Introduction

This paper examines the brief history of studies of contrastive rhetoric in ESL/EFL writing and the implications of these findings/results for the current teaching of English writing classes in Japan as an EFL setting. The review starts with Kaplan (1966), who introduced this field of study, and explores his influence on other researchers, teachers, and learners of both English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

The research literature review will include main researchers who have been influential in the field of contrastive rhetoric with reference to contrast between the English and Japanese languages: Kaplan, Hinds, Kobayashi, Oi and Kamimura, Kubota, and Connor, among others. The contrast between other languages such as Arabic and English (Ostler, 1987; Yorkey, 1977; Kaplan, 1966; all in Weigle, 2002), Chinese and English (Matalene, 1985; in Weigle, 2002), Spanish and English (Collado, 1981; in Weigle, 2002), and Finnish and English (Mauranen, 1991; in Connor, 2003) will not be dealt with in this paper. Those contrastive rhetoric studies regarding other languages will be investigated in a further study. It is appropriate to mention briefly that studies such as Hinds’ dealt with essays between English and Korean, English and Chinese, and English and Thai, in addition to English and Japanese, and provided different patterns of rhetoric for each language.

It is the belief of this writer that an active awareness of contrastive rhetoric will improve one’s “persuasive writing” skill in English essay composition, a view derived from findings obtained in the author’s previous research (Nishi, 2004). One finding in particular shows a tendency on the part of Japanese L2 learners of English to maintain his or her L1 thought pattern in English writing, also found in the original study conducted by Kamimura and Oi (1996).
Kaplan’s study: the first researcher in the field

Kaplan (1966) introduced the concept of contrastive rhetoric after examining the essays of approximately 600 students in an ESL setting. The students’ L1 background differed in many ways; however, they were all studying English in the United States. Based on the patterns observed in the collected essays, Kaplan created diagrams of rhetorical patterns as follows: Native speakers of English tend to write with linear logical progression from the beginning to the end of an essay; Asians tend to write in a circular, recursive logical progression, whereas speakers of Semitic, Romance, and Russian languages were found to write in multi-iterative, back-and-forth progression (Kaplan, 1966). His diagrams were inspired by popular theories of Contrastive Analysis in Linguistics at the time. (Connor, 2004; Casanave, 2004).

If a student comes from a L1 culture different from L2 (the target language), he or she will tend to have different expectations of writing in the L2. Furthermore, these patterns of writing may not match the expectations within the intended discourse community. Therefore, if the student does not understand what is expected in the L2 writing, readers may have difficulty in interpreting these essays.

Ultimately, the diagrams were criticized at the time as too simplistic, and for having ignored several genres of writing. Even Kaplan himself modified his original work of the cultural patterns into “preferential tendencies” (Kaplan, 1982, 1983, 1988).

Kaplan (1987) contends that “although all kinds of rhetorical modes are possible in any written language, each language has certain preferences.” He also points out that “since a text is a complex structure involving syntactic, semantic, and discoursal features (including cohesion and coherence, schematic structure, audience, and the sociolinguistic functions of a given text), CR does not and cannot ignore the composing process. A new direction for CR research is thus suggested.” (Kaplan, 1988; in Mok, 1993) Researchers observe “investigations of both the political and historical contexts of writing, and the socio-psychological, interactive properties of texts.” (Mok, 1993: 152) In writing, “purpose, task, topic, and audience are all culturally informed.” (Carrell, 1984; Hinds, 1987; in Mok, 1993) The above statements stress the importance of educating students to be aware of these significant elements, found within the culture of English-speaking readers: Clear statement of what the purpose of the writing is, what type of task is to be given, and who will be the audience of the writing.

Connor (2002) explained that “all groups engage in a variety of types of writing, where pre-
Contrastive Rhetoric and its Recent Studies: Implications for the Current Teaching of English Writing at Universities in Japan

ferred patterns of writing are genre dependent." (Connor, 2002: 497).

Kaplan (in Connor, 1996) “reasserted that contrastive rhetoric was not meant as a teaching pedagogy but as a knowledge and awareness about differences in writing patterns across cultures.” (Connor, 1996: 166). Connor (1996) contends that this knowledge is important for writing-course ESL teachers in North America to maintain their ESL students’ awareness of the following: “English-speaking readers are convinced by facts, statistics, and illustrations in arguments; they move from generalizations to specific examples and expect explicit links between main topics and subtopics; and they value originality.” (Connor, 1996: 167). Connor (1996) also pointed out that the "Lack of awareness of such cross-cultural differences in text characteristics and reader expectations is believed to be the main cause preventing non-native writers’ successes in the international community." (Connor, 1996: 169).

