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Intercultural Rhetoric Pedagogical Considerations: L1 Teaching Methodologies' Impact On L2 Competency

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Abstract

Situated within the Intercultural Rhetoric (IR) framework (Connor, 2004; 2011), which departs from Contrastive Rhetoric (CR) (Kaplan, 1966; 1976), this study investigates the consequences of Arabic language policies and planning on Arab students' English academic literacy. The study uses text linguistic analysis of Arab students' native Arabic papers and their English academic papers to explore the transfer of the Arabic language instruction practices into ESL written texts. Applying Halliday and Hassan (1976), Gutwinsky (1976), Enkvist (1973), and Huddleston and Pullum's (2002) syntactic principles, the analysis involves a three-way comparison of surface linguistic features (syntactic relations and cohesive devices) in a corpus of Arab students and English-speaking students' papers. Furthermore, the Arabic and English-speaking students completed surveys about the skills emphasized in their L1 classrooms. It is believed that, due to the education policies that emphasize the teaching of a classical, unspoken Arabic variety, and the methods of writing instruction of this variety, Arab students do not learn how to construct academic texts in L1. Therefore, they face a daunting task in learning English academic literacy and they, consequently, write English texts that are similar to spoken English. The results of the analysis show that the Arabic speaking and English-speaking students' texts exhibit differences at the rhetorical level. The characteristics of the ESL texts are similar to Arabic native texts which suggest a transfer of L1 *learned* writing methods into L2 texts. The findings from the linguistic analysis and the data obtained from the surveys are discussed with reference to Arabic teaching methodology, language planning, and learning experience transfer.

Keywords: Intercultural rhetoric; Arabic pedagogy; diglossia; learning experience transfer; ESL