

AWEJ Vol.3 No.2 June 2012

pp. 365 – 399

Rhetoric Transfer in L2 Writing: The Role of Second Language Proficiency

Adel Abu Radwan
Department of English,
College of Arts and Social Sciences,
Sultan Qaboos University, Oman

Abstract

Second language writing research has unequivocally demonstrated that a salient feature of L2 writing is the writers' tendency to switch back and forth between their L1 and L2, transferring their respective languages' rhetorical patterns, especially when they struggle with an L2 writing problem (Wang, 2003; Woodall, 2000). Ostler (1987), among others (cf. Thompson & Thomas, 1983; Cowan, 1978), claims that, despite their mastery of English, the L2 writing of Arabic-speaking students consistently exhibits rhetorical patterns peculiar to Arabic written discourse. However, Fakhri (1994) discovered that lack of conformity to English norms in Arabic-speaking students' L2 writing was not the result of transfer from the learners' native language. Rather, "factors such as the subjects' unfamiliarity with acceptable writing techniques ... or purely developmental factors common to all ESL learners may be a more plausible explanation." (p. 84)

The apparent disparity in research findings calls for further research to find out whether transfer could be the source of L2 writing problems among Arabic-speaking writers. Hence, this study has analyzed written text collected from 16 graduate students, divided into three groups. Statistical analyses have revealed significant differences between the intermediate Arabic group, on the one hand, and both the advanced Arabic speaker and the English native speaker groups on the other in frequency of most features. This result suggests that transfer from the native language into the target language during the writing process decreases as the writers' L2 proficiency develops, which casts some doubt on certain assumptions of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis.

Keywords: Rhetoric transfer, proficiency, composition, discourse, contrastive analysis

Introduction

For nearly a century, the role of the native language in the acquisition of a second language has been a highly debated and controversial issue. Most, if not all, theoretical accounts of second language acquisition (SLA), from purely structural to generative theories, assume some role for a learner's first language (L1) in acquiring a second language (L2) (see e.g., Carroll, 2001; Ellis, 2006; Gass & Selinker, 1992; Odlin, 2005). Structural linguistics and behaviorist psychology, for instance, have attributed transfer and learners' overall difficulties in acquiring a foreign language to the differences between the target language (TL) and the native language (NL) and to the learner's inability to acquire those aspects of the TL that are not instantiated in their L1 (Ionin & Montrul, 2010). In early studies, transfer was mainly restricted to ostensible cases of direct carry-over of items or patterns from the native language into the target language (Gass, 1984). However, recent advances in this area have incorporated and referred to a profusion of phenomena as part of a comprehensive account of linguistic transfer.

N. C. Ellis (2006) argues that the linguistic forms which L2 learners fail to adopt or use in their L2 processing do not generally become part of their intake because of one of the associative factors shaped by the learner's L1 such as contingency, cue competition or salience. Similarly, generative approaches to SLA have not ruled out a role for the native language at least in the initial state of second language acquisition (Hawkins, 2001; Whong-Barr, 2006). Within these approaches, many researchers stipulate that the entire initial state in the acquisition of a second language is constrained and defined in whole or in part by the learner's L1 grammar (Full Access/Full Transfer Hypothesis) (see e.g., Hawkins & Chan, 1997; Schachter, 1990). Other researchers have proposed that transfer is mainly restricted to lexical categories (see Vainikka & Young-Scholten, 1996), while a third group assumes an intermediary position, suggesting that all of "L1 grammar is transferred except the value of formal features under functional heads" (Eubank, 1996, cited in Craats, 2002, p. 37).

Contemporary studies of transfer have investigated a wide range of phenomena at almost all linguistic dimensions, focusing on its role in the acquisition of syntax (see Helms-Park, 2001; Mathews & Yip, 2003; White, 2003), morphology (Cenoz, 2001; Koda, 2000; Gabriele, 2009), meaning and lexis (Singleton, 2004; Zimmerman, 2004), phonology (Hancin-Bhatt, 2000; McAllister, Flege & Piske, 2002), and pragmatics (Liu, 2000). These studies and many others have demonstrated that non-native speakers transfer their respective language patterns to make up for their linguistic and sociolinguistic handicap. Recent research has extended crosslinguistic transfer research into the area of L2 reading (Kwon, 2003; Yu, 2004) and L2 writing (DePalma & Ringer, 2011; Pennington & So, 1993). The present paper (a) investigates the role of L1 transfer in L2 writing, focusing on transfer of a number of features thought to be ostensible markers of Arabic rhetorical and stylistic patterns, and (b) examines the relationship between level of L2 proficiency and frequency of transfer in L2 learners' compositions.

Previous Studies

In recent years, crosslinguistic transfer has received increased interest by researchers in the field of L2 writing (see Cumming, 1998; DePalma & Ringer, 2011; James, 2009; Pennington & So, 1993). Research has unequivocally showed that one of the salient features of L2 writing is L2 writers' tendency to switch back and forth between their L1 and L2, especially when they are struggling with a problem when composing in L2 (Berman, 1994; Qi, 1998; Victori, 1999; Wang & Wen, 2002; Wang, 2003; Woodall, 2000). Switching to L2 serves different functions including developing ideas and producing text content, transferring L1 knowledge to the new context, planning writing to assist in text generation, and making evaluations of the texts (Wang, 2003; Woodall, 2000). Similarly, Qi (1998) found that despite being a highly proficient Chinese-English bilingual, the participant in his study switched to her L1 frequently especially when she needed to initiate a thinking episode, facilitate thought development, avoid overloading memory, and verify lexical choices. He claimed that high knowledge demands increased

the participant's switching to her L1, resulting in better performance. These studies suggest that learners, especially those with inadequate proficiency in L2, rely on their L1 to achieve their goals and to solve any problems they encounter when composing in a new language. Thus, a major problem for these learners is how to overcome the negative effects of "transfer, or interference, of their L1 writing conventions in L2 writing" (Kubota, 1998, p. 69).