Leki also states that “In the case of EFL writing teachers dealing with groups of EFL students from a single native language and educational background, the benefits of contrastive rhetorical analyses are perhaps more obvious, particularly if the students have consciously learned contrasting text forms in their native languages.” (Leki, 1991: 137).

Raimes (1991) further supports these conclusions by saying, “Rather than abstracting a principle of the ‘linear’ development of English prose (Kaplan, 1966) as a pedagogic principle, contrastive rhetoric is more useful as a consciousness-raising device for students; teachers can discuss what they have observed about texts in different cultures and have students discover whether research findings hold true in their experience of their L1 texts.”

The author believes that these apply to EFL teachers in other countries as well, in terms of understanding the expectations of readers of persuasive writing. Additionally, to avoid confusion and misunderstanding, the author insists that students should properly learn the prior expectations for L2 written discourse.

**Hinds’s study: contrast between English and Japanese**

Hinds (1990) points out that “deductive writing contributes directly to the overall coherence of the composition.” He also asserts that languages such as Japanese are “more commonly claimed to exhibit an inductive style, although the deductive style is also possible.” (Kobayashi, 1984). He compared newspaper editorials between Japanese and English and discovered that Japanese articles are more inclined to exhibit a “specific to general” progression; English writings
contrastingly evidence a more "general to specific" progression. Hinds performed research based on Kobayashi’s study of 1984 concerning the comparison of Japanese writing versus English writing, in which she characterized English writing as starting with generalities and moving towards specifics. (Hinds, 1990). This is why professional translators of Japanese and English recognize the necessity to reorganize the information written in the original essay. (Hinds, 1990). In his study, one translation of a Japanese article into English has a significant reorganization in the sentence development: it starts with a clear statement of purpose followed by sentences that develop or expand on this statement of purpose. In the original Japanese article, comparatively, readers must wait until the last paragraph for the statement of purpose. Without the relocation of the points in the paragraphs, English readers will not be able to understand the context of discourse until the very end of the article (Hinds, 1990). L1 Japanese readers, on the other hand, already understand the cultural expectations of Japanese writing.

Furthermore, in the same research, Hinds (1990) investigated expository writing in Korean, Chinese, and Thai, in addition to Japanese. He studied inductive, deductive, and quasi-deductive writing, and found a common style among the four languages: “delayed introduction of purpose.” (Hinds, 1990: 98). This was subsequently demonstrated to have the “undesirable effect of making the essay appear incoherent to the English-speaking reader, although the style does not have this effect on the native reader.” (Hinds, 1990: 98). Therefore, readers of Korean, Chinese, Thai, and Japanese will not have many problems in reading the inductive style of essays; however, English-speaking readers will contrastingly expect that essay organization will be written deductively. (Hinds, 1990: 99).

Hinds also categorized English as a “writer-responsible language” and Japanese as a “reader-responsible language.” (Hinds, 1987). Hinds claimed that there are cross-cultural differences in the roles of the writer and reader (Hinds, 1987; in Mok, 1993). According to his classification, English writing should explicitly explain the writer’s viewpoints; Japanese writing, however, is not required to clarify the author’s views. (Hinds, 1987: Mok, 1993: 155). Hinds (1987) presents the reasons as these: “English writers’ great concern for clarity can be traced back to the emphasis on literacy in classical Greece and post-reformation England,” while “the Japanese are oriented to shared social purposes and value indirectness and nuances.” (Hinds, 1987; in Mok, 1993: 155).
Connor’s study: contrast between Finnish and English

Connor (2004) describes the appearance of several new trends in the field of contrastive rhetoric: “an expansion of genres under consideration and a move to emphasize contexts of writing.” She recognizes that ESL and EFL classes now teach other types of writing in addition to the mandatory student essay, such as “the academic research article, research report, and grant proposal,” as well as professional writing styles such as business (Connor, 2004). In her study of a grant proposal to the EU by Finnish scientists, rhetorical differences were seen between the Finnish scientists’ original proposal in Finnish and the proposal written by a Finnish-American speaker of English (Connor, 2004). In English writing, “Readers’ expectations determine what is perceived as coherent, straight-forward writing.” (Connor, 2002: 497). “Teachers of English and others, such as consultants in grant proposal writing, need to educate students or clients about readers’ expectations.” (Connor, 2002: 505).

