

Charteris-Black, J. 1997 (a) "Practice and Preference in second language writing instruction: A contrastive perspective". In G. Fulcher (ed.). *Writing in the Language Classroom*. Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall Europe. Pp. 61-76.

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to compare the first and second language writing instruction experienced by tertiary level students in their native settings. Contrastive rhetoric claims that where there are similarities in the instructional processes by which first and second language texts are generated, these will manifest themselves at the level of product through similarities in the organisational features of first and second language texts. Instructional process is defined with reference to selection of text type, teaching method and the aspect of writing on which feedback is given.

The findings of the study are that there are a number of similarities between the experience and perception of first and second language writing. The main differences are that learners show a preference for more transactional text types in English and more expressive text types in the L1. English writing instruction emphasises grammatical accuracy at the expense of guidance in organisation, with the result that learners are given insufficient guidance in the organisational differences between first and second language texts. Potential candidates for further education overseas require more explicit guidance in the relationship between the rhetorical characteristics of first and second language writing of specific text type. Teachers of English writing would benefit from more information on how learners have learnt to write in the first language.

Practice and Preference in Writing Instruction: A Contrastive Perspective

Introduction

In the 1990s contrastive approaches in writing theory have shifted from their earlier interest in the textual differences between first and second language writing towards a comparison of the differing educational contexts in which first and second language writing occurs. This shift originated in a dissatisfaction with explanations of second language error with reference to the first language system because it implied too strong an acceptance of the contrastive hypothesis (Lado 1957, James 1980). Increased awareness of the influence of language learning theory on writing theory have led to fresh approaches in Contrastive Rhetoric which aim to investigate the relationship between the processes of text creation in the L1 and in the L2.

A possible reason for the growing interest in the contexts within which writing occurs is because accounts based on a theory of language alone are of little benefit to teachers in multilingual settings; this is because the task of comparing features of English texts with the full range of languages present would be impractical. In addition, accounts based on a theory of language learning can usefully identify broad similarities and differences in first and second language writing instruction in diverse educational settings. This is only possible in a limited sense with contrastive approaches based on a theory of language because they rely on the assumption that there are universally unmarked syntactical patterns. The internationalisation of English, increased global mobility, and the resulting growth in the numbers of students learning English in multilingual contexts requires an analysis of the shared characteristics of how writing is taught across a range of native environments.

The aims of this study are, first, to explore contrastive rhetoric as a theory of language learning by examining the extent to which there are recurrent differences between writing instruction in English and in the first language in different sociorhetorical communities; and, secondly, to establish whether students have different preferences regarding the first and second language writing instruction experienced in their native educational settings.

When students are viewed as products of specific educational cultures, it is quite likely that the differences between first and second language writing instruction in the native educational setting may be less than those between the English language writing instruction received in the students' native and the target language settings. If this is the case, teachers in target language settings would do well to inform themselves of the likely areas where such differences exist. The claim of contrastive rhetoric to be a theory of language learning is

likely to be upheld if it can be demonstrated that students' experiences of first and second language writing in the native setting are similar. For example, while learners may be taught explicit lexical-grammatical differences between L1 and English writing, the differing rhetorical expectations of the second language reader may not be identified because it is assumed that audience expectations are the same as for first language writing. This is all the more likely to be the case for students from ESL bilingual backgrounds where there are local societal norms for writing in English and where the use of English is restricted to particular transactions and within particular domains. The rhetoric of English (L2) writing may share the hallmarks of first language educational influences if writing in both languages is taught in the same way.

The aims can be summarised in the following research questions:

- 1/ How does L2 writing pedagogy differ from L1 writing pedagogy across a range of educational settings?
- 2/ What differences are there in the preferences of overseas EAP learners at tertiary level as regards the L1 and L2 writing pedagogy previously experienced across a range of educational settings?"
- 3/ Can Contrastive Rhetoric contribute to a theory of language learning?

These questions were answered through a questionnaire-based survey of fifty undergraduate and postgraduate learners from twenty-five different countries presently studying at the University of Surrey. In order to ensure that a reasonably complete picture in both languages was obtained, three key variables of writing pedagogy were identified as follows:

- a) The types of text practised by writers.
- b) The teaching methods employed in the creation of these texts.
- c) The nature of the feedback provided.