Related to this area are studies in contrastive rhetoric. Traditional contrastive rhetoric is generally based on the assumption that "rhetorical aspects of each language are unique to each language and culture" (Casanave, 2007, p. 27). Working from this premise, research in this area has examined the differences in rhetorical patterns between various languages (e.g., Connor, 1996; Hinds, 1990; Ostler, 1987) and has focused on the difficulties which L2 learners confront in L2 writing, attributing them to transferring writing conventions of their L1 into their L2 writing. In a study comparing the written narratives of Korean college students and native speakers of English, Kang (2005, p. 259) found that "specifically Korean linguistic strategies were evident in the Korean English learners' English narrative discourse rather than the preferred discourse style of the target language." This was most evident in the transfer of cohesive devices, including "substitution, ellipses, continuative conjunctions, synonyms, and lexical collocations." (p. 274)

In a seminal paper, Kaplan (1966) contends that many students in ESL programs wrote texts which were significantly different from those written by native speakers of English. He noted that the writing problems which L2 learners encounter are not merely a byproduct of structural interference from their native languages; rather, they are a result of transfer of rhetorical strategies and rhetorical patterns from their native cultures. This type of transfer, according to him, results in failure to compose the message in the rhetorical patterns which suit the targeted audience, which may lead to communication failure. He further claims that Arabic speakers, along with speakers from other linguistic

backgrounds, tend to follow rhetoric and thought patterns that are different from those used by English native speakers. In this regard, he contends that Arabic texts are circular (non-linear) and are based on “a complex series of parallel constructions” (p. 6). English rhetoric, on the other hand, is linear and deductive, starting with a topic sentence which is followed by details supporting it in a deductive manner.

Though Kaplan (1987) admits that his earlier argument was too strong, and points out that various rhetorical modes are possible in any language, he maintains that languages usually have certain preferences. Thus, while all forms are possible, they do not have an equal frequency of occurrence. Kaplan adds that native speakers have at their disposal hundreds of mechanisms to convey meaning. For him, these variations are mostly sociolinguistically constrained. Non-native speakers of any language usually do not possess a complete inventory of all possible alternatives, and at the same time do not recognize the constraints on a particular alternative. Thus, the learner’s native language will determine to a large extent the rhetorical choices he makes when writing in English.

Similarly, Ostler (1987, p. 169) contends that "various cultures organize the development of ideas differently when writing expository prose and that the differences persist when speakers of these cultures learn to write in a new language." He further claims that Arabic-speaking students’ writing in English has been shown to be different from the writing of English native speakers. Ostler exaggerates the case and indicates that though Arabic-speaking learners might master English grammatical forms and idioms, they still produce foreign-sounding essays, which ESL teachers can identify Arabic-speaking students' English essays as having been written by Arabs even when these essays are devoid of grammatical errors.

Thompson & Thomas (1983) concur with Ostler and argue that Arabic and English writing systems use different organizational styles. They contend that while Arabic paragraph structure is seen as a series of parallel constructions with parts of sentences

connected by coordinating conjunctions, the “maturity” of English style is measured by the degree of subordination rather than coordination. Cowan (1978, p. 11) makes the same point and argues that while "college English skills require analysis and subordination of thought, Arabic requires synthesis and coordination." Yorkey (1974) explains this phenomenon, indicating that Arabic writing reveals preference to sequencing of events and balancing of thought, which favors coordination. Consequently, ESL teachers usually notice the absence of typical English structures such as participial phrases and adverbial clauses in the writing of Arabic speaking English learners.

While many studies (e.g., Leki, 1991; Purves, 1988; Connor & Kaplan, 1987) point to the existence of rhetorical transfer, several studies have criticized Kaplan’s (see e.g., Ismail, 2010; Kubota, 1998; Mohan and Lo, 1985; Wang, 2003, among others). Raimes (1991) rejected Kaplan's strong hypothesis that language controls thoughts and rhetoric and adopted a weaker version, stating that cultural background affects cognitive processes which, in turn, control rhetorical preferences. Thus, rhetorical preferences exhibited by L2 learners while composing in a foreign language may not necessarily be the result of direct transfer of rhetorical patterns from the native language “but can be due to other cultural dimensions such as L1 literacy practices, writing functions, writing conventions, the frequency and distribution of different writing genres” (Ismail, 2010, p. 26). This has led Liebman (1992) to suggest a new contrastive rhetoric hypothesis which

considers not only contrasts in how people organize texts in different languages, but also other contrasts such as their approach to audiences, their perception of the purposes of writing, the types of writing tasks with which they feel comfortable, the composing processes they have been encouraged to develop, and the role writing plays in their education. Understanding these contrasts will be as helpful to teachers as understanding the textual contrasts other contrastive rhetoricians have noted. (p.142)

On another dimension, Mohan and Lo (1985), who advocate the interlanguage hypothesis, argue that the problems evident in the writing of L2 learners are the usual difficulties of inexperienced writers. They maintain that what is being identified as non-English is merely non-skilled developmental writing, which is indicative of the developmental stages ESL students go through to reach mastery of the target language. Similarly, Wang (2003), who analyzed the writing of eight Chinese-speaking ESL learners with two differing levels of proficiency, showed that L2 proficiency determines to some extent the writer's approaches to composing in L2. This result concurs with the finding of Wang & Wen (2002) who showed that the amount of L1 interference in learners' L2 writing decreased as their L2 proficiency developed. These and many other studies view L2 student writing problems as an indispensable byproduct of their interlanguage development. As L2 students progress towards mastery of the second language, they go through various developmental stages.

As for studies within the Arabic context, Fakhri (1994) examined the English writing of Arabic-speaking learners. He concluded that, except for the frequency of coordination, no evidence of transfer was found in the written compositions of these learners. He further pointed out that lack of conformity to English writing norms in Arabic-speaking L2 writing might not be the result of transfer. Rather, "factors such as the subjects' unfamiliarity with acceptable writing techniques ... or purely developmental factors common to all ESL learners may be a more plausible explanation" (Fakhri, 1994, p. 84). However, Fakhri was cautious not to reject completely the notion of transfer in L2 writing and pointed out two major problems researchers usually fall prey to when exploring crosslinguistic transfer: first, previous research lacks a systematic way of presenting evidence in support of its claims; second, it fails to provide plausible and convincing explanations for these claims, which raises questions about the validity of previous conclusions.

In consonance with these conclusions, Hatim (1997, p. 161) criticizes previous contrastive rhetoric research of Arabic as being “characterized by a general vagueness of thought which stems from overemphasis on the symbol at the expense of meaning.” Moreover, he emphasizes that there is nothing inherent in the linguistic structure of Arabic that necessitates the use of certain structures. Arabic texts are “generally bound up with a host of sociopolitical factors and circumstances, not with Arabic *per se*. It is, therefore, speakers not languages which must be held accountable” (Hatim, 1997, p. 53). Similarly, Connor (2003, p. 504) suggests that differences in writing stems “from multiple sources including L1 national culture, L1 educational background, disciplinary culture, genre characteristics, and mismatched expectations between readers and writers.”