As is explained in Connor (2002: 505), in the current application of contrastive rhetoric, “cultural differences need to be explicitly taught in order to acculturate EFL writers to the target discourse community.” Additionally, Reid (1993) observes that the “style in which each culture organizes and presents written material reflects the preferences of that particular culture.” (Reid, 1993: 61). Reid also draws attention to the fact that various studies have confirmed that “many ESL writers do use different first language rhetorical patterns when writing English.” (Reid, 1993: 61). Further, she illustrates that “the differences among rhetorical patterns do not represent differences in cognitive ability but rather differences in cognitive style,” (Reid, 1993: 62) of which the author agrees. Mok (1993) also warns that “some CR researchers easily fall into a monolithic idealism in criticizing other rhetorics.” (Mok, 1993: 156). One should be careful when teaching students writing by using contrastive rhetoric to emphasize that this concept does not advocate the superiority of English rhetorical style, but rather that each language has a unique rhetorical pattern that suits the culture of its discourse community.

In reference to this issue of possible biases, Mok (1993) questioned “the validity of the use of English rhetorical standards (British or American) to evaluate English writings of non-native writers for non-native readers.” (Mok, 1993: 156). Indeed, it is unfortunate that “the issue of what rhetorical framework to use for writing in English as an international medium has not attracted much attention from CR researchers.” Further discussion regarding the issue of validity should be addressed in future research of contrastive rhetoric.
Connor (2004b) in her lecture proposed changing the name of Contrastive Rhetoric to Intercultural Rhetoric. Additionally, Connor (2004a) suggested that we have “a set of new methods for intercultural rhetoric research that is context-sensitive and, in many instances, goes beyond mere text analysis.” Connor specifically suggests varying approaches among text analysis, genre analysis, corpus analysis, and ethnographical analysis. (Connor, 2004a) This means the field of intercultural rhetoric has changed “from the study of student essays to the study of writing in many disciplines and genres.” (Connor, 2004a). With this change, Connor considers that directions for future intercultural rhetoric research “will be faithful to the rigorous empirical principles of the area of study but still consistent with postmodern views of culture and discourse.” (Connor, 2004a: 293). This counters the negative opinions provided by other researchers.

Kobayashi’s study: contrast between Japanese and English

Kobayashi (1984) performed a study that compared American and Japanese students’ use of general statements in essays (in Connor 1996). She obtained a total of 678 writing samples from four groups of students. These groups were comprised of U.S. college students, Japanese advanced ESL students in the U.S., and college students in Japan who were English majors and non-English majors. (Kobayashi, 1984). “Each student wrote three compositions involving narration and exposition. The first three groups wrote in English, whereas the non-English-major Japanese students in Japan wrote in Japanese.” (Kobayashi, 1984 in Connor, 1996).

The results were different among the groups. U.S. students “favored the general-to-specific pattern, placing the general statement at the beginning. Japanese students writing in Japanese favored the specific-to-general pattern, placing the general statement at the end. The two Japanese groups writing in English differed from each other: the Japanese students in the U.S. wrote more like the U.S. students,” while, “the Japanese students in Japan wrote more like the non-English-major Japanese students in Japan.” (Kobayashi, 1984 in Connor, 1996). Kobayashi (1984) added further clarification, observing that “the differences among the four groups are not absolute but rather a matter of degree.” However, Kobayashi maintains that “They do suggest (1) the existence of cultural preferences for certain rhetorical patterns, and (2) a tendency for Japanese ESL learners to use first language patterns when writing in English.” (Kobayashi, 1984). Thus, Kobayashi’s study can be considered as one supporting the tenets of Contrastive Rhetoric.
Oishi and Kamimura's study: contrast between Japanese and English

Kamimura and Oi reported that differences exist in the manner of argumentative essay writing between two groups, American students and Japanese Students (Kamimura and Oi, 1996 in Nishi, 2004). In the study, the students wrote an argumentative essay citing their opinions for or against Capital punishment. They discovered that a specific organizational unit, defined as “Reservation,” often appeared in the writing of the Japanese students. Kamimura and Oi (1996) stated that ‘Reservation’ refers to “the sentences in which the writer recognizes that Capital punishment is a controversial issue and shows his/her understanding to the counter opinion to his/hers” as well as the student’s original opinion. They considered this phenomenon as “the Japanese writing that gives the impression of circularity, as Kaplan terms.” (Kamimura & Oi, 1996; in Nishi, 2004). In their other studies of writing, they also have shown results that support contrastive rhetoric theory. (Kamimura & Oi, 1994; Oi & Kamimura, 1995).