Background

The aim of Contrastive Rhetoric is to provide an account of the influence of first language text organisation on second language texts; the nature of the account will depend on the relative emphasis which is placed on language as opposed to language learning theory.

Accounts based on an analysis of language will provide a description of any regular differences - as established by text analysis - between the organisation of texts written in the first and second languages. This approach clearly overlaps with translation theory. Accounts (such as this one) based on a theory of language learning provide a description of different pedagogic approaches to writing instruction in the first and second languages.

Studies in contrastive rhetoric can be divided, accordingly, into two broad categories depending on whether the primary emphasis is on language or on language learning; the former primarily rely on written texts as data; they are focused on the product of writing pedagogy and reflect a strong version of the contrastive approach by looking to first language rhetoric as a basis for the prediction of second language rhetorical features (Lado 1957). Measures of rhetorical differences in such text oriented approaches include paragraph organisation (e.g. Connor & Kaplan 1987, Kaplan 1966 and 1987; Ostler 1987), and cohesion devices (e.g. Johns 1984; Scarcella 1984; Williams 1983).

Mohan & Lo (1985) initiated the shift in line of investigation from language to language learning with the claim that the rhetorical differences between texts produced by a group of Canadian writers and those written by a similar group of Cantonese writers lay in the type of writing instruction which these two groups had received rather than in any underlying rhetorical differences in the first languages concerned. They appealed for more information on literacy instruction: "...we should be aware of the late development of composition ability across the board and pay particular attention to students' previous educational experience" (Mohan & Lo 1985:528)

The importance of differences in contextual features in second language writing was further highlighted by Purves (1988) and other contributors to the International Association for Educational Achievement's study of written composition, based, primarily, on European data. Most significant amongst these contextual features was the nature of the educational context within which the texts were written: "The role of the school in promulgating rhetorical styles remains clear...it serves as a primary agent in the transmission of cultural and thereby rhetorical and stylistic norms" (Purves, 1988:25). However, Eggington (1987) and Hinds (1987) had both commented on the absence of explicit writing instruction in the native educational settings of Korea and Japan respectively. Most of the above researchers share the view that "Writing for most school children, is nearly always school sponsored and inevitably, therefore reflects the culture of the school system and reproduces culturally preferred discourse styles" (Leki 1991:124)

In response to the developing climate of contextual awareness, Kaplan himself implicitly acknowledged that an effective interpretation of rhetoric should include features relating to the context of writing as well as the texts themselves:

"While contrastive rhetoric is focused on the finished text - the product- or on some product along the way between idea and finished text, it does not and cannot ignore the process of composing" (Kaplan 1987: 289).

This brings us to the most recent, line of contrastive rhetorical research which replaces textual considerations almost entirely by contextual ones. The shift from textual to contextual focus in contrastive rhetoric has broadened the scope of the methodologies used to identify relevant rhetorical features; for example, contextual approaches explore the contexts of writing through a consideration of reader preferences (Connor & McCagg 1987; Folman & Sarig 1990), interviews (Indrasuta 1988), and direct ethnographic type accounts by students on aspects of their first language writing (Liebman 1988; Liebman-Klein 1987; Saville-Troike 1994, Severino 1993). Some of these studies also compare literacy instruction in different cultures (e.g. Carson 1992; Liebman 1992; Severino 1993). These researchers explore the possible influence of the way that first language writing is taught in terms of the code available, pedagogic practice and the functions of writing.

Such studies have been summarised by Liebman:

This new contrastive rhetoric considers not only the contrasts in how people organise texts in different languages, but also other contrasts such as their approaches to audiences, their perception of the purposes of writing and types of writing tasks with which they feel comfortable, the composing processes they have been encouraged to develop and the role that writing plays in their education. (Liebman 1992: 142)

The methodology used in this study bears closest resemblance to that used by Liebman (1992) which explores the differences between Arabic and Japanese first language writing instruction through questionnaire data. The main differences are that this study contrasts L1 and L2 writing pedagogy across a range of educational contexts, whereas Liebman's data solely concerned instruction in L1 writing instruction in two educational settings (Arabic and Japanese). This is because the implications of this study are for academic writing instruction in multilingual, multicultural tertiary settings where teachers need evidence for any shared experiences and preferences in writing instruction among international students.

Method

Sample

As part of its service function within the University of Surrey, the English Language Institute offers various types of academic writing programmes; these include essay writing, technical writing and thesis writing programmes. The fifty students for this survey had all chosen to attend such in-session language support. The students came from twenty-five different backgrounds, as follows: Arabic (Jordan, Lebanon and Syria) Bengali, Chewa Lomwe, Chinese (both Hong Kong and mainland China), Danish, Farsi, Finnish, German, Greek, Indonesian, Japanese, Kalanga/Setswana (bilingual), Korean, Malay, Malayam, Norwegian, Polish, Spanish, Swedish, Tamil, Thai, and Tswana. Their ages ranged from 20-50. Twenty were undergraduates and thirty were postgraduates. There were approximately equal numbers of males and females.

All students had satisfied individual University Departments that they were sufficiently proficient in English to pursue the degree course for which they had enrolled. They had also taken a placement test; those who fall below the cut off point are "referred"; when a student is referred they are invited to come for an interview, after which the majority are directed to the relevant programme. The sample for this study had all been directed to some type of academic writing programme.

Research Instruments

Writing pedagogy was defined in terms of three variables of choice of text types, choice of instructional methods and choice of aspect of writing performance on which to offer feedback. The selection of text types, instructional methods and aspects on which to offer feedback was based on current practise within the University's in-session language support programmes. Two questionnaires were designed to explore these different aspects of writing pedagogy in the home country. The two questionnaires were identical except that one relates to mother tongue instruction while the other relates to English instruction. Two categories of variable underlay the design of the research instrument: quantitative and qualitative variables; the former are concerned with the type and the amount of writing instruction given; the latter are concerned with students' perception of the instruction which they experienced.

The quantitative dimension concerns each of the three variables: the frequency with which particular text types are practised (e.g. expository essay writing); the frequency with which various methods are employed to teach these text types (e.g. explicit attention to rhetorical strategy); and the frequency with which aspects of writing performance are selected for feedback (e.g. grammatical accuracy).

The qualitative dimension was based on informants' subjective impressions of the relative value or usefulness of each of the variables used to define writing pedagogy. They were asked to rate each of the component parts of these variables on a Likert scale of one to five, according to how useful (as regards text type), how helpful (as regards teaching methods), and how important (as regards feedback) they had found it. In the case of first language instruction they were asked to rate its use according to their perception at the time; however as far as English is concerned, they were requested to bear in mind their need for English in pursuing their current overseas academic studies in a British University. They were also asked to give general impressions of the effectiveness of writing instruction using a binary scale.

It was hoped that by directing questionnaires partly concerning student preferences towards a period of their education which had now ceased, more reliable information could be obtained than would be the case had such questions concerned courses of study in which they were currently involved. This is because students are likely to be more detached in their assessment of completed courses since there would be no danger of anyone involved with them knowing their responses. The disadvantage was that the approach relies on students' being able to recall experiences from an earlier and completed period of their education and the accuracy of such recollections cannot be guaranteed. However, research constraints on a small scale project of this nature meant that it was not possible to collect data directly from twenty-five different countries.

Administration

The questionnaires were administered during the normal one hour of class time just before an end of semester break. This was thought to be a suitable time in which students could be asked to undertake the type of introspective reflection necessary in order to ensure an accurate picture of their previous experience of writing pedagogy. They were asked to spend a period of reflection on how they had learnt to write in English in their home country; they then completed the first questionnaire. They were then asked to reflect on how they had been taught to write in their L1. They then completed the second questionnaire. It was anticipated

that the second questionnaire would be more difficult to recall since many students would have received no mother tongue education for a considerable time prior to their coming to the UK. Where students from the same country were in the group, they were encouraged to discuss their answers to assist recall. They were asked to refrain from responding to any of the questions for which they could no longer recall the information requested.

Results and Discussion

1. Quantity of Instruction

Table one shows the mean scores for questions one to three of the questionnaire which all relate to quantity of instruction.