These conflicting and contentious claims suggest a need to devote further attention to the study of the role transfer in L2 writing. Thus, this paper attempts to further explore the issue of rhetorical transfer in the English writing of Arabic-speaking learners and to find out how learners’ level of proficiency in the target language affects the frequency of occurrence of certain L1 rhetorical patterns in their L2 writing. Specifically, the paper investigates the following research questions:

1. Do Arabic texts produced by Arabic native speakers manifest different rhetorical patterns than English texts produced by English native speakers?
2. Are the targeted rhetorical features more present in the English writing of Arabic native speakers than in the writing of English native speakers?
3. Do Arabic written texts produced by Arabic-speaking learners demonstrate different rhetorical patterns from English texts produced by the same learners?

Method

Participants

Sixteen adult graduate students enrolled in three universities in the Washington DC metropolitan area participated in this study. They were divided into three groups: six English native speakers (henceforth, ENS); five advanced L2 English Arabic native speakers (henceforth, ANSA) who received several years of English formal instruction and who were identified as highly proficient non-native speakers of English by their English native-speaking instructors; and five intermediate L2 English Arabic native speakers (henceforth, ANSI) who were undertaking an intensive English writing course as a requirement for admission to a graduate program. The study involved two groups of non-native speakers of English to explore the comparative effects of their L2 proficiency on the rhetorical patterns they used in their L2 writing.

The English non-native participants' length of stay in the USA ranged from 6 months to 2.5 years, and their ages ranged from 26 to 32 years. While students in the advanced group received writing training in English in their respective universities, students in the intermediate group received extensive writing instruction in English in preparation for their course of study. Their instruction involved working on various writing assignments inside and outside the classroom.

Instrument and data collection

The researcher met with each participant individually in a study room equipped with a computer in the library at the participants' respective universities. They were asked to write a two-page single-spaced essay on the following topic '*What do you think are the prospects of the peace process in the Middle East?*' This topic was selected because of its sensitivity and the potential it might have to provoke students' inner sentiments when composing in L2, which in turn might stimulate them to resort to their native language rhetorical patterns to express these inner feelings. The participants were required to write

only two single-spaced pages so that their writing could be quantitatively compared. They were not given any time limits to finish writing the essay in order to avoid putting them under any pressure; however, they were instructed to turn in the first draft of the essay. In addition to the first writing task, two days after its completion, each student in the Arabic groups was asked to write a two-page essay in Arabic on the same topic.

Target of investigation

The following features, which are believed to be typical characteristics of the Arabic writing system (see Sa'adeddin, 1989; Koch, 1983) were investigated in this study: (1) Loose packaging of information reflected in the frequent use of coordination and lack of subordination; (2) Overuse of the definite article "the"; (3) Circularity of organization reflected in repetition of the same ideas and frequency of paraphrasing; (4) High frequency of personal-involvement pronouns and statements.

Regarding the first feature (loose packaging of information reflected in the frequent use of coordination and lack of subordination), consider the following example:

"And the Yemeni minister confirmed that the government will not run any hotels or industrial institutions, and the economy will follow open market strategies. And he confirmed that the government declared yesterday the formation of two committees, and they will carry out the transformation."

(Asharq-Al-Awsat, November 25, 1994; literal translation)

In their analysis of Arabic and English written texts, Mohammed & Omer (2000) claim that Arabic and English differ in their use of conjunctive cohesive devices. While Arabic is predominantly additive, English is basically a subordinative language, using various cohesive markers (e.g., temporal, causative, adversative). Accordingly, Arabic texts usually have a higher incidence of additive conjunctions than non-additive conjunctions.

Mohamed & Omer (2000) attribute this distinction to the fact that the Arabic-speaking community and the English-speaking community are contrasted along several cultural dimensions, one of which is *oralized vs. literate*. This refers to the “amount of oral residue that different cultures allow in written discourse” (p. 47). In this view, Arabic is believed to allow a greater amount of oral residue in its written discourse than English. According to Ong (1982, cited in Mohamed & Omer, 2000: 49), the distinction between oral and literate cultures has serious effects on how human communication in these cultures. First, while in oral cultures propositional development is largely additive, it is predominately subordinative in literate cultures. Second, communication is mainly aggregative in oral cultures, while it is analytic in literate cultures. Thirdly, while communication is largely context-based in oral cultures, it is text-based in literate cultures.

With regard to the second feature (overuse of the definite article ‘the’), consider the following example taken from a proposal for a new doctoral program:

“At their conferences, *the* educators have been calling for reform in *the* areas of curriculum and instruction by adopting *the* modern trends and benefiting from *the* experiences of *the* developed countries.”

Lyons (1999, p. 278) notes that “some languages will require generics to be definite while others do not”. Arabic belongs to the first class of languages, which may explain the extensive use of the definite article ‘the’. On the other hand, English belongs to the other class, which may have serious implications for Arabic speakers learning English (Crompton, 2011). Crompton (2001:7) attributes this problem in the writing of Arab ESL learners to the following factors:

- Differing patterns of definiteness for the nouns in genitive constructions are likely to transfer (Car the teacher)
- In a range of idiomatic uses learners are likely to “reinstate” definite articles

omitted in English (I went to the bed)

- Proper nouns in Arabic often contain the article (He lived in the India).
- Non-ellipsis of articles in compound noun phrases (the salt and the pepper)
- Use of the definite article (obligatory in Arabic) in generic plural noun phrases (The horses are useful animals)
- Use of the definite article for abstract nouns (All men fear the death)
- Use of the definite article for mass nouns (The milk is nutritious to the body).

The third feature (repetition of the same ideas and frequency of paraphrasing) is exhibited in the following excerpt:

Yesterday, we reached the point of deprivation. The Kuwaiti citizen has been deprived of the right to work after retirement, and Kuwait has been deprived of his competence and expertise. Following a careful study, the board of directors of the department of Social Security has decided to deprive any Kuwaiti citizen of the right to work, particularly if he is young, capable, and skilled. (As-Siyasa Daily, May 15, 1984; cited in Sa'adeddin, 1989, p. 39)

This text shows different kinds of repetition including synonymy (*competence/expertise*), exact repetition (*Kuwaiti citizen*), and morphologically related words (*deprive/deprivation*). The use of synonyms or near-synonyms along with formal parallelism creates some type of cohesion in Arabic texts at the propositional level (James, 1983). English, on the other hand, creates cohesion within the text using pronouns, substitution, ellipsis, etc. at the word and clausal levels. Consider the following examples taken from Mohammed & Omer (2000, p. 60):

Arabic: I plunged into deep *sleep*, and during my *sleep*...

