

## Thesis Statement in English Argumentative Essays by Arab Students: A Study of Contrastive Rhetoric

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### Abstract

This contrastive rhetoric study follows Petrić's (2005) work and investigates the thesis statement element in English argumentative essays written by eight Saudi students studying at an English language institute in the United States which offers intensive English programs that help students meet the academic programs requirement of language proficiency. The paper compares students' argumentative essays written before and after a workshop on writing. The workshop is given to highlight the cultural differences between English and Arabic argumentative writing. The findings indicate that the texts written after the workshop reflected a greater inclination towards the conventional use of the thesis statement in the English argumentative essays. Additionally, they adhered to one option from the two given in the prompt. The paper concludes by arguing for the importance of addressing the cultural differences in the writing classroom.

**Keywords:** Arabic rhetoric; Contrastive rhetoric; ESL writing; Writing instruction