Kubota's study: contrast between Japanese and English (Negative viewpoints)

There have been concerns and negative views towards the expressive teaching of L2 rhetorical patterns. Mohan and Lo (1985) take this position “when they suggest that problems of Chinese students writing in English do not result from the influence of Chinese rhetorical patterns but are the usual difficulties of inexperienced writers.” (Mohan & Lo, 1985; in Leki, 1991).

Leki (1991) cites several objections, in particular that “writing, for most school children, is nearly always school sponsored and inevitable, therefore, reflects the culture of the school system and reproduces culturally preferred discourse styles.” In other words, because the school system is itself located inside in its own culture, its assumptions within this culture are different from those of other cultures.

Land and Whitley (1989) found that “non-native speaker readers could accommodate more kinds of rhetorical patterns than could native-speaker readers.” (Linda & Whitley, 1989; in Raimes, 1991). They further claim that “we need to recognize, value, and foster the alternative rhetoric that the ESL student brings to our language.” (in Raimes, 1991).

Casanave (2004) criticized that “the discussion in this work tends to avoid the difficult philosophical and ideological questions.” (Casanave, 2004: 30). She elaborates that in L2 educational
settings, teachers are "perhaps more interested in these structural aspects of our students' writing than in the intractable speculations about the connections among language, culture, mind, and reality." (Casanave, 2004: 30). Casanave additionally cautioned, by quoting Kubota, stating "Kubota urges teachers to be cautious in constructing and reinforcing the notion of cultural uniqueness." (Kubota, 1998; in Casanave, 2004: 45)

Atkinson (1999) observed that "culture has not yet been adequately theorized in CR specifically or EAP or applied linguistics more generally." (Atkinson, 1999; in Atkinson, 2004). He also mentioned that “CR has had a strongly product-oriented, structuralist bias.” (Atkinson, 2004: 285). Atkinson insists that “we need to refocus our vision on the processes that produce the products, rather than looking solely at the products themselves,” a point in which the author agrees with. (Atkinson, 2004: 284).

Raimes (1998) further criticized that “contrastive studies tend to lead to a normative, essentializing stance” and “to cultural stereotypes and a reductive perspective about students, learning, and teaching.” (Raimes, 1998: 143).

Kubota and Lehner (2004) critiqued that “traditional contrastive rhetoric has perpetuated static binaries between English and other languages and viewed students as culturally lacking.” (Kubota & Lehner, 2004: 7). They further point out that “such frameworks seek to critically understand politics of cultural difference and explore situated pedagogy that challenges essentialism.” (Kubota & Lehner, 2004). Instead, Kubota and Lehner propose “alternative conceptual foundations for critical contrastive rhetoric that incorporate key concepts drawn from post-modernism, post-structuralism, post-colonialism, and critical pedagogy.” (Kubota & Lehner, 2004: 9)

Kubota (1992) found in her study that “the Japanese students indeed tended to place the main idea at the end of paragraphs (i.e., Hinds's inductive style), but when asked to evaluate styles, they claimed to prefer the deductive style.” This is a differing perspective, compared to the studies by Kaplan, Kamimura and Oi, or Connor. Kubota (1992) asserts that a Japanese text can indeed be described as logical, analytical, direct, and succinct; and it can even express the main point at the beginning. “Clearly, the issue is complex.” (Connor, 1996).

Conclusion

Although there are some negative views towards contrastive rhetoric such as Kubota’s stud-
ies, many positive studies such as those of Kaplan, Connor, Kobayashi, and Oi and Kamimura support the idea of using contrastive rhetoric. The second language writing field within contrastive rhetoric provides versatile material for studies among researchers, by contrasting two languages: L1 (a language other than English) and L2 (English). In order to make contrastive rhetoric more persuasive approach, we should investigate the standard rhetoric for international English.

Based on these studies, it may be concluded that there is a strong tendency among learners of English as a second or foreign language to have influences on their English writing essays transferred from their first language. The important areas of difference are: How the idea of the author is developed; what type of organization is used; and how the logic progresses through the essay. In order to write an essay easily understood among readers, the writer should be aware of the differences between English writing and that of their first language. Paying attention to the different forms of rhetoric is a key factor in improving as a writer of English, and being accepted among English readers. As teachers of English, we should be well aware of the affects of rhetoric in teaching of English writing skills, and form consistent strategies for the education of Japanese college students.

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