English: I plunged into deep *sleep*. During *it*...

Arabic: ...but my *eyes* rose and I met with his *eyes*.

English: ...but my *eyes* rose and I met his.

Sa'adeddin (1989) maintains that this type of repetition, along with the other features explained above, is in reality a reflection of the effects of the long Arabic oral traditions on the Arabic writing system. Mohamed & Omer (2000), on the other hand, attribute the persistence of orality in written Arabic texts to three factors:

the influence of Qur'an, classical Arabic poetry and oratory, the role of oral tradition in the transmission of knowledge, and the literacy policies involved in the teaching of Arabic writing within the Arabic educational system. (p. 4)

As a result of the influence of oral traditions, Arabic written discourse will often reflect such markers of orality as repetition, exaggeration, loose packaging of information, etc. (Sa'adeddin, 1989). In contrast, the influence of oral tradition on the English writing system is rather negligible. Moreover, the educational systems in English-speaking countries have focused on teaching functional aspects of writing as determined by a host of factors including genre type, audience, purpose, etc, which resulted in the manipulation of writing conventions that are different from those used in oral communication (Mohammed & Omer, 2000). Accordingly, English written texts reflect features such as elaborate organization in terms of sentence, paragraph and discourse, and are also characterized by a developed progression and a complicated thematic structure (Sa'adeddin, 1989).

The fourth feature investigated in this study is 'high frequency of personal-involvement pronouns and statements.' According to Chafe (1982), self-involvement expressions are characterized by the high frequency of first person pronouns, emphasis on personal relationships, and the use of evaluative comments. Connor-Linton *et al.* (1987) divide them into different domains: cognitive (believe, know), saying (tell, ask),

affect (love, hate), and perception (see, hear).

Data coding

The collected written English essays produced by the three groups were coded for the presence of the targeted features. The data were coded following these steps: (1) segmenting each essay into 100-word unitsⁱ, and (2) identifying the targeted features in these units using color coding. The following are examples from the data illustrating use of the various features under investigation:

1. *Loose packaging of information*

This feature was investigated at different levels, as shown in the following examples taken from the participants' essays:

a) *Use of conjunction 'and' in sentence-initial position*

And we must not deceive ourselves that they want things other than the fortune of Arabs. (ANSI)

b) *Use of other conjunctions in sentence-initial position*

But I don't feel any great need to spend my life there. (ENS)

c) *Use of clausal coordination*

Many claim the U.S. keeps close ties with Israel in order to enhance the stability of the region, **yet** Israel has never done anything to assist in solving the many regional disputes. (ENS)

d) *Frequency of subordinate constructions*

Although the signing of the peace treaty between the Palestinians and Israel was a momentous occasion, so far no peace seems to be apparent. (ANSA)

2. *Overuse of the definite article "the"*

One group is with the new change and want to enforce **the** peace. (ANSI)

3. *Circularity of organization reflected in frequency of repetition and paraphrasing*

..the political situation hasn't been changed for more than forty years, with the same leaders and with the same regimes. Most of the regimes are the same. They have no right to speak... (ANSI)

4. *High frequency of self-involvement statements*

We cannot believe them; they in the past did not respect the agreements. Now who knows if they respect this time. We love to live in peace with the neighbors. (ANSI)

Results

Differences between Arabic texts and English texts

The first research question attempts to examine whether the Arabic texts produced by Arabic native speakers show similar or different patterns from those utilized by the English native speakers in their English composition. To do this, the Arabic texts produced by the Arabic-speaking participants were compared to the English texts produced by English native speakers for the presence of the targeted features. Table (1) displays the means and standard deviations for each feature by group:

Table 1. *Means, SD* for Arabic texts produced by Arabic native speakers and English texts produced by native speakers

Feature	Arabic Group		English Group	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
conjunction 'and' initially	1.259	.147	.000	.000
other conjunctions	.407	.116	.250	.071
clausal coordination	.769	.096	.375	.048
subordination	.643	.109	.638	.079
use of 'the'	6.508	.810	4.25	.785
repetition	4.04	.219	1.50	.129
self-involvement	1.224	.164	.500	.104

These results were submitted to a *t*-test (Table 2) to find out if there were any significant differences between the two groups with regard to frequency of the various features. Results of the *t*-test showed that, with the exception of subordination ($t = .091, p = .929$), the texts produced by the two groups were significantly different: 'use of the conjunction and initially' ($t = 16.723, p = .000$), 'other conjunctions initially' ($t = 2.447, p = .034$), 'clausal coordination' ($t = 7.593, p = .000$), 'use of the' ($t = 4.592, p = .001$), 'repetition' ($t = .402, p = .000$), and 'self-involvement statements' ($t = 7.938, p = .000$). Thus, these results show that Arabic texts have significantly higher frequency of the investigated features than the English texts. The main question that arises from this finding is how whether native speakers of Arabic carry over these features into their English composition and how proficiency level affects frequency of transfer.

Table 2. Results of t-test for the Arabic and English groups composing in their native languages

	F1*	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7
<i>t</i> -value	16.723	2.447	7.593	.091	4.592	.402	7.938
<i>p</i> -value	.000	.034	.000	.929	.001	.000	.000

*F1 = conjunction and initially; F2= other conjunctions initially; F3= clausal coordination; F4= subordination; F5= 'the'; F6= repetition; F7= self-involvement

Frequency of targeted features and language proficiency

The second research question investigates whether the writings of Arabic native speakers in English display greater frequency of the targeted features than the writings of English native speakers. Table (3) displays frequencies of the mean scores per 100-words for coordination (manifested in 'use of conjunction and initially', 'use of other conjunctions initially', and 'use of clausal coordination') and subordination.