Table 1: Quantity of Instruction

n=50	First Language (Mean)	English (Mean)
Total teaching time	6 hrs. (100%)	4 hrs (100%)
Focus on writing	2 hrs 12 mins. (37%)	1 hr. 20 mins. (33%)
Explicit writing guidance	0 hrs. 20 mins. (6%)	0 hrs. 17 mins. (7%)

Learners in this study received exactly 50% more total time on instruction in their L1 as compared with English and a slightly larger percentage this time was spent with a focus on L1 writing 1 as compared with writing in English (37% as opposed to 33%). The greater importance placed on L1 writing probably illustrates the fact that it is through the L1 that literacy is learnt. While far more time is allocated in both languages to writing practice, a slightly higher proportion of total teaching time is given over to explicit guidance in English writing. The relatively small amount of time allocated to explicit guidance in either first or second language writing supports the view that "Few young people in other cultures are explicitly taught how to write in school" (Leki 1991:130). It is evident from this that tertiary institutions may need to anticipate compensating for the lack of explicit instruction given to overseas students earlier in their education.

2. Practise and Perception of Selected Text Types

Table two shows the number of respondents who indicated that they had experienced each of the text types identified, and the overall frequency ranking of the text type.

Table 2: Text Type.

n=50	First Language- Rank	English Rank
Descriptive Essays	47 1	37 1
Narrative Essays	45 2	36 2
Expository Essays	44 3	30 4
Personal Letters	39 4	34 3
Business Letters	28 6	26 5
Poems	29 5	13 8
Reports	26 7	21 6
Journals/ Diaries	23 8	09 11
Administrative Letters	19 9	16 7
Proverbs	16 10	10 10
Research Papers	15 11	11 9
Total	331	247

One of the issues raised in contrastive rhetorical studies has been the need for more information on variation between different educational systems in the frequency with which practise is given in writing particular text types: "Another problem arising from the comparison of texts across cultures is related to the frequency of a particular text type in a particular culture" (Leki 1991:128)

The results of this survey show that there is a strong similarity in the frequency with which learners practise particular text types in the L1 and L2 (English) writing classrooms.; for example, the four most commonly practised text types are the same in both the L1 and English. We can see that in both languages a large amount of practice is given in essay writing, and that over half the students also practised writing business and personal letters in both the L1 and the L2. These similarities indicate some support for the belief in contrastive rhetoric that in selecting text types, L2 writing instructors may be influenced by their frequency of use in the L1.

The most noticeable differences between L1 and English text types are in the areas of expressive writing such as poems, journals, diaries and transactional writing such as business and administrative letter writing. In the L1 classroom the expressive types were ranked 5th and 8th respectively as compared with 8th and 11th in the English classroom. Conversely the transactional types were ranked 6th and 9th respectively in the L1 classroom as compared with 5th and 7th in the English writing classroom. This suggests that the domain of self-expression is perceived as a function of the L1, while the L2 is perceived as more orientated towards achieving external transactional goals.

Table three shows the learner preference regarding L1 and L2 text types:

Table 3: Usefulness of Text Type.

n=50	First Language						English					
	1	2	3	4	5	Av	1	2	3	4	5	Av
Descriptive Essays	1	4	6	16	20	4.1	4	2	12	9	10	3.5
Narrative Essays	3	5	5	18	14	3.8	2	5	15	6	8	3.4
Expository Essays	0	4	8	15	17	4.0	0	1	13	6	10	3.8
Personal Letters	0	5	13	10	11	3.7	3	5	6	10	10	3.6
Business Letters	4	4	7	6	7	3.3	3	1	4	8	10	3.8
Poems	6	8	6	5	4	2.8	8	0	2	2	1	2.1
Reports	2	0	5	9	10	4.0	2	1	3	4	11	4.0
Journals/ Diaries	3	0	8	6	6	3.5	1	2	1	2	3	3.4
Administrative Letters	3	2	4	5	5	3.4	2	1	1	3	9	4.0
Proverbs	3	1	4	3	5	3.4	3	1	4	2	0	2.5
Research Papers	3	1	3	1	7	3.5	1	1	2	5	2	3.5

