

# Exploring an Academic Writing Instructor's Perception of Her Experiences Teaching English Academic Rhetorical Patterns to International Graduate Students in a U.S. Educational Setting

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The purpose of this study is to understand one academic writing instructor's perception of her lived experiences teaching English academic rhetorical patterns to international graduate students in a U.S. educational setting. In order to explore the complex and deep meaning the instructor gives to her teaching practice, a series of iterative and in-depth phenomenological interviews was conducted. The result reveals that the academic writing instructor has two pedagogical goals: "toward independent writers," and "the additive enrichment approach." In order to obtain these goals, the instructor has effectively integrated her personal characteristics, her awareness of the second language acquisition process, and her knowledge of teaching writing skills.

## Introduction

Instructors of academic writing play a vital and complex role in teaching English rhetorical skills to international graduate students. Not only do they have to teach English academic writing skills to these students, but they also need to understand their students' L1 rhetorical structures that may cause difficulty in learning English academic rhetorical patterns. According to Connor (1996), "the linguistic and rhetorical conventions of the first language interfere with the writing in the second language" (p. 5). Therefore, it is necessary to understand the complexity of pedagogical challenges of academic writing instructors.

A number of studies have been generated regarding the academic writing instructor's awareness and understanding in the rhetorical differences between students' L1 and their L2 (e.g., Kamimura & Oi, 1994; Chen, 1994). For example, Kaplan's seminal study (1966) clearly shows that the academic writing instructor needs to be aware of cross-cultural differences in paragraph organization by exploring how ESL students' L1 rhetorical structures were reflected in their L2 English writing. Kubota (1997) also suggests that the academic writing instructor needs to explore ESL students' weakness in L2 English writing that may be a result of their culturally unique conventions, such as Japanese reader responsibility, a classical overall organization (*ki-shoo-ten-ketsu*),<sup>1</sup>. These studies illustrate the importance of academic writing instructors' awareness and understanding of L1 rhetorical conventions.

In order to further understand the role that English academic writing instructors play in teaching English rhetorical patterns, a case study may be helpful. According to Stake (1988), the purpose of a case study is to understand the complexity and dynamic nature of the particular entity, and to discover systematic connections among experiences, behaviors, and relevant features of the context. One of the best ways to explore the complex role of writing

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instructors' pedagogical experiences in teaching English rhetorical patterns would be iterative and in-depth interviews.

The purpose of this study is to explore an experienced instructor's perceptions in teaching English academic rhetorical structures in a U.S. multicultural setting. By exploring how the writing instructor understands teaching English rhetorical patterns to international graduate students, this study may benefit teachers who are involved in the field of L2 writing instruction in multicultural settings. The iterative in-depth interviews of this study will attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the pedagogical goals of an experienced L2 academic writing instructor in terms of teaching English academic rhetorical patterns?
2. What drives these goals?

### **Methods**

According to Rossman & Rallis (1998), phenomenological interviewing seeks to understand the lived experience of a small number of people. Along the lines of phenomenological studies, Seidman (1998) supports a series of three in-depth phenomenological interviews, each with a specific purpose. The first interview seeks the participants' experience from the past to the present. The second interview reconstructs the details of the participants' current experience. The third interview tries to understand the meaning of the participants' experience.

Following Seidman's interviewing method, this phenomenological case study focuses on one academic writing instructor who was the only instructor teaching academic writing to international graduate students at the University of Arizona. The iterative in-depth interviews of this study will attempt to answer the following interview questions:

1. What have been the instructor's experiences teaching English academic rhetorical patterns to international graduate students from the past to the present?
2. What are the details of the instructor's current challenges and outcomes in terms of teaching English academic rhetorical patterns?
3. What are the goals and meanings the instructor gives to teaching English academic rhetorical patterns?

In order to conduct this phenomenological case study, in-depth iterative interviews were conducted with one academic writing instructor. The participant of these interviews was Professor Sandra Rothschild. She was interviewed because she was the only instructor who was teaching the academic writing course 407 A and B for international graduate students at the University of Arizona. She had been reputed to be an excellent writing instructor with more than ten years of teaching experience.

Following Seidman's (1998) interviewing methods, the four in-depth interviews each focused on a research question (See Appendix I for detailed phenomenological interview questions). The first interview sought the instructor's historical experiences in teaching English academic rhetorical patterns to international graduate students from the past to the present. The focus was on the history of the instructor's teaching experiences. Based on the results of the first interview, the second interview attempted to reconstruct the details of the instructor's specific current challenges and outcomes in teaching English academic rhetorical patