

A Review of Contrastive Rhetoric

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1. INTRODUCTION

Recently there has been a surge of interest in discourse analysis: the study of linguistic patterning beyond the sentence. Linguists had long been content with analysis at the sentence level. Even the popular generative grammarians of the '60's never attempted to go beyond single sentence. Now, more and more attention is being given to discourse rather than to the isolated sentence.

The study of discourse analysis encompasses multiple disciplines. Rhetoricians, of course, have a long tradition of concern for the construction of persuasive text. Teachers of composition have been particularly interested in setting up models of good passages. Ethnolinguists, when translating newly discovered languages into, say, English, noticed that discourse in one language is very different from that in another. And, finally, linguists began to show interest in the analysis of "text grammar", examining the entire discourse rather than its individual component sentences. Psychologists, particularly cognitive psychologists, are also paying attention to discourse analysis from the point of view of comprehension. By now it has been widely accepted that the study of discourse is very important to the study of language. In the field of applied linguistics, H. G. Widdowson (1979) has noted "a change of focus from the sentence as the basic unit in language to the use of sentences in combination."

In the field of ESL (English as a Second Language), Robert Kaplan proposed the notion of contrastive rhetoric in 1966. He claimed that rhetorical logic, how ideas are arranged in text, is shaped by the culture and the students from different cultures write English in various discourse patterns that are preferred in their own languages. His work aroused much interest among ESL teachers, who have long been vaguely aware that students from other linguistic-cultural backgrounds do write differently even when their proficiency in English reached relatively high. Despite much interest and enthusiasm toward contrastive rhetoric, the method of investigation has not been well established.

In this paper, I explore the meaning of contrastive rhetoric and examine whether the notion of contrastive rhetoric can be explained linguistically in the context of

discourse analysis. Particularly, as an ESL teacher, having taught both in the U.S. and in Japan, I focus on the contrastive rhetoric of English and Japanese prose.

2. CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC

2.1 Robert Kaplan's work

Kaplan examined approximately 600 essays written by students speaking a variety of native languages, all studying English as a second language. These students were grouped into three populations: speakers of Arabic, Oriental, and Romance languages.

Kaplan's tenet was that rhetorical logic, how ideas are arranged in text, is shaped by the culture in which it has developed, and, thus, meets the approval of the society which shapes it. The approval of a society is expressed through preference for certain kinds of discourse patterns and, implicitly, through rejection of other organizational patterns which do not conform to the approved conventions (1966). Kaplan describes the thought patterns of native speakers of English as linear, in contrast with other groups of speakers (1982, p. 2):

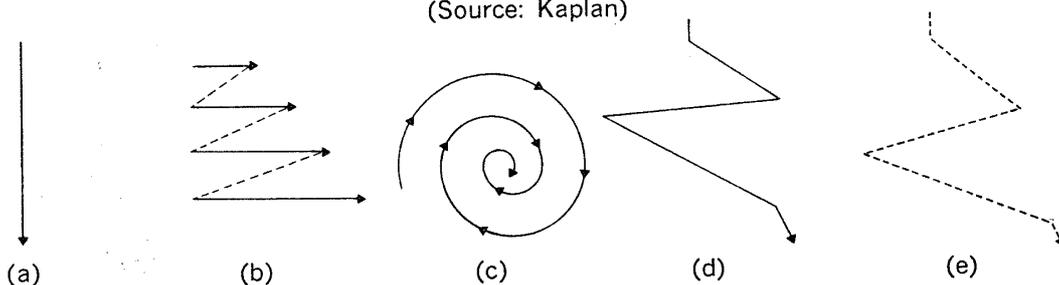
"Linear is defined as a discourse pattern in which the topic occurs at the beginning of the discourse unit and controls its content. Old material, that is the topic itself, is developed through various sorts of modification in the form of new material. The new material then becomes old material, forming a cohesive chain of ideas linked to one another through the old-new relationship. This modification generally takes the form of exemplification, illustration, and restriction, but is not limited to these. Development is limited however, to the topic introduced at the beginning of the discourse. Linearity might be described as a straight narrow band composed of links of ideas—old and new—directly linked to the topic."

In contrast to the linear organization of English prose, Kaplan noted four kinds of discourse structures among 600 compositions he gathered:

- (1) Parallel constructions, with the first idea completed in the second part. (fig. b)
- (2) Circularity, with the topic looked at from different tangents. (fig. c)
- (3) Freedom to digress and to introduce extraneous material. (fig. d)
- (4) Similar to (3), but with different lengths, and parenthetical amplification of subordinate elements. (fig. e)

(Source: Kaplan)

(Source: Kaplan)



Kaplan identifies his discourse types with language types: (1) Semitic, (2) Oriental, (3) Romance, (4) Russian.