Table 3. Frequency of coordination and subordination in the writing task for all groups

Category	Conjunction 'and' initially		Other conjunctions initially		Clausal coordination		Subordination	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
ENS	.000	.000	.250	.071	.375	.048	.638	.079
ANSA	.063	.031	.063	.015	.563	.079	.813	.090
ANSI	1.325	.189	.063	.018	.750	.101	.875	.076

Note. ENS= English native speakers; ANSA = Arabic native speakers advanced; ANSI =Arabic native speakers intermediate

As displayed in table (3), the ANSI group used the conjunction ‘and’ in sentence-initial position more frequently than all other groups ($M = 1.325$). The ENS group did not use this feature at all ($M = .000$). Moreover, the other Arabic group (ANSA) barely made any use of this feature ($M = .063$). The frequency of occurrence of conjunctions other than ‘and’ sentence-initially shows similarity among the three groups, though the ENS made somewhat more use of this feature than the other groups ($M = .250$). As for clausal coordination, results show that the ANSI group used this feature slightly more than the other groups ($M = .750$), with the ENS group making the least use of this feature in their writing ($M = .375$). With regard to the last feature, contrary to expectation, ENS demonstrated a slightly lower frequency of this feature than the other groups ($M = .638$), with ANSI unexpectedly scoring the highest frequency ($M = .875$).

A Kruskal Wallis test, a nonparametric statistical procedureⁱⁱ was performed on the above results. The results showed significant differences between the three groups in their use of the various features: ‘and’ initially ($p = .003$); ‘other conjunctions initially’ ($p = .007$); ‘clausal coordination’ ($p = .005$), and subordination ($p = .011$). In order to locate the differences between the three groups in the use of the different features, a post-hoc *Scheffé* test was performed on the data. It showed that the ANSI had a higher frequency of ‘and’ in sentence-initial position than all other groups ($p = .000$, for all groups), and there were no significant differences between ANSA and ENS ($p = .838$). The same test was performed on the other features, and it showed that ENS used more ‘other conjunctions initially’ than both Arabic-speaking groups ($p = .000$). As for clausal coordination, results of the *Scheffé* test revealed that ANSI used a higher frequency of this feature than ANSA ($p = .033$) and ENS ($p = .000$). With regard to subordination, the *Scheffé* test showed no significant differences between the two Arabic-speaking groups ($p = .745$) and significant differences between ANSI and ENS ($p = .01$).

With regard to the other features, Table (4) shows the mean scores and standard deviations for the frequencies of ‘the’, ‘repetition’, and ‘self-involvement statements’.

ANSI shows the highest frequency of use of the definite article ‘the’ ($M = 7.50$) followed by ANSA ($M = 5.75$), and ENS ($M = 4.25$). As for repetition, ANSI also showed the highest frequency of use of this feature ($M = 3.75$). ANSA showed the lowest frequency ($M = 1.00$). The self-involvement category showed a pattern consistent with the previous results; ANSI made the greatest use of self-involvement statements ($M = 1.125$). The other three groups demonstrated a comparable behavior with respect to the use of this feature ($M = .650$) for ANSA, and ($M = .500$) for ENS.

Table 4. Frequency of ‘the’ ‘repetition’ and ‘self-involvement’ in the writing task for all groups

Category	Use of ‘the’		Repetition		Self-involvement statements	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
ENS	4.25	.785	1.50	.129	.500	.104
ANSA	5.75	.743	1.00	.129	.560	.045
ANSI	7.50	.522	3.75	.410	1.125	.195

A Kruskal Wallis test was performed on the results. The following results were obtained: there were statistically significant differences between the groups in their use of ‘the’ ($p = .009$), in ‘repetition’ ($p = .003$), and in ‘self-involvement’ ($p = .011$). In order to locate the differences among the three groups in their use of each of these features, a post-hoc *Scheffé* test was performed on the results. It showed that ANSI used ‘the’ more than ANSA ($p = .028$) and more than ENS ($p = .000$). There were no significant differences between ANSA and ENS ($p = .063$). As for ‘repetition’, the *Scheffé* test showed that ANSI used this feature more than the other groups ($p = .000$ for all groups). There were no significant differences between ANSA and ENS ($p = .139$). As for the last feature (self-involvement), the test showed significant differences between ANSI and

ANSA ($p = .000$) and between ANSI and ENS ($p = .000$). There were no significant differences between ANSA and ENS. In summary, the above results show that, apart from use of ‘conjunctions other than and initially’, ANSI used the targeted features significantly more frequently than the other groups. With the exception of ‘and’ in sentence-initial position, there were no significant differences between the three groups. In general, these results show that the participants in the group with lower proficiency level manifested higher use of the targeted features than the other two groups.

Differences between Arabic and English texts produced by Arabic native speakers

The third research question examines whether the English written texts produced by Arabic native speakers were similar to or different from Arabic texts produced by the same speakers with regard to the targeted features. In order to answer this research question, the Arabic texts produced by these participants were compared to the English text produced by them. Table (5) displays the means and *SDs* for the two groups.

Table 5. Frequency of targeted features in the Arabic groups' English and Arabic written texts

Feature	ANSA				ANSI			
	Arabic Text		English Text		Arabic Text		English Text	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Conjunction 'and' initially	1.175	.096	.063	.031	1.343	.149	1.325	.189
Other conjunctions	.402	.128	.063	.015	.412	.121	.063	.018
Clausal coordination	.825	.067	.563	.079	.715	.096	.750	.101
Subordination	.649	.146	.813	.090	.638	.079	.875	.076
Use of 'the'	6.27	.910	5.75	.743	6.75	.740	7.50	.522
Repetition	4.10	.204	1.00	.129	3.978	.246	3.75	.410
Self-involvement	1.273	.169	.560	.045	1.177	.168	1.125	.195

To answer the second research question as to whether the Arabic and English texts produced by Arabic-speaking learners were similar or different, the participants' results for the Arabic texts were submitted to a *t*-test. The test results did not reveal any significant differences between the two Arabic texts produced by the two groups: conjunction 'and' initially ($t = 1.883, p = .109$), other conjunctions initially ($t = .116, p = .911$), clausal coordination ($t = 1.882, p = .109$), subordination ($t = -.135, p = .897$), use of 'the' ($t = .827, p = .440$), repetition ($t = -.783, p = .464$), and self-involvement statements ($t = -.804, p = .452$). Thus, the two groups of learners used the targeted features in a similar pattern in their Arabic texts.