The most significant differences as regards learner preference for text types were that they found learning to write business and administrative letters more useful in English and learning to write descriptive and narrative essays, poems and proverbs more useful in the L1. It is also of interest that the lowest rating for any of the text types in either language was for poetry in English. One possible explanation of this findings is that the majority of students at the University of Surrey are pursuing graduate and post-graduate programmes which have a strong vocational element; this is reflects in the fact over the last three years the university has been in the top three British universities in terms of the number of graduates who have found employment within six months of graduating. While these findings need further research from a larger sample which included students from universities with a less vocational orientation to make general claims for tertiary learners, we can claim that learners in this university perceive English as a language with particular specialised functions. The native language is preferred for maintaining the learners' sense of identity through the expression of personal feelings, beliefs and attitudes while English is preferred for conducting transactions with external domains. Successful EAP teaching in this University will need therefore to identify the particular text types which the learner is likely to require in their selected academic discipline.

3. Instructional Methods and Learner Perception

Table four show the results for the frequency with which particular instructional methods were employed in teaching first and second language writing and their ranking relative to each other.

Table 4: Teaching Method.

n=50	First Language	Rank	English	Rank
Grammar Instruction	39	1	42	1
Writing Plans or Outlines	37	2	19	5=
Reading Model Essays	36	3=	31	2
Discussion with Teacher	36	3=	25	3
Guidance on Organisation	35	5	19	5=
Writing Drafts	27	6	17	11
Memorising Model Essays	25	7	18	9=
Looking at Diagrams	24	8=	19	5=
Thinking about the reader	24	8=	19	5=
Discussion with students	22	10	21	4
Copying	21	11	18	9=
Total	326		248	

There are a number of similarities between the instructional methods used to teach L1 writing and English; for example, there is a concern for grammatical accuracy in both languages. Reading model essays and discussions with the teacher are both highly ranked; these similarities lend further support to contrastive rhetorical claims which interpret textual differences as a function of the transfer of training (Mohan & Lo 1985).

The major differences between the L1 and the English writing classrooms are in the the use of plans or outlines, guidance on organisation and in the use of drafts: all these methods are used more in the L1 writing classroom. This is surprising as it suggests a more process orientated approach in the L1 writing classroom. There is often a tendency to see the L2 writing classroom as providing an opportunity to consolidate grammatical knowledge, and this is at the expense of higher level skills such as writing plans, and drafts and knowledge of organisational and rhetorical patterns. These findings were supported by the results for question eight of the questionnaire which concerned explicit guidance in rhetorical organisation; the percentage of students who received such guidance is shown in table five:

Table 5: Rhetorical Guidance

First Language	English
44%	20%

Clearly, writers in academic contexts need to be orientated towards academic success by learning a particular type of writing. Each academic discipline has its own well-developed schemata for academic discourse and novice writers need to receive instruction in the characteristic generic and organisational structures of their area of subject specialisation. We can see from table six that such an approach would meet with learner approval:

Table 6: Perception of Teaching Method. n=50

	First Language						English					
	1	2	3	4	5	Av	1	2	3	4	5	Av
Grammar	2	8	5	9	15	3.7	1	1	6	14	20	4.2
Plans/ Outlines	0	1	7	14	15	4.2	0	2	1	7	9	4.2
Reading Model Essay	2	0	8	14	12	3.9	0	3	10	9	9	3.8
Discussion w' Teacher	3	1	7	10	15	3.9	0	1	6	7	11	4.1
Organisation	1	0	6	16	12	4.1	0	2	3	8	6	3.9
Writing Drafts	0	1	9	7	10	4.0	0	0	5	6	6	4.1
Memorising Models	0	2	4	9	10	4.1	1	2	2	7	6	3.8
Diagrams	2	3	7	9	3	3.3	1	3	2	9	4	3.6
Thinking of Reader	0	3	7	6	8	3.8	0	3	3	5	8	3.9
Discussion w' Student	2	4	4	3	9	3.6	1	3	7	3	7	3.6
Copying	4	2	9	3	3	3.1	7	3	2	5	1	2.4

While these results indicate that students share the view of their teachers that writing is a means of consolidating grammatical knowledge, this should not be at the expense of the overall organisational skills which may be required to produce well structured, and rhetorically effective, writing. They perceive the use of process approach methods such as writing plans and outlines, writing drafts, and discussions with the teacher, as equally important in both languages. Conversely, more product type approaches such as the use of model essays and copying are perceived as slightly more effective in teaching L1 writing skills. Interestingly, when model based approaches are used in the teaching of English writing, there was a preference for the use of diagrams in English; we can hypothesise that this is because a visual mode of communication reduces the processing load required when there is sole reliance on metalanguage in the conceptualisation of the finished text.