2.2 Criticism on Robert Kaplan's work

As impressive and novel as his models are, there are some who have criticized Kaplan's diagrammatic representation as being too impressionistic and lacking well grounded theoretical support. One of these critics is John Hinds (1982), who makes two very important criticisms. First, he suggests that the research method lacked adequate controls; the range of English ability among the subjects was very broad and this was not entirely taken into account. At certain levels of English proficiency, some errors may not be the result of negative transfer from the native language, but rather of either developmental stage errors resulting from interlanguage, or incorrect hypotheses about the language.

Hinds's second general criticism of Kaplan's article is that Kaplan has over-generalized the term 'oriental'. To Kaplan, Oriental languages include Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Cambodian, Laotian, Malaysian, Thai and Vietnamese. Although these countries are all located in the Far East, their typologies differ greatly.

2.3 Some empirical studies on contrastive rhetoric

Despite the shortcomings mentioned above, Kaplan's article attracted a lot of researches. A number of people have undertaken a variety of research on contrastive analysis. While some have questioned the specific patterns attributed to the various culture groups identified by Kaplan, most contrastive research shows that there does appear to be a tendency to transfer the preferred cultural pattern of argument into English.

The following is a list of the results of various studies that I summarized, based on the data originally mentioned in Kaplan and Ostler (1982).

Author (year)	Native Language of Subjects	Impressionistic Descriptions	Discourse Features
Kaplan (1966)	Arabic (Semitic Languages)	series of parallel constructions	*Extensive use of conjunctions and sentence connectors. *Sentences begin with coordinating elements (And, So, But). *Minimum of subordination.
	Oriental	approach by indirection, "turning and turning in	*The construction circles back, returning to the subject and showing it from a variety of tangential

		widening gyre”	views, but never attacks it directly. Ideas are developed in terms of what they are not, rather than what they are. *Lacks the facility of abstraction sufficient for extended definition.
	French	“digression”	*... “I wonder why ...,” leading to a digression that does not contribute specifically to the basic thought of the paragraph.
	Russian	“rhetorical difficulty”	*Short sentences mingled with extremely long sentences.
Santana-Seada (1974)	Spanish		*Longer sentences, fewer sentences per visual paragraph. *Digressive propositions occur with notably greater frequency than among native writers of English. *Greater frequency of coordinate structure in Spanish paragraph (cf: a greater frequency of subordinate in English paragraph).
Berman (n. d.)	Hebrew	seems “clumsy and childish”	*Use of coordination where native speakers of English would use various subordinating structures, such as relative clauses.
Ishiki (1981)	Japanese	“extreme abbreviation”	*Structural ellipsis (as in Haiku) occurs,
Loveday (1980)	Japanese	(1) under-differentiation (2) over-differentiation (3) sociolinguistic	(1) Economy of speech, extreme abbreviation, objective analysis. (2) Concern for status within social hierarchy and avoidance of terms of self references and self address, heavy emphasis on rigid politeness formulas. (3) Reluctance to make negative decisions or firm assertions.
Ostler (n. d.)	English	Latinate	*“English rhetorical style developed in a fashion following the Latinate works of Remus and Bacon, into an efficient, pragmatic linear style.”
	Spanish	Greek rhetoric	*“Spanish adheres to the conven

			tions of Greek rhetoric. The cultural orientation of the native Spanish speaker requires that he express his personal point of view in a flexible, artistic manner."
Koch	Arabic	"a balance, a rhythm, a repetitiousness that produces an archaic feeling."	*"Repetitiousness is part of the rhetorical structure of Modern Standard Arabic, at least in terms of written persuasive argument. Repetition serves not only as a text building device, but also as an important strategy, creating rhetorical presence which the Arabic speaker deems necessary for effective persuasion. The repetition occurs in lexical roots, morphological patterns, the use of conjoined pairs of synonymous terms, syntactic parallelism, and paraphrase."
Ostler (1980)	Arabic		English essays by Saudi Arabian students were analyzed using two quantitative measures: Kellogg Hunt's T-unit and Kaplan's Discourse Bloc. *It was found that English writers used significantly more subordination; the Arabic writers used significantly more coordination. Further, in the Arabic corpus, the dependent clauses in coordinate structures are embellished with adverbial and adjectival modification.
Dehghanpesheh (1972)	Farsi		*"Farsi writers prefer to develop paragraphs using a topic followed by restatement, metaphor, simile or proverb as illustrative devices, in the Arab manner."
Chen (1981)	Chinese		*The study encompassed 200 texts written by native speakers of Chinese taking the Michigan placement test at the college level. 1. Twenty percent of the writers did not take an academic stance

