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Intercultural Studies in the Arab World from a Contrastive Rhetoric Perspective

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Abstract

Writing in a second/foreign language involves more than the use of appropriate vocabulary and accurate grammar. It requires some knowledge about the rhetorical styles bound up with the target culture and its audience's expectations. Different cultures often have very different modes of organization and other conventions of written discourse. Likewise, speakers of different languages have diverse patterns of thought and unique perceptions of the world. For this reason, when relying on their first language writing knowledge, non-native English learners may use rhetorical conventions and textual features that make sense in their native language but they are alien to the English writing tradition. The objectives of this article are to show that contrastive rhetoric can help to provide answers to some of the writing problems faced by students in their second or foreign language. It aims to shed light on the role of contrastive rhetoric in overcoming cultural barriers for Arab ESL/EFL students and the necessity of raising students' target language cultural awareness as well as integrating intercultural differences when teaching second or foreign language writing.

Keywords: contrastive rhetoric, intercultural differences, cultural awareness