	-3.619	.000
		Females	2.0000	1.79310		

Table (4) shows that there are statistically significant differences between Males and Females in the means of the use of Root Repetition ($t = -3.619$, $p < 0.05$), the features of Root Repetition, was used by the Females more than by the Males. In other words, the Females have transferred these features more than the Males. In contrast, there are no statistically significant differences between the Males and Females in the use of Pattern Repetition ($t = -.262$, $p > 0.05$),

Table (7).The results of t-test of the differences in the means of use of the rhetorical features in the Arab EFL students' compositions Before and After the treatment

No	Feature	Assignment	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	Sig
1-	Pattern Repetition	After	10.7625	3.18230	-4.255	.000
		Before	13.2500	4.14759		

2-	Root	After	.8875	.94123	-4.624	.000
	Repetition	Before	1.7875	1.46429		

Table (7) shows clearly that there are statistically significant differences between the compositions written Before and After the treatment in the means of the use of Pattern Repetition (t = -4.255, p < 0.05), Root Repetition (t = -4.624, p < 0.05), Word Repetition (t = -5.752, p < 0.05), The mean of use of each of the features before and after the treatment displays a decrease in the use of all of these features. That is, all of the features are transferred less in the compositions written After the treatment.

The decrease in the use of each of the features appears to be due to the manipulation of the treatment. As mentioned in the discussion in relation to the question of the rhetorical features transferred from Arabic into the English writings of the students, the transfer of the rhetorical features by the Arab EFL students was attributed to the influence of the L1 of the students and its culture. Clearly, the treatment raised the students' awareness of the cultural, rhetorical, and linguistic differences between Arabic and English and of the importance of rhetoric in FL writing. What raises the usefulness of the treatment is that the students have time to monitor the organization of their compositions, not as in speech and pronunciation (Fakhri, 1994). Evidently, the students benefited from the treatment since they were able to use the knowledge they received with regard to the organization of texts in English.

The findings of this research with regard to raising students' awareness of rhetorical features have important implications. Rather than looking at the transferred features as something fixed and stable in students' writings, they can be portrayed as flaws that can be reduced or eradicated as a result of increasing the EFL students' awareness of the importance of rhetoric in writing in FL and of the cultural, rhetorical, and linguistic differences between L1 and FL. Hence, the pedagogical value of CR becomes evident here. The rhetorical differences among languages can be used in the EFL writing classes to make the students more aware of such differences and, hence, reduce the transfer of L1 rhetorical features and increase the right use of the FL features

Implications of the Study

On the basis of the findings of the study, the following pedagogical implications can be stated:

1. English teachers are recommended to make Jordanian Arab EFL students more aware of the cultural, rhetorical, and linguistic differences between Arabic and English. The results of the study showed the significance of raising the students' awareness of the

cultural, rhetorical, and linguistic differences between Arabic and English in reducing the transfer of all the rhetorical features.

2. English teachers are recommended to teach Jordanian Arab EFL students the expectations of the English discourse audience. This raises the students' familiarity with the form of the English discourse.

3. Jordanian EFL students need to practice writing in different modes, and their teachers are advised to check their writings and inform them about the rhetorical patterns commonly used in English in each mode. The results of the study made it evident that Jordanian EFL students carried over different rhetorical features in different modes of writing. It was also shown that different modes required different rhetorical features in Arabic and in English.

4. English teachers and curriculum designers are recommended to use English reading passages on different topics to raise the students' familiarity with topics on which they write. It was evident in the study that the students transferred more rhetorical features when writing on the topics that were more familiar to them in their L1. This implies that more familiarity with a topic in FL means more familiarity with the rhetorical features used when writing on this topic. Additionally, using more English reading passages helps to raise the students' awareness of the cultural, rhetorical, and linguistic differences between Arabic and English.

5. English teachers and the evaluators of the Jordanian Arab EFL students' compositions should focus on both the rhetorical as well as the linguistic aspects of the students' compositions. Raising the students' awareness of the importance of rhetoric in FL writing in this study appeared to have a significant influence on reducing rhetorical transfer.

6. EFL teachers should be well-trained to teach students how to write in English. The results of the study indicated that the teachers have important roles in enhancing students' ability to write.

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