			<p>but became personally involved with their texts ;</p> <p>2. Thirty percent of the essays examined concluded with some type of proverb or formulaic statement on virtue—a phenomenon ascribed to the Chinese cultural assumption that all prose should have moral content ;</p> <p>3. The consistent thematic pattern was one in which the opening idea was stated as contrary to the basic thesis :</p> <p>4. The contrary topic was developed and, subsequently, a second topic was introduced, usually near the end of the essay, in which was revealed the actual opinion of the writer ;</p> <p>5. There was a demonstrable reluctance on the part of most subjects to adopt a stance ; they preferred instead to assume a position of moderation ;</p> <p>6. This reluctance resulted in a characteristic phenomenon : the writer would first say something positive about a topic before making any critical statement—sixty percent of the texts employed this pattern to some degree.</p>
Harder (1979)	Japanese		<p>*The <i>isshindenshin</i>—the notion that people can intuitively understand each other's thoughts—produces several anomalies in English ; the lack of syntactic and semantic parallelism in a string of ideas, the use of complex phrasing which (to the English reader) seems unnecessarily prolix, the occurrence of sentence fragments and of ungrammatical topicalizations. Furthermore, the English linear pattern of organization, with its emphasis on objectivity, on clarity, on logical sequencing and with its insist-</p>

			ence that only ideas centrally relevant to the topic be included, is antithetical to the Japanese pattern of dealing with loosely defined topics in the discussion of which the writer's personality dominates and the organization is expected to reflect the writer's process of thinking as it actually occurred.
Nishimura (n. d.)	Japanese	lack of single central idea frequent use of paragraph openers	*There is no single central idea, but, rather, parts of ideas are scattered throughout the paragraph (Japanese). It is up to the reader to "follow sensitively and intuitively the delicate and significant trend of thinking throughout the whole discourse." *Japanese writers also retain their native cultural preferences for starting paragraphs with formulaic openers. Nishimura compared 157 paragraphs taken from a book by a native English speaking writer with 155 paragraphs taken from a book by a native Japanese speaking writer, writing in English. She found that nine percent of the English writer's paragraphs started with paragraph openers, while in the Japanese-English corpus thirty-one percent of the paragraphs started with such openers.

2.4 Thinking patterning and rhetorical patterning in Western languages

Kaplan claims that rhetorical logic, how ideas are arranged in text, is "shaped by the culture in which it has developed, and thus, meets the approval of the society which shapes it". (1981) Kaplan says that among sociologists and anthropologists the idea that logic per se is a cultural phenomenon has long been held. (p. 399)

Karl Pribram, a psychologist, identifies, in his book *Conflicting Patterns of Thought*, four distinctive "patterns of thinking" characteristic of much of the Western world. (1949)

These four patterns are: (a) Universalistic reasoning, (b) Nominalistic or Hypothetical reasoning, (c) Intuitional organismic reasoning, and (d) Dialectical

reasoning. The characteristics of each pattern of thinking described by Pribram are as follows:

- (a) Universalistic reasoning: reason is created with the power to know the truth with the aid of given general concepts.
- (b) Nominalistic or hypothetical reasoning, which is distrustful of "pure reason", and broad categories (the nominalists regarding abstract concept such as "justice" or "beauty" as only "names", in contrast to the "realists", for whom these are real); here, emphasis is placed on induction and empiricism.
- (c) Intuitional or organismic reasoning, which is giving more attention to intuition than to either inductive or deductive systems "is in a position to ignore some of the basic opposition between nominalism and universalism"; it is "organismic" in stressing the unity or organic relationship of the whole and its parts.
- (d) Dialectical reasoning which resembles "universalistic reasoning" in that it is systemic and deductive, but its system is located in assumed naturally antagonistic forces found in the world rather than "in the mind" of the one who reasons.

Each pattern of thinking is attributed to a different language group by Pribram:

- (a) The universalistic pattern: French, Mediterranean, and largely "Romance languages".
- (b) The nominalistic or hypothetical pattern: Anglo-American (English).
- (c) The intuitional or organismic pattern: Germanic and Slavic languages.
- (d) The dialectical pattern: associated with Marxism (Russian).

It is interesting to note that Pribram does not exemplify his taxonomy with any non-Western languages. It is fair to infer, therefore, that either his typology is not claimed to be applicable to non-Western traditions, or that there is not difference between the Western and non-Western traditions in this respect. However, given the fact that Pribram finds a need to differentiate subpatterns within the Western tradition, it is unlikely that the same typology would hold for such highly diverse and highly developed non-Western traditions of thinking as the Semitic, Chinese, Indian and Japanese, not to speak of the less well-known African traditions.

