

【資料】

Fostering Voice and Rhetoric in L2 Writing

Annie Semmelroth

第二言語でのライティングにおけるヴォイスとレトリックの養成

Annie Semmelroth

Abstract

Developing academic writing skills can be challenging for all students regardless of linguistic or cultural background. Students with distinct linguistic and cultural dispositions face significant rhetorical barriers to overcome for successful study. When teaching second language (L2) students important concepts of English for academic purposes (EAP), it is important to be sensitive to cultural differences and their connection to written discourse. Students confronted with re-orienting themselves to new academic principals can easily feel lost in terms of using “voice” in written discourse and following unfamiliar standards of rhetoric. There are principals and methods teachers should keep in mind when approaching academic discourse for L2 students in order to aid the acclimation to new education principals. Due to the dramatic cultural transition some students must overcome, prolonged EAP studies focusing on rhetoric and voice are necessary for long term academic success.

Historical Influence

Cross cultural differences of voice and rhetoric are reflections of learned behavior and educational values. Educational values vary from country to country and are certainly varied between Western and Eastern countries. By way of example, cross-cultural differences between Eastern educational systems and Western educational systems should be examined. When considering the cross-cultural struggles Eastern students may face with written English discourse, it is important to recognize the different educational values and backgrounds the students bring to the class. Historically, Eastern countries such as China, Japan and Korea have been influenced by Confucius, an exemplar who valued essential pragmatic acquisition of essential knowledge and behavioral reform (Tweed and Lehman, 2002). Teaching tactics involving disciplined study habits, rote learning, lock-step teaching and memorization are outcomes to these values. On the other hand, Western education has been greatly influenced by Socrates, an exemplar who valued the questioning of widely accepted knowledge and believed that the learning process began with doubt (Tweed & Lehman, 2002). These values are well connected to the

Western values of student participation and critical thinking. Written academic work in the Western world needs to be more than simply rehashing information. The writer needs to reflect a level of critical thinking in his/her written discourse; a developed study habit Western raised students often take for granted. Utilizing critical/analytical thinking skills are commonly expected in English university level discourse. Students raised under Confucian influenced education systems are likely to experience learning and communication dislocations and be culturally disadvantaged when confronted by a system which rewards assertive and highly verbal students (Holmes, 2004, p. 296). These are issues that EAP educators should be aware of when approaching classrooms with students from culturally diverse backgrounds.

The Influence of Voice and Rhetoric in Written Discourse

The concepts of rhetoric and “voice” are culturally dependant. As defined by John Hinds (1983), written rhetoric reflects the writer's view of the most effective means to organize the subject matter. Rhetoric is the mirror image of logical thinking and presentation. Robert T. Oliver describes rhetoric as a mental process.

... Rhetoric is a mode of thinking or a mode of “finding all available means” for the achievement of a designated end. Accordingly, rhetoric concerns itself basically with what goes on in the mind rather than with what comes out of the mouth... Rhetoric is concerned with factors of analysis, data gathering, interpretation, and synthesis ... (Oliver, R. as cited by Kaplan, 1966: pp. 1).

Rhetoric in academic discourse, therefore, is the written manifestation of logic, organization, interpretation and expression. Just as these factors vary between languages and across cultures, so does rhetoric. Written “voice” is also a concept which varies across cultures. Paul Matsuda asserts that “voice” is a metaphor of “a distinct quality in written discourse that can be discerned by readers but is not readily identifiable in terms of a single linguistic or rhetorical feature” (2001: pp. 37). Voice, however it may manifest in writing, is not optional, but always present; drawn upon from the repertoire of voices the writer has encountered in their lives (Ivanic and Camps, 2001). Greta Vollmer also pinpoints the descriptive qualities of voice.