In order to compare between each group's Arabic and English written texts, a paired sample *t*-test was conducted on the results of each group. Except for use of 'other conjunctions initially' ($t = -6.607, p = .007$) and 'use of subordination' ($t = -6.679, p = .007$), the test results for the ANSI group did not show any significant differences between the two types of text produced by the group: conjunction 'and' initially ($t = .322, p = .769$), clausal coordination ($t = -.420, p = .703$), use of 'the' ($t = -1.713, p = .185$), repetition ($t = 1.671, p = .193$), and self-involvement statements ($t = .671, p = .550$); see Table (6) below. These results show that in composing the English texts, the participants in the intermediate group used basically the same rhetorical patterns which they utilized in composing their Arabic texts.

As for the advanced group (ANSA), the results of a paired *t*-test performed on the group's Arabic and English texts showed that, with the exception of subordination ($t = -1.804, p = .169$) and 'use of the' ($t = .742, p = .512$), the group's English texts had a significantly lower frequency of the targeted features than their Arabic texts: conjunction 'and' initially ($t = 20.399, p = .000$), other conjunctions initially ($t = 5.940, p = .01$), clausal coordination ($t = 7.266, p = .005$), repetition ($t = 23.338, p = .000$), and self involvement statements ($t = 6.686, p = .007$). Contrary to the results of ANSI, when composing in English the advanced group produced texts that had significantly fewer instances of the targeted features than in their Arabic texts.

Table 6. Results of *t*-test for the comparison between Arabic and English texts produced by ANSA and ANSI

		F1*	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7
ANSI	<i>t</i> -value	.322	-6.607	-.420	-6.679	-1.713	1.671	.671
	<i>p</i> -value	.769	.007	.703	.007	.185	.193	.550
ANSA	<i>t</i> -value	20.399	5.940	7.266	1.804	.742	23.338	6.686
	<i>p</i> -value	.000	.01	.005	.169	.512	.000	.007

*F1 = conjunction and initially; F2= other conjunctions initially; F3= clausal coordination; F4= subordination; F5= 'the'; F6= repetition; F7= self-involvement

In sum, these results show that while the advanced group (ANSA) was able to reduce the effects of the native language when composing in English, the English texts produced by the intermediate group (ANSI) showed rhetorical patterns similar to those used in Arabic. This result gives further support to the finding obtained in answer to the second research question involving comparison between the English texts produced by the three groups (ANSI, ANSA, ENS).

Discussion

The results presented above show that the English texts produced by the ANSI group were significantly different from those produced by the two other groups in the frequency of five features: conjunction 'and' initially, 'the', 'clausal coordination', 'repetition', and 'self-involvement statements'. The other groups showed, more or less, similar frequencies for almost all features. In sentence-initial position in Arabic, the conjunction 'and' usually does not have the same function as other conjunctions. It is not used as a cohesive device to establish cohesion between different parts of a text. Rather, it is used to help create an emphatic sentence. Unexpectedly, the ENS group demonstrated a significantly higher frequency of 'but, yet, so' in sentence-initial position than the two

Arabic-speaking groups. The apparent non-presence of this feature in the writing of Arabic native speakers might be a result of the unfamiliarity of these learners with how to use these conjunctions in sentence-initial position and their preference, as pointed out by Ostler (1987) and Yorkey (1974), for using them to create balance sentence-medially. This preference is well-evident in the ANSI higher frequency of clausal coordination.

Formal instruction might explain this preference, as EFL/ESL instructors usually focus on conjunctions to create compound sentences, and teaching of complex sentences usually comes at a later stage. Since all learners in the Arabic-speaking groups received several years of formal instruction in English, this type of structural preference is likely to occur. Unexpectedly, the frequency of subordination in the writing of the ANSI group was significantly higher than in that of the English-speaking group. This might again be attributed to the extensive formal instruction in writing, including emphasis on the use of complex sentences, which this group's members were undertaking at the time of the study. Several studies (see e.g., Doughty, 1991; Schmidt, 2001; Radwan, 2005) suggest that awareness of certain grammatical features induced by formal instruction correlates positively with acquisition of these features.

Results for 'the' showed that the ANSI used this feature significantly more than all other groups. The definite article is a common feature in both spoken and written Arabic. Its significance in Arabic can be shown through the following two examples:

1) bint jamila.

girl beautiful (a beautiful girl)

2) al-bint jamila .

the girl beautiful (the girl is beautiful.)

The only distinction between (1) and (2) is the use of 'the'. This difference, however, is very important, since its presence distinguishes between a phrase as in (1) and a full sentence as in (2). The fact that equational sentences (sentences that do not have a verb) are mostly possible because of the use of 'the' might explain its abundance in the writing of the ANSI group compared to non-native speakers of Arabic. The fact that the other Arabic-speaking group used fewer instances of 'the' might again suggest that the students' higher levels of proficiency in English could have helped these learners to use the feature in a manner similar to that of the native-speaking group.

Results obtained for 'repetition' showed a significantly higher frequency of this feature in the writing of the ANSI group than in the writings of the other groups. This might suggest that the level of proficiency in English is a factor which accounts for the high incidence of this feature in students' writing. Moreover, in Arabic, repetition is pragmatically motivated. Speakers think that repetition is a way of making oneself considerably clearer in presenting their argument and of convincing others of one's view. Repetition, according to Johnstone (1987, p. 210), is "a powerful persuasive strategy and an essential cohesive strategy." The higher frequency of this feature is explained by Sa'adeddin's (1989) who states that aurally developed texts such as Arabic ones very often display a higher degree of repetition and redundancy.

With regard to 'self-involvement statements', that ANSI group displayed a higher frequency of this feature than the other groups. High frequency of self-involvement statements in written texts is explained by Chafe (1982) in terms of involvement and detachment. For him, involvement is a technique frequently used in speaking when the communicator does not have enough time available to him to plan his utterances, resulting in a high incidence of first and second person pronouns, emphatic particles, and fuzziness. Sa'adeddin (1998) indicates that Arabic writing typically reflects a high use of this feature to establish solidarity, friendliness, warmth and self-confidence.

In general, the results discussed above show that for most of the features examined in this study, the ANSI group exceeded all groups in using these features. On the other hand, the advanced group's (ANSA) written texts demonstrated a pattern similar to that of the ENS group and different from ANSI for almost all the features. The fact that the ANSA group had fewer instances of the native language writing patterns suggests that their L2 proficiency helped them to overcome any rhetorical differences between their native language and the target language and probably gave them more control over their writing processes. On the other hand, the ANSI's lower proficiency level constrained their access to L2 rhetorical patterns, and thus forced them to switch to their L1 patterns to solve any writing problems they encountered when composing in L2. Moreover, the apparent parallel in this groups' writing between structures such as coordination in their L1 and L2 writing seems to suggest some type of reliance on translating which is a common strategy in language switching. Perl (1979, p. 328) suggests that translation helps L2 learners maintain their "stable composing processes." Translation helps learners to maintain a one-to-one correspondence between the two languages. Thus, switching to L1 patterns seems to be vitally important for "writing their texts with coherence, organization, and topical appropriateness" (Wang, 2003, p. 367).

Conclusions and implications

This study investigated certain features of text organization in English and Arabic to determine whether Arabic native speakers transfer these features into their English writing. Overall, the results show that transfer from the native language into the target language during the writing process decreases as the writers' L2 proficiency develops. For most features, Arabic native speakers with intermediate English proficiency switched more frequently to their L1 rhetorical patterns than writers in Arabic speakers with advanced English proficiency. This suggests that high overall proficiency level, or probably experience in L2 writing, correlates positively with a reduction in levels of rhetorical transfer from L1.

In general, Arabic and English speakers seem to use different organizational patterns and writing styles. Knowledge of these patterns and styles can be very beneficial to Arab students learning English. At the same time, ESL specialists and teachers, particularly those involved in teaching English to Arabic-speaking students, should be familiar with these organizational patterns, for this awareness can potentially lead them to a better understanding of the problems their students encounter. Once rhetorical and organizational differences are pointed out, they should be put to use prescriptively in the classroom. Presenting the findings of contrastive rhetoric in a pedagogical context can lead to enlightenment of learners about their writing in English (Leki, 1991). Awareness of rhetorical patterns thus might have some pedagogical value as it might translate into ability to use this knowledge in actual writing situations.

From a methodological perspective, this study is based on a small number of participants and investigated few features used in one type of text (argumentative). Future research needs to collect data from a larger number of participants and needs to examine a multitude of features in various types of texts: argumentative, persuasive, expository, etc.

About the author

Dr. Radwan received his Doctorate in applied linguistics from Georgetown University in Washington, DC. He worked as an adjunct professor at George Mason University in Virginia, USA. He is currently an assistant professor of Linguistics at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman, where he teaches courses in psycholinguistics, language acquisition, and theoretical linguistics. Dr Radwan's chief interests include psycholinguistics, second language acquisition, attention and awareness in language learning, translation, and contrastive rhetoric.

References

- Berman, R. (1994). Learners' transfer of writing skills between languages. *TESL Canada Journal*, 12, 1, 29–46.
- Carroll, S. (2001). *Input and evidence, The raw material of second language acquisition*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Casanave, C.P. (2007). *Controversies in second language writing*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Cenoz, J. (2001). The effect of linguistic distance, L2 status, and age on cross-linguistic influence in third language acquisition. In J. Cenoz, B. Hufeison, & U. Jessner (eds.), *Crosslinguistic influence in third language acquisition (8-20)*. Tonawanda, NY: Multilingual Matters.
- Chafe, W. (1982). Integration and Involvement in Speaking, Writing, and Oral Literature. In D. Tannen, *Spoken and Written Language: Exploring Orality and Literacy (35-53)*. Norwood: Ablex.
- Connor-Linton, J., Taylor, C., Landolfi, L., & Seki, M. (1987). Soviet and American Expression of personal involvement: Some implications for cross-cultural and cross-gender communication. *Multilingua*, 6, 3, 257-286.
- Connor, U. & Kaplan, R. (eds.) (1987). *Writing Across languages: Analysis of L2 texts*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Connor, U. (1996). *Contrastive rhetoric: Cross-cultural aspects of second-language writing*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Connor, U. (2003). Changing currents in contrastive rhetoric: Implications for teaching and research. In B. Kroll (ed.), *Exploring the dynamics of second language*

- writing* (218-241). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Cowan, J. (1978). Factors influencing Arab and Iranian students in country and in the United States. In G. Althen (ed.), *Students from the Arab World and Iran*. Washington, D.C.: NAFSA.
- Craats, van de (2002). Conservation in the Acquisition of possessive lexical items. *Linguistics in the Netherlands*, 2002, 37-47.
- Crompton, P. (2011). Article errors in the English writing of Advanced L1 Arabic learners: The role of transfer. *Asian EFL Journal. Professional Teaching Articles*, 50, 4-34.
- Cumming, A. (1998) Theoretical perspectives on writing. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 18, 61-78.
- DePalma, M., & Ringer, J. (2011). Toward a theory of adaptive transfer: Expanding disciplinary discussions of “transfer” in second-language writing and composition studies. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 20, 134-147.
- Doughty, C., 1991. Second language instruction does make a difference: evidence from an empirical study of relativization. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 13, 431–469.
- Ellis, N. C. (2006). Selective attention and transfer phenomena in L2 acquisition: Contingency, cue competition, salience, interference, overshadowing, blocking, and perceptual learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 27, 164–194.
- Ellis, R. (2006). Current issues in the teaching of grammar: An SLA perspective. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40, 85-107.
- Eubank, L. (1996). Negation in early German-English interlanguage: More valueless

- features in the L2-initial state. *Second Language Research*, 12, 73–106.
- Fakhri, A. (1994). Text organization and transfer: The case of Arabic ESL learners. *IRAL*, 32,1, 78-86.
- Gabriele, A. (2009). Transfer and transition in the SLA of aspect. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 31, 371-402.
- Gass, S. (1984). A review of interlanguage syntax: Language transfer and language universals. *Language Learning*, 34, 115-132.
- Gass, S., & Selinker, L. (eds.) (1992). *Language Transfer in Language Learning*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Hancin-Bhatt, B. (2000). Optimality in second language phonology: Codas in Thai ESL. *Second Language Research*, 16, 201–232.
- Hatim, B. (1997). *Communication across cultures: Translation theory and contrastive text linguistics*. Exeter, Devon, UK: University of Exeter Press.
- Hawkins, R. (2001). *Second language syntax: A generative introduction*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Hawkins, R., & Chan, Y. C. (1997). The partial availability of Universal Grammar in second language acquisition: The “failed functional features hypothesis.” *Second Language Research*, 13, 187–226.
- Helms-Park, R. (2001). Evidence of lexical transfer in learner syntax: The acquisition of English causatives by speakers of Hindi-Urdu and Vietnamese. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 23, 1, 71-102.
- Hinds, J. (1990). Inductive, deductive, quasi-inductive: Expository writing in Japanese, Korean, Chinese, and Thai. In U. Connor & A. Johns (eds.), *Coherence in*

- writing: Research and pedagogical perspectives* (87-109). Alexandria, VA: TESOL.
- Ionin, T., & Montrul, S. (2010). The Role of L1 Transfer in the Interpretation of Articles with Definite Plurals in L2 English. *Language Learning*, 60, 4, 87-925.
- Ismail, S. (2010). Arabic and English persuasive writing of Arabs from a contrastive rhetoric perspective. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University of Pennsylvania.
- James, C. (1983). *Contrastive analysis*. London: Longman.
- James, M. (2009). "Far" transfer of learning outcomes from an ESL writing course: Can the gap be bridged? *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 18, 2, 69-84.
- Johnstone, B. (1987). An introduction. *Text*, 7, 3, 205-214.
- Kaplan, R. B. (1966). Cultural thought patterns in inter-cultural education. *Language Learning*, 16, 1-20.
- Kaplan, R. B. (1987). Cultural thought patterns revisited. In U. Connor & R. Kaplan (Eds.), *Writing across languages: Analysis of L2 text* (9-21). MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Koch, B. J. (1983). Presentation as proof: The language of Arabic rhetoric. *Anthropological Linguistics*, 25, 1, 47-60.
- Koda, K. (2000). Crosslinguistic variations in L2 morphological awareness. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 21, 297-320.
- Kubota, R. (1998). An investigation of L1-L2 transfer in writing among Japanese university students: Implications for contrastive rhetoric. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 7, 69-100.

- Kwon, J. (2003). *Pragmatic transfer and proficiency in refusals of Korean EFL learners*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Boston University.
- Leki, I. (1991). twenty years of contrastive rhetoric text analysis and writing pedagogies. *TESOL Quarterly*, 12, 25-42.
- Liebman, J. (1992). Toward a new contrastive rhetoric: Differences between Arabic and Japanese rhetorical instruction. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 1, 2, 141-165.
- Liu, S. (2000). Pragmatics. In M. Byram (ed.), *Encyclopedia for language teachers*. London: Routledge.
- Lyons, C. (1999). *Definiteness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Matthews, S., & Yip, V. (2003). Relative clauses in early bilingual development: transfer and universals. In A. Giacalone (ed.), *Typology and Second Language Acquisition* (39-81). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- McAllister, R., Flege, J., & Piske, T. (2002). The influence of L1 on the acquisition of Swedish quantity by native speakers of Spanish, English and Estonian. *Journal of Phonetics*, 30, 229–258.
- Mohamed, A. & Omer, M. (2000). Texture and culture: Cohesion as a marker of rhetorical organization in Arabic and English narrative texts. *RELC Journal*, 31, 2, 45-75.
- Mohan, B. & Lo, W. (1985). Academic writing and Chinese students' transfer and developmental factors. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19, 3, 515-534.
- Odlin, T. (2005). Cross-linguistic influence and conceptual transfer: What are the concepts? *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 25, 3-25.

- Ong, W. (1979). *Literacy and orality in our times: Profession*, 79. New York: Modern Language Association of America.
- Ostler, S. (1987). English in parallels: A comparison of English and Arabic prose. In U. Connor & R. Kaplan (eds.), *Writing across languages: Analysis of L2 text* (169-185). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Pennington, M., & So, S. (1993). Comparing writing process and produce across two languages: A study of 6 Singaporean university student writers. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 2(1), 41-63.
- Perl, S. (1979). The composing process of unskilled college writers. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 13, 4, 317-336.
- Purves, A. (1988). *Writing across languages: Issues in contrastive rhetoric*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Qi, D. (1998). An inquiry into language switching in second language composition processes. *The Canadian Modern Language Journal*, 54, 3, 413-435.
- Raimes, A. (1991). Out of the woods: Emerging traditions in the teaching of writing. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25, 407-430.
- Sa'adeddin, M. (1989). Text development and Arabic-English negative interference. *Applied Linguistics*, 10, 36-51.
- Schachter, J. (1990). On the issue of completeness in second language acquisition. *Second Language Research*, 6 (2), 93-124.
- Schmidt, R. (2001). Attention. In P. Robinson (Ed.), *Cognition and second language instruction* (pp. 3–32). Cambridge University Press, New York.
- Singleton, D. (2004). Lexical transfer: Interlexical or intralexical? In D. Gabrys-Barker

- (Ed.), *Cross-linguistic influence in the second language lexicon*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Thompson-Panos, K., & Thomas-Ruzić, M. (1983). The Least you should know about Arabic: Implications for the ESL writing instructor. *TESOL Quarterly*, 17,4, 609-621.
- Vainikka, A., & Young-Scholten, M. (1996). Gradual development of L2 phrase structure. *Second Language Research*, 12, 7–39.
- Victori, M. (1999). An analysis of writing knowledge in EFL composing: A case study of two effective and two less effective writers. *System*, 27, 537-555.
- Wang, L. (2003). Switching to first language among writers with differing second-language proficiency. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 12, 347-375.
- Wang, W., & Wen, Q. (2002). L1 use in the L2 composing process: An exploratory study of 16 Chinese EFL writers. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 11, 225–246.
- Whong-Barr, M. (2006). What transfers? In S. Unsworth, T. Parodi, A. Sorace, & M. Young-Scholten (eds.), *Paths of development in L1 and L2 acquisition* (187–199). Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Woodall, B. (2000). *Language-switching in second language writing*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Washington, Seattle, WA.
- Yorkey, R. (1974). Practical EFL techniques for teaching Arabic-speaking students. In J. Alatis & R. Crymes (eds.), *The human factor in ESL*. Washington, DC: TESOL.
- Yu, M. (2004). Interlinguistic variation and similarity in second language speech act behavior. *Modern Language Journal*, 88, 102–119.

Zimmerman, R. (2004). Metaphorical transferability. Forthcoming in D. Gabrys-Barker (ed.), *Cross-linguistic influence in the second language lexicon*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

ⁱ Following Fakhri (1994), coding the targeted features in the participants' essays was based on computing the frequency of occurrence of these features per 100 words. A t-unit which is the standardized measurement in such cases was not used because the t-units were not comparable across the different groups.

ⁱⁱ The study used a nonparametric statistical procedure due to the small sample size in order to assess the significance of the difference among the four groups in the use of various features.