Whether or not Pribram's observations are correct, interestingly enough, these classifications relate to Kaplan's classifications. Let us review Kaplan's classification of different rhetorical patterns. Among the Western languages Kaplan dealt with English, Romance languages, and Russian and attributed characters to each language as follows:

- * English — linear.
- * Romance languages — freedom to digress and to introduce extraneous material.
- * Russian — similar to Romance languages but with different lengths, and parenthetical amplification of subordinate elements.

Both Kaplan's and Pribram's classifications are, of course, incomplete, but they offer some evidence indicating that when a language differs from another, the way of thinking or rhetoric also differs.

2.5 Conclusion

With only a few empirical studies on contrastive rhetoric in hand, we cannot as yet say that we have established the notion of contrastive rhetoric and the methodology for its investigation. Contrastive rhetoric is a very difficult field of study. As Kaplan and Ostler (1982), in an address to a conference, expressed it,

"There are those in the audience who are interested in the notion but who are somewhat reluctant to get into it because of either the paucity of material or the complexity of the problem."

I feel it is fair to say, on the basis of the information reported so far, that the notion of contrastive rhetoric has indeed been recognized. The difficulty is in discovering *how* we should characterize the rhetorical style of language. Research in contrastive rhetoric will require the development of definitions of the rhetorical patterns of the languages being contrasted, definitions that are theoretically well-grounded and testable.

Kaplan's contribution to the ESL field is twofold: 1) he identified differences in discourse structures, proposing a provocative, if vague, hypothesis, thereby generating empirical studies in contrastive rhetoric, and 2) he made teachers of ESL aware that their students might present various discourse structures that deviate from the norm of English prose, quite apart from the normal developmental errors. For the classroom teacher Kaplan made three suggestions (1982):

1. Make students in the ESL composition classroom aware that rhetorical differences *do* exist across cultures;
2. Teach students the differences between the rhetoric of their own languages and that of English; and finally,
3. Teach students to exploit the structures of English in order to achieve greater reading comprehension and wider acceptability of the texts which they themselves write.

I think these are very good suggestions. ESL teachers, particularly composition teachers, could profit by bearing them in mind, and it is certain that their students would benefit.

3. STRUCTURE OF EXPOSITORY PROSE IN ENGLISH AND JAPANESE

3.1 The structure of expository discourse in English

As I wrote in the earlier section, Kaplan claims it is important to teach the students the differences between the rhetorics of English and that of their own language and to exploit the structure of English. Let us now, then, study the structure of English expository discourse.#

The format of discourse structure in English expository prose has traditionally been set in the pattern designated originally by Alexander Bain (1866). In his book *English Composition and Rhetoric*, Bain made the first systematic formulation of paragraph theory (Rodgers 1965). The six rules Bain set out have been followed ever since. These six rules, summarized by Rodgers (p. 404), are:

1. The bearing of each sentence upon what precedes shall be explicit and unmistakable.
2. Recommended use of parallel structure when several consecutive sentences iterate or illustrate the same idea.
3. A statement of the topic in the opening sentence, unless the sentence was obviously preparatory.
4. Logical ordering of the sentences.
5. Unity: which implies a definite purpose and forbids digressions and irrelevant matter.
6. Proportion: everything should have bulk and prominence according to its importance.

Later writers rephased and made occasional additions, but the core of these "six rules" stands more or less firm. Textbook writers adopt, in one way or another, Bain's rules in expressing suggestions for good writing to students.

Common to all suggestions for good expository writing is the importance of the opening part. For example, Wyoff and Shaw (1969) write,

"Ordinarily, since the purpose of writing is clearness of communication, the first sentence of the paragraph, especially in expository and argumantative writing, should be or contain the topic. Your reader should be told immediately what he is to read about." (p. 163)

Smally and Hunk (1982) advocate,

"Generally, because the topic sentence does introduce, it is a good idea to place it at or near the beginning of the paragraph." (p. 10)

Among various types in English prose, expository prose is thought to best reflect the thinking system of man.

The advice given by Carpenter and Hunter (1981) may serve to summarize the importance of a topic sentence:

“The important thing to remember is that English need to be told the purpose of the writing as soon as they begin to read... Writers have to follow these two customs: 1) state the main ideas clearly and explicitly and 2) state the main ideas at the beginning of the piece they are writing.” (p. 428)

There seems to be a consensus, at least among composition teachers, that in English expository writing one should start the paragraph with a topic sentence that serves to orient the reader.

