

Culture of Writing and Writing of Culture: Organizational Connections and Pedagogical Implications of ESL Writing in Multilingual Philippine Setting

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Abstract : One recurring issue in ESL writing is the confusing differences in the writing conventions of the first language and the target language. Culture may play an intriguing role in specifying writing features and structures that ESL writers have to follow. Although writing is typically organized in a three-part structure with introduction, body, and conclusion, it is important to analyze the complex nature of ESL writing. This study investigated the organizational features and structures of argumentative essays written in English by thirty college ESL students from three linguistic backgrounds (Cebuano, Chavacao, and Tausug) in a Philippine university. The nature of word order and sentence construction in the students' essays and the specific components of the introduction, body, and conclusion were quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed based on ESL writing models. Focus group discussions were also conducted to help clarify the possible influence of students' first language on the ways their essays were conceptualized and organized. Results indicate that while there was no significant difference in the overall introduction, body, and conclusion in all essays, the sentence length was interestingly different for each linguistic group of ESL students, and the word order was notably inconsistent with the S-V-O pattern of the target language. The first language was also revealed to have a facilitative role in the cognitive translation process of these ESL students. As such, implications for a multicultural writing pedagogy was discussed and recommended considering both the students' native resources in their first language and the ESL writing models in their target language.

Keywords : community funds of knowledge, contrastive rhetoric, ESL writing, multicultural writing pedagogy

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