... synonymous with identity, defined as either the clear and forceful expression of opinion or as some intangible rhetorical quality that conveys the author's uniqueness (Vollmer, 2002, p. 1)

So, while rhetoric is the feature of writing which expresses logic though patterns and is the backbone of organizing information, voice is the individualized tone of writing that shines through otherwise organized structures of genre, and discipline specific writing. The definition for voice and rhetoric appear to be descriptive and concrete, however,

concepts of logic, organization and methods to interpret information are all culturally dependant. Developing advanced levels of academic writing in a second language is hard enough to accomplish. This process becomes potentially even more difficult for students raised in an education system which values different educational standards, organization and logic.

In the past, ethnocentric approaches to describing English rhetoric and voice have been taken. In 1966, Robert Kaplan described English rhetoric as “linear” in its straightforward presentation of information to the reader whereas the rhetoric in “oriental” writing was marked by an approach of “indirection” (1966). The descriptions comparatively describe one rhetoric process as logical the other as lacking in sensibility. To investigate different value systems, John Hinds evaluates Japanese rhetoric in a study evaluating a common organizational framework for Japanese compositions called, *ki-shoo-ten-ketsu* (Hinds, 1983). In his study he presents original and translated written discourse which follows the *ki-shoo-ten-ketsu* rhetoric to both native Japanese and native English speaking audiences. The logic, focus, coherence and unity presented in the *ki-shoo-ten-ketsu* format all received higher evaluations by the Japanese audience than the English speaking audience (Hinds, 1983, p. 190-194); indicating the different values reflected in rhetoric.

The notion of “voice” in written discourse has also been assumed to be a Western concept and has been commonly connected to ideologies in individualist cultures (Matsuda, 2001, p. 36-40). In a study by Paul Matsuda, the discourse features of voice in written in Japanese are studied and presented to disprove this common assumption (2001). Matsuda concludes his study by asserting that native Japanese speakers struggle with constructing voice in English not because of the concept of voice is absent or incompatible with their own culture, rather it is due to the lack the familiarity with linguistic strategies used in English (2001). Learning concepts of voice and rhetoric are not principals in writing exclusive to English. These are concepts which exist in many forms across cultures and languages. The studies by Matsuda (2001) and Hinds (1983) evaluate more than differences in language. They are indicative of how culture influences one's fundamental reasoning, logic and approach to organizing ideas for reading or writing academic discourse. And since rhetoric and voice are dependent upon logic, reasoning and mental processes, it would appear as though rhetoric and voice are not innate concepts to academic writing, rather, subjects which must be explicitly taught to L2 students.

Principals for Teaching Rhetoric and Voice

Teaching rhetoric and voice cannot simply be completed through explanation alone: it must be practiced and applied over an extended period of time. Well written academic English is not a matter of self-reflection and personal expression. After all, even native speakers of English need to be taught how to manage the writing process in their own

language (Matsuda, 2001, p. 39). In order to approach the lengthy process of learning and practicing new rhetoric Andy Kirkpatrick outlines seven principals to follow when teaching contrastive rhetoric (1997). In recognition of cross-cultural differences, Kirkpatrick presents practical teaching approaches to use for contrastive rhetoric instruction. They are as follows:

- Principle 1: approaches must focus on authentic rhetoric and not on negative transfer.
- Principle 2: Establish areas of similarity between the L1 and L2.
- Principle 3: Know the background of the author and for whom the text is intended.
- Principle 4: Prescriptive manuals on genre may be discipline specific.
- Principle 5: The writer needs appropriate models and correct examples to follow.
- Principle 6: Students need ample opportunity to practice.
- Principle 7: Disciplines and cultures are in constant state of change. Writing changes with culture and disciplines (Kirkpatrick, 1997: pp. 90-98).

The principles compile prior research in the area of rhetoric and provide a guideline to follow when teaching contrastive rhetoric to ESL students. The framework recognizes that students may struggle with internalizing new rhetoric and suggests broad ideas and principals to follow when working with ESL students.