Although most textbooks on English composition have presented this “received position” on topic sentences, there are some people who question this dogma. One of them is Richard Braddock (1974). He investigated a corpus of 25 complete essays, randomly chosen from among 420 articles published in *The Atlantic*, *Harper's*, *The New Yorker*, *The Reporter* and *The Saturday Review* (January, 1964 through March, 1965), in terms of

- 1) what proportion of the paragraphs contain topic sentences?
- 2) where in the paragraphs do the topic sentences occur?

Braddock found that only 13% of the expository paragraphs of contemporary professional writers begin with a topic sentence. (p. 301)

Braddock's study shows that the sample of contemporary professional writing he gathered did not support the claims of textbook writers about the frequency and location of topic sentences in professional writing. Braddock, however, does not oppose teaching the student to place the topic sentence at the beginning. He says,

“In my opinion, often the writing in the 25 essays would have been clearer and more comfortable to read if the paragraphs had presented more explicit topic sentences.” (p. 301)

We can conclude, therefore, whether or not the actual writing follows this rule, that in English expository and argumentative writing the preferred way to open a discourse is with an explicit statement that should serve as a topic sentence.

3.2 Structure of expository discourse in Japanese

As discussed in the previous section, the opening part of a text has a great bearing on the entire discourse in English expository and argumentative writing. In contrast with this, Japanese expository and argumentative writing presents a very different format.

John Hinds (1981) states the characteristics of Japanese expository prose, from the perspective of English speakers, as follows (p. 27):

1. We anticipate a number of ‘unrelated’ or ‘indirectly related’ comments to appear in

the development of the text.

2. We anticipate a repetition, partial or complete, of thematic statements when Japanese writers return to the baseline theme in order to initiate a new perspective.
3. We anticipate that the 'lead' or theme of the composition may not appear in text initial position with any frequency. In fact, the theme may not appear at all except by implication.

The meaning of Hinds' third point is that the topic sentence, in its conventional form, is not found in Japanese expository prose. Sakuma (1981) says that the concept of "a topic sentence" is not fully recognized in Japanese composition (p.212).

Condon and Yousef (1977) also explored the organizational differences between the two languages; in the Japanese organizational pattern, they noticed the omission of a general statement in one case and the omission of specific points in another case.

We can conclude that the structure of expository discourse in Japanese differs markedly from the English structure.

3.3 Characteristics of English prose written by Japanese students

Since the discourse structures of the two languages differ, when Japanese students write expository prose in English, it presents a style that deviates from English prose style. Kaplan expresses it as "approach by indirection, turning and turning in a widening gyre". B. D. Harder and H. Katz-Harder, who taught English composition in both the U.S. and Japan, state as follows (1982, p. 23):

The larger discourse structure of the Japanese essays written in English... relate to culturally motivated choices. The essay seems disorganized and illogical, filled with nonrelevant material, developed incoherently with statements that remain unsupported. Often the writers personality, instead of explanation and support, dominates the content. The central idea is usually very vague or only loosely connected with the topics in the essay; if it is stated at all, it usually appears in the last sentence, more as an after-thought than the result of the previous discussion.

Both Kaplan's and the Harders' statements are largely based on their impressions and give no concrete account of the differences they mention. For example, what specific aspect of the discourse structure of English essays written by Japanese students caused them to seem "disorganized and illogical" to the Harders? What qualities gave rise to the phrase "developed incoherently"? In linguistics, concrete data should be supplied when describing the nature of discourse, rather than subjective descriptions of phenomena. In the following section, I will show some studies that contributed to clarifying these propositions.

4. EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC BETWEEN JAPANESE AND ENGLISH

4.1 Paragraph segmentation studies

4.1.1. Makino's paragraph study

Makino (1979) used three different types of texts; recipes, medical diagnosis, and cartoon descriptions. For the recipe and medical discourse, he asked subjects to identify acceptable and unacceptable paragraphings from among the suggested paragraphings given at the end of the discourse, and to show the degree of acceptability. He reported that there is a difference as to acceptability of paragraphing between the Japanese and American subjects.