However, what is perhaps most interesting about the results for learner preferences for writing pedagogy is that the same instructional approaches are popular in both languages and that approaches associated with both product oriented teaching (reading model essays) and those associated with process oriented teaching (discussion with the teacher, writing drafts) are equally highly rated. It may therefore be possible to talk of "universals" in developing effective writing pedagogy and the range of pedagogies being developed in the teaching of English writing may work equally well in teaching writing in other languages.

4. Aspects of Feedback and Student Preferences

Table seven shows the results for the aspect of writing on which teacher attention was focused on the provision of feedback:

Table 7: Feedback on Writing. n=50

	First language	Rank	English	Rank
Grammatical Accuracy	40	3	46	1
Vocabulary	41	2	35	3
Organisation	43	1	39	2
Length of Text	36	4	28	4
Handwriting	35	5	26	6=
Style	31	6	27	5
Truth of Content	30	7	26	6=
Originality of Content	22	8	19	8
Total	278		246	

The results on feedback to some extent compliment those on text types; in English writing 92% indicated that they had received feedback on the grammatical accuracy of their writing (as compared with 80% for the L1). However, it is surprising, given that only 38% indicated that they had received guidance in organisation in English writing, that 78% indicated they had received feedback on this area. There appears to be a contradiction between what is done in the English writing classroom and what teachers expect learners to be able to do; alternatively it may be that organisation is perceived by teachers as an area which can only be dealt with effectively in response to learner performance as it may need to be individualised according to their current level.

Table 8: Perception of Feedback on Aspects of Writing. n=50

	First Language	English
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	1	2	3	4	5	Av	1	2	3	4	5	Av
Organisation	1	0	5	12	25	4.4	0	1	3	14	21	4.4
Vocabulary	0	2	4	21	14	4.1	1	2	7	14	11	4.1
Grammar	0	4	6	10	20	4.2	0	0	4	13	29	4.5
Length	0	2	7	18	9	3.9	2	7	5	8	6	3.3
Handwriting	1	5	8	10	11	3.7	5	3	10	4	4	3.0
Style	2	0	8	12	9	3.8	0	4	11	8	4	3.4
Truth of Content	0	0	11	12	7	3.9	4	2	10	5	5	3.3
Originality	0	0	7	7	8	4.0	1	1	5	6	6	3.8

Students showed a preference for the three most common area in which feedback was given in their writing: grammar, vocabulary and organisation. There is no difference between their preference for feedback on organisation and vocabulary in both first and second language writing instruction. Very few learners who had received feedback on organisation vocabulary or grammar gave it less than a 4 or 5 rating. This lends further support to the notion that there are universal aspects of learning to write which are important irrespective of the language in which one is writing. By contrast, feedback on handwriting was preferred on first language writing; this is probably because- as has already been suggested- there are aspects of writing which are concerned with developing literacy skill, and these need be acquired in the L1. Feedback on the truth of the content while was also preferred in the first language and this is probably because it is seen as more appropriate for the expression of personal views and beliefs.

5. Overall Learner Evaluation of Writing Pedagogy

Table nine shows the results for the responses to question nine which concerns learners' overall impressions of the effectiveness of writing pedagogy.