The principals outlined by Kirkpatrick (1997) are insightful concepts to keep in mind when approaching an EAP class and designing a curriculum. However, they do not address specific teaching methods, lessons or curriculum development proven effective for rhetoric and voice development. One proven method for developing critical and analytical skills as well as control of rhetoric is sustained content-based instruction (CBI).

Developing Voice and Rhetoric with Sustained Content

Support for this study begins with content-based ESL (Pally, 1997, p. 297). Through content-based ESL, students become familiarized to the form and logic of one discipline at a time: allowing students to recycle academic vocabulary (Pally, 2001, p. 281). Content-based study is a “reciprocal process” through which students master language while learning new content (Stroller and Tedick, 2003, p. 1). The central tenant of content-based study is that students become proficient in a language when utilizing it to study something else in a sustained way (Pally, 1997, p. 298). In terms of teaching rhetorical control and voice, sustained CBI is practiced in a similar way. Sustained CBI tactics propose a teacher pursue one subject for a half to a full semester. The period should be long enough for students to become familiar with the rhetorical conventions of a discipline; eventually allowing students to synthesize, question and evaluate information, and recycle the conventions in personal writings and discussions (Pally, 1997). Repetition of content also aids in familiarizing students in interpreting and expressing information using cognitively demanding language. Through these practices, a student becomes

exposed and prepared for skills needed for future university study (Pally, 1997). Sustained CBI benefits the ESL student by fostering the development of critical thinking and analytical skills one discipline at a time. This, in turn, supports the development of rhetorical control in their L2.

An important rhetorical feature required for EAP is critical thinking. Definitions for critical thinking vary, however, for EAP standards it stresses the importance of comparing and contrasting, descriptions, categorization and differentiation, and adhering to the academic conventions of a discipline (Pally, 1997, p. 295). These are special skills required for university and the workplace. They cannot be simply taught through a few simple lectures. Rather they require study and practice over time. Sustained CBI aims to develop these skills for second language students in the same manner that they are developed for native English speaking students (Pally, 1997, p. 299). Once a subject area is chosen for the study of an extended period of time, ESL students can begin to explore and understand the organization and logic behind one discipline and its written discourse Pally (1997). recommends utilizing topics which are “universal” , i. e., economic issues, political issues, pop culture or issues concerning second language acquisition (SLA). Repeated exposure to one topic and its rhetoric will relate to future academic study and aid in the growth of important academic skills. Ample practice of higher-level reasoning in an L2 allows for personalized development of argumentation and knowledge of rhetorical conventions (Pally, 1997, p. 299).

Questioning, challenging and disputing knowledge is also a necessary skill for academic and professional development in English (Pally, 2001, p. 290). Again, this is a culturally specific approach (Socratic roots) to education which may be counter-intuitive to some ESL students. In a number of interviews by Pally (2000, as cited by Pally 2001), students reported feeling “intimidated” when it came to criticizing or challenging readings or lectures. Sustained CBI helps students overcome these challenges by allowing students to acquire enough background knowledge through which they can use familiar concepts and vocabulary to question texts and gain confidence (Pally, 2001, p. 290). In a study by Pally (2001), 13 academic papers from low intermediate to advanced level ESL students from various countries were analyzed. The lower-level participants had completed a sustained CBI course prior to the project, the higher-level students had not. The higher-level students who did not take the sustained CBI course produced papers below their intellectual level. Students who had taken the class displayed more advanced analytical/critical thinking and stronger argumentation in their writing, even in a case comparing an L1 Japanese student with students from Europe whose writing conventions differ less in comparison (Pally, 2001, p. 289). Despite grammatical errors, the sustained CBI students displayed better written format and stronger rhetorical control despite their lower-level English skills. Furthermore, the lower-level students were able to transcend the added disposition of greater cultural distance as a result of the CBI classes (Pally, 2001). The study reflects remarkable results for sustained CBI students suggesting the approach

is dependable and effective. The approach is effective as it demystifies critical and analytical thinking for ESL students and provides them with similar forms of practice that native English speakers grow up with (Pally, 2001). In short, critical and analytical thinking skills learned through sustained CBI aid ESL students in developing rhetoric.