In the third experiment, the subjects were asked to make a story out of four-boxed cartoon strips that had no words. Among the differences between the American and the Japanese story-writing, the most striking difference reported is the opening/introduction part of discourse. Makino says:

"50% of the Americans verbalized I (introduction) in their first paragraph, but only 12% of the Japanese subjects did so." (p. 289)

4.1.2. John Hinds's study on paragraph segmentation

Hinds (1981, a) selected an article from the *Asahi Shinbun's* editorial section. Each sentence was numbered and no paragraph boundaries were indicated. The original Japanese text was given to subjects who were native speakers of Japanese and an English translation of the same material was given to subjects who were native speakers of English. The subjects were asked to circle the number of the sentence which they felt could initiate a new paragraph. Hinds reports that the same material was segmented differently by the speakers of the two languages. He states: "The significance is that there are different organization clues in the respective passages which force the readers to segment the way they did." In particular, he claimed the primary organization clue for the Japanese text is *thematic* and that the organization clues of the English passages are more *syntactically* oriented. That is to say, the Japanese subjects sought the clues for the segmentation in terms of what is being talked about as a topic in a given passage, while the clues for the native speakers of English tended to be syntactic shifts such as from third person subjects to first person subjects, or the use of the pronoun *it* which signals the continuation of a paragraph.

On this work by Hinds I would like to raise the following questions:

(a) Hinds says that the primary organization clue for the Japanese text is thematic and that the organization clues of the English passage are more syntactically oriented. I wonder if the English way of segmentation is always based on these syntactic manifestations only.

(b) I also wonder if the same result would be achieved if the strategy of the experiment is reversed. That is, instead of using Japanese prose as an original, use English prose for the same purpose, and given the original to native speakers of English and the translation to native speakers of Japanese, to see if the same result is obtained. My question is whether the material Hinds used (an article in a Japanese newspaper) was culturally biased: easier for the Japanese subjects to understand and follow the content than was the translation for their English-speaking counterparts.

4.1.3. Mayumi Sakuma's paragraph study

The subjects of Sakuma's study (1981) were high school students and college students in Japan. They were given an article, in Japanese, without paragraph divisions, and were asked to imagine themselves as the author of the article and to

- a. make the beginning of each new paragraph.
- b. underline all clear topic sentences.
- c. explain briefly their reasons for their decisions in *a* and *b*.

The data on the indication of paragraphing and topic sentences were recorded as the percentage of agreement among subjects. Those figures were compared with those that resulted from her earlier study with American subjects. As a result, Sakuma found that there is a great deal of difference among Japanese subjects as to paragraph segmentation and the designation of the topic sentence, while there is apparently little discrepancy in the same areas of English discourse among the American subjects. Sakuma attributes this to the American education, in which "the fixed standards of composition" are imparted to the students.

All the studies reported so far, except for Makino's third experiment, deal only with the strategy of paragraph segmentation. I would like to question the value and reliability of paragraph segmentation for researchers seeking the difference in discourse structure between English and Japanese. In this respect, one may note that the linguist Robert Longacre doesn't think much of paragraph segmentation (1979). He says:

"The paragraph indentations of a given writer are often particularly dictated by eye appeal; that is, it may be deemed inelegant or heavy to go alone too far on a page or a series of pages without an indentation or section break. A writer may, therefore, indent at the beginning of a subparagraph to provide such a break. Conversely a writer may put together several paragraphs as an indentation unit in order to show the unity of a comparatively short embedded discourse."

Thus, it is questionable whether paragraph segmentation throws any light on the perceived conceptual chunking of texts.

4.2 Discourse production studies

4.2.1. Hiroe Kobayashi's study on contrastive rhetoric: American and Japanese students' writing (1983)

While the former studies are only concerned with the paragraph-segmentation of a given text rather than the students' own writing, Kobayashi goes one step further and opens up a new dimension in contrastive rhetoric study. She examines the discourse structure of students' writing in both the languages compared. Her hypothesis, following Kaplan's, is that when writing in English ESL students transfer the rhetorical pattern of their first languages. Therefore, she thinks it is necessary to compare first-language compositions with those written in English.

The specific rhetorical pattern that Kobayashi looks into is the macroorganization principle of "general-to-specific" and its variations. She sets up four possible rhetorical patterns that can be identified in the students' writing: (1) general-to-specific, (2) specific-to-general, (3) general statement in the middle, and (4) omission of a general statement. Kobayashi's hypothesis is that Americans tend to represent ideas from "general to specific", while Japanese commonly arrange ideas from "specific to general". Her study sought the differences in degree in their choice of such patterns.

The sample of Kobayashi's study consisted of 226 students representing four groups: American college students in America, advanced Japanese students of ESL in America; and two groups of Japanese college students in Japan, one majoring in English and the other with a non-English major. Two groups in America and one group in Japan wrote in English, while the fourth group wrote in Japanese.

Four different tasks were performed for the study: (1) picture-eliciting writing (narrative), (2) picture-eliciting writing (expository), (3) free-writing (narrative), and (4) free-writing (expository). Each piece of composition was classified as the presence of a general statement and its location.