Table 9: Evaluation of Writing Pedagogy

Yes Responses	First Language	English
Effectiveness of Teaching	92%	50%
Difficulty of Writing	54%	82%
Adequacy of Help	62%	40%
Encouraged by Mark	78%	54%
Adequacy of Feedback	50%	34%
Enjoyment of Writing	62%	54%

Clearly the sample found L1 writing pedagogy more effective than L2 writing pedagogy and this is apparently related to the difficulty of L2 writing. Over half the learners did not find that they were given either enough help or adequate feedback on their L2 writing; this was not the case with their L1 writing. These results need to be interpreted against the nature of the sample: these informants were all attending some form of remedial writing classroom, after having been referred to the University's in-sessional support programme, so clearly, the earlier efforts to teach them writing in English had not been entirely successful. A possible reason for this, as indicated above, may be the overt attention given to grammar instruction in the writing classroom. Had it been possible to include in the sample overseas students who were not encountering any difficulty with academic writing the results may well have been different. However it is difficult to access such a group as they tend to merge with the native student population, nevertheless this may be a possible direction for further research.

Conclusion and Suggestions for Further Research

The data for various aspects of first and second language writing pedagogy for this study were taken from a relatively small sample of students, albeit from a wide global spread of educational backgrounds; it would be beneficial to conduct a similar study using a larger data base and to expand the data to include interviews with learners and teachers.

The finding for the first question was that overall differences between first and second language writing pedagogy as defined by text type, instructional method and focus of feedback are not great, and there is strong evidence that similar methods of literacy instruction are used in L1 and L2 writing. This provides strong support in favour of contrastive rhetoric as making a significant contribution to a theory of language learning. The absence of clear guidance in the differences between the organisational features of L1 and L2 texts is likely to lead learners to resort to first language patterns of text organisation and rhetoric; this tendency is likely to be aggravated by the use of the English writing classroom as an opportunity to consolidate grammatical knowledge.

The major recommendation of this study is, therefore, that the amount of guidance given in organisation in English writing should match that given in the L1 writing classroom where 70% of the sample indicated that they had experienced advice in this area. If learners do not receive explicit guidance in the differences between first and second language text organisation, it is of little surprise if they transfer the organisational and rhetorical patterns of their first language writing to their second language texts. It would seem that a precondition of such guidance is that teachers of English writing are aware of text organisation of first language texts and how this differs from English texts with a similar communicative purpose. One future role of contrastive rhetorical studies could be to provide descriptive models of similar text types to those which have a high frequency in English across a range of first languages.

It would seem likely to enhance the development of second language writing competence if we take into account the preferences of learners as regards selection of text types and teaching pedagogy in terms of instruction and feedback. In answer to the second research question, this study has revealed some areas of mismatch between learner preferences and what is currently practised. These differences have been highlighted by identifying text types and instructional methods for which learners show a stronger preference in English as compared with their L1 and leads to the following recommendations:

- 1) Teachers need to ensure that they include functional text types such as business and administrative letters as well as the usual staple diet of essays. This is of especial importance to learners who are expected to go on to overseas study since these texts will have a high practical value.
- 2) Instruction needs to identify the characteristic organisational, and rhetorical features of texts in English as well as their typical lexical and grammatical content. Adequate feedback needs to be provided on these features in order to ensure that learners develop competence in these areas. Practise in expressive writing should only occasionally be given in English, since this is primarily the domain of the first language.
- 3) Instruction should involve both adequate discussion with learners and explicit guidance in writing plans and outlines prior to writing the composition itself. This should be in addition to so-called product focused activities, such as reading model essays, which also are perceived as beneficial in both L1 and L2 writing instruction. Learners who are from the same language background(s) need explicit guidance in differences between first and second language text organisation.

In response to the third research question, we have seen that there is a need to explore similarities as well as differences in how writing is taught across cultures as this can lead to the identification of universals in writing pedagogy; from the evidence presented in this study these would include: writing drafts, reading model essays, and receiving feedback on organisation, vocabulary and grammar. Where particular language learning difficulties are encountered, reference should be made to contrastive rhetoric as a theory of language learning to see if it can provide insights into the possible origins of these difficulties.

Hopefully the methods which have been developed in contrastive rhetorical studies using learners from one or two L1 backgrounds can be developed further - along the lines demonstrated in this study - to incorporate learners from a wide range of backgrounds. In this way the findings of contrastive rhetoric can be of value in both mono- and multilingual educational settings and ensure that there is a smooth transition from the native to the international educational context.

The end