In addition to rhetoric, sustained CBI classes also reflect personal changes in ESL students fostering the development of voice in written discourse. As expected, students craft their identities in relation to their communities which they are familiar with (Pally, Perpignan, Katznelson and Rubin, 2002). For students writing in their L2 the demands for constructing voice are two-fold. First, the L2 writer must understand what voice types are acceptable by the new language. Next, the L2 writer must be able to recognize which voice types are associated with the range of genres and discourses across disciplines (Ivanic & Camps, 2001, p. 31). Voice is comprised of ideational positioning (regarding both world views and presentation of knowledge), interpersonal positioning (sense of personal authority on a topic), and textual positioning (expression through lexical structure) (Ivanic & Camps, 2001, p. 10-31). In order for detailed understanding of the conventions of voice in specific genres and disciplines, numerous examples and positive models should be demonstrated. The benefits of sustained CBI promote understanding of one discipline and genre at a time. This focused practice provides the L2 students the opportunity to explore voice in a new language and identify it with specific genres.

In another study by Pally et al. (2002), sustained content-based studies reveal the benefits of voice development for ESL students. For the study, the feedback from 43 international students from the Caribbean, Central and South America, the Middle East and Southern and Eastern Europe was analyzed over the course of 3 semesters of sustained content-based classes. The goals of the course were to provide students with academic skills which could later be applied to other academic and professional contexts through engaging students in authentic academic tasks. However the students reported additional “by-products” of the sustained content course. One important “by-product” reported by roughly half the students was “learning the meaning of learning”, defined as: studying and commitment in general, avoiding avoidance, appreciating challenge, attending to comments and feedback, learning from mistakes, speaking out, asking questions, and assessing instruction and information that is still beyond one's ability (Pally et al., 2002). These “by-products” of the class reflect the internalization of study habits and values appreciated in English academic settings. In addition to this, 43% of the students reported improved speaking skills, 23% reported improved grasp of mass media, and 43% reported increased genre/discipline specific knowledge (Pally et al., 2002). Overall, the study reflected personal changes in the learners indicating deep personal impact. Many students who took the course indicated that the methodology influenced their world views and fostered personal change in their outlook toward education. The community and learning experience provided by the sustained content-based course will become one of many life experiences the students can add to their repertoire of voices. By

studying a sustained system of concepts, the students became more knowledgeable and articulate in their writing (Pally et al., 2002). As an added benefit to control of rhetoric, the internalization of new academic values aid the students in their future approach to classrooms and the voice they will use in their written discourse.

Conclusion

Academic discourse is a specific form of writing which should be explicitly taught, practiced and corrected. There are a number of issues to be sensitive of when approaching this topic. First, the culture of the L2 students should be considered and respected in the process. The L2 students do not come from a background lacking rhetorical knowledge and/or concept of voice. Rather, they are likely to be unfamiliar with the culturally specific English use of rhetoric and voice and the linguistic features needed to articulate them. Next, in order to explicitly teach rhetoric and voice found in EAP, L2 students should be offered extended exposure and practice, just as native speakers have been raised with. Sustained CBI allows for the extended exposure of one discipline allowing for the development of critical and analytical thinking skills which, in turn, increases control of rhetoric and voice. It is important to remember that there is no one superior form of rhetoric or voice. However, EAP teachers are responsible for meeting the needs of their students, i. e., they have the responsibility to teach L2 writers how to appease an English audience (Leki, 1991 as cited by Pally, 1997, p. 294). Appeasing an English audience goes beyond grammatical control, and extends into culturally specific logic, format and expression. In short, EAP teachers are required to approach the topic of rhetoric and voice and in order to aid their students in overcoming future academic challenges. To this end, long term lesson plans such as sustained CBI should be implemented to effectively teach new academic standards.

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