The following findings are reported:

(A) Distribution of the three major patterns

(1) General-to-specific (GS)/Specific-to-general (SG)

The American students strongly preferred a GS pattern, while both Japanese groups in Japan (one writing in Japanese and the other, in English) favored its reverse pattern, SG.

The Japanese students in the United States fell into a midposition between the American students and the Japanese in Japan in their choice of both GS and SG patterns.

(2) Omission of a general statement (OM)

Both Japanese groups in Japan had a high tendency to employ an OM pattern in the picture-narrative task.

The Japanese students in Japan, particularly those writing in English, had the highest tendency to employ the OM pattern.

(B) Relationship between patterns and types of tasks

The types of writing tasks affected students' choice of the three rhetorical patterns. In the free-composition type, students had more GS patterns but fewer SG and OM, while they display the opposite tendency in the picture-eliciting type.

Kobayashi's remarks on "general-to-specific" and "specific-to-general" are very interesting. Her observations may be summarized as follows:

General-to-specific	Specific-to-general
The writing tends to have a tight structure because of its exclusion of irrelevant ideas.	The writing tends to have a loose structure because of its inclusion of specifics indirectly related to the general ideas.
The writing tends to have a direct relationship between the general and specific statements.	The writing tends to have a less direct and straightforward relationship between the general and specific statements.
The writing tends to be performance-oriented; that is, the writer seems more conscious of the need to organize his or her ideas for an audience.	The writing tends to be process-oriented because the direction is not restricted by a general statement.

Then Kobayashi makes reference to cultural/rhetorical tradition in order to explain why Americans tend to assume "general-to-specific" while Japanese prefer "specific-to-general". She says that English writing, particularly exposition, "rests upon assumed confrontation between the writer and the reader", while in Japanese writing the writer and the reader are involved in "a mutual, cooperative act of communication."

Moreover, Kobayashi's study demonstrated that the type of writing tasks affected the students' choice of three major patterns, GS, SG, and OM. For the free-composition type of writing, students chose the GS pattern more often than for the picture type; for the latter, they chose SG and OM more frequently.

Kobayashi's study makes it clear that there are language-specific preferences in overall organization patterning. Based on this fact, I examined in more detail the syntactic as well as rhetorical differences between English expository writing and Japanese expository writing.

4.2.2. K. Oi's study on contrastive rhetoric (1986)

I also undertook a discourse production study. The subjects of my research are: 17 American college students writing in English (A-E); 15 Japanese students writing in English (J-E); and 19 Japanese students writing in Japanese (J-J). They were asked to write a short essay on the title; "Do you think all T.V. commercials should be banned totally?"

The hypothesis that I proposed are:

1. Writers from different cultures will employ different rhetorical patterns.
2. Writers from one culture transfer their native rhetorical patterns when writing in a second or foreign language.
3. The transfer of the rhetoric is linguistically measurable.

The data were analyzed on the two levels: the micro-structure and the macro-structure. For the analysis on the micro-structural level, I have chosen to use Halliday and Hasan's cohesive devices (1976). Using the framework presented by Halliday and Hasan to analyze the cohesive devices, English discourse and Japanese discourse are compared with respect to the following categories: (1) reference, (2) substitution, (3) ellipsis, (4) lexical cohesion, and (5) conjunction.

For the macro-structural level analysis, I largely followed Kobayashi's classification of organization patterns. Further, I looked into inner argumentation. I labeled each sentence of the student's writing with either "For", "Against", or "Neutral", depending on the nature of the writer's stance on the proposition, in this case, on the commercial. (For example, a given sentence is in the nature of supporting the commercial, it is labeled as a "For" sentence.) I also termed those compositions consisting with only one category of argumentation (e.g., all sentences are labeled "For") "Pure", while those in which argumentations fluctuate from "For" to "Against" or to "Neutral" (and vice versa) are called "Mixed".

The results obtained in my study and the discussion based on the results can be summarized as follows:

(A) on the micro-level analysis:

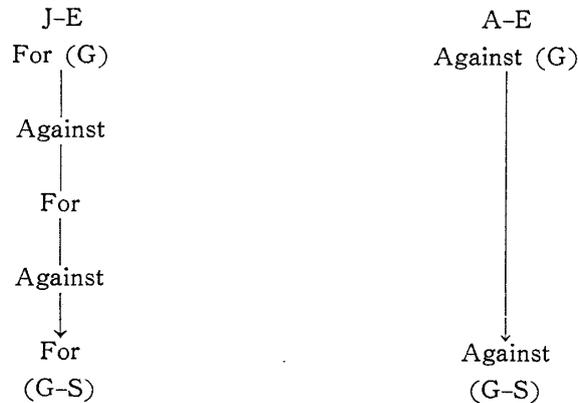
Japanese students writing in English use conjunctions as freely as they would in Japanese. A clear transfer of a native language patterns is discernible here. In the category of lexical cohesion, the use of identical words appears less frequently in American students writing. This is explained by their use of synonyms to avoid repetition of the same words.

(B) on the macro-level analysis:

The results obtained in this study are similar to those of Kobayashi in that the majority of American students took the general-specific pattern, while the majority of the Japanese students writing in Japanese assumed the specific-general pattern. As far as the argumentation is concerned, the ratio of "Pure" argumentation is higher in the American corpus than in the other two groups. The pure-type argumentation is considered an ideal strategy for argumentative prose in the Western rhetorical tradition. This is the style described as "linear" by Kaplan. In contrast with this linear style, the frequent alternation of "For" to "Against" arguments and the presence of neutral statements hinder the flow of argumentation, giving the impression that Kaplan terms "approach by indirection, turning and turning in a widening gyre".

Kobayashi's study deals with over-all organization only. In my study, inner

argumentation was investigated by examining each sentence in detail. For example, in the following two samples, both classified as G-S, the inner argumentations are quite different.



Organization including argumentation may be the hardest area for Japanese students to master in their efforts to conform their English to that of native speakers. However, once the linear style is explained by way of clarifying inner logic, sentence by sentence, students can easily modify their writing. Another characteristic of Japanese writing is the discrepancy between the first part of writing and the conclusion. Most Americans explicitly state their attitude toward the problem as they begin writing. Japanese students, however, usually start with hesitation or neutral statements; they wait until the last part of text to reveal their stance.

To sum up, frequent alternation of argument and lack of an initial general statement as a topic sentence lead to Harder's comment on Japanese students' writing in English: "The essay seems disorganized and illogical, filled with nonrelated material, developed incoherently with statements that remain unsupported. . . . The central idea is usually very vague or only loosely connected with the topics in the essay; if it is stated at all, it usually appears as the last sentence." (1982) I feel that the question of whether the writing is logical or illogical is debatable and that such an evaluative stance leads to simplistic characterizations and misses the underlying cause of the organizational patterning. What is crucial is the difference in writing conventions in the two cultures.

4.2.3. Y. Nishimura's paragraph-reorganization study (1986)

Nishimura took what is considered to be a typically-organized passage of English expository prose and scrambled the sentences of the text. She then asked Japanese students and American students to reorganize these randomized sentences into a coherent passage of expository prose. She also gave the Japanese translation of the text to one Japanese group. She investigated whether there is a difference in a way of organizing a passage between English and Japanese.

The subjects of Nishimura's study are: (1) 158 typical Japanese EFL students

whose majors were other than English language and literature, (2) 128 advanced Japanese EFL students whose majors were English language and literature, and (3) 59 American students of various majors. The Japanese students were divided into two groups; Group J, who took a Japanese version as a test material, and Group E, who took the original English version.

Nishimura found that there is a substantial difference between typical Japanese EFL students and American students in their prose-organization strategies, while there is not much difference between advanced Japanese EFL students and American students. In particular, she put the major difference at the concluding part of the passage. She writes (p. 126):

In-depth analysis of the differences has revealed that the major factor demanding the cross-cultural differences in rhetoric is that attitude toward the ending. Many typical Japanese EFL students tend to avoid making a point in the ending of the prose passage. While such a strategy is considered to be inappropriate in English so that most American students end their passage with a definite conclusion.

It is interesting to note that this finding of hers contradicts with those of earlier studies. In Makino's study, a major difference is attributed to the opening part of text. In Kobayashi's study, as well as mine, a preferred organization pattern of the Japanese students is general-to-specific, where they tend to state their general comment, often as a conclusion, at the end.

5. CONCLUSION

The studies I discussed in this paper are only part of the studies actually undertaken in the field of contrastive rhetoric. There are some important studies I have left out (Connor and McCagg (1983), for instance). Methodologies developed in various studies so far are not necessarily the best and finest and there are some contradicting conclusions. The trend in the studies, nevertheless, is clear now. We all recognize the rhetorical differences beyond individual sentences, in particular, the difference in organization of text among the languages.

The important problem to be solved is to determine what the source and the cause of the rhetorical differences are. It is natural that some portions of differences result from developmental errors as long as we are dealing with ESL/EFL students. Therefore, such comments as "clumsy and childish" observed in the case of Hebrew (see page 4 of this paper) made by Berman are clearly beside the point. We have to focus on the differences that are culturally/linguistically rooted. And we as ESL/EFL teachers, have to identify them and teach students the rhetorical differences between the native languages and the target languages, so that the erroneous negative transfer will be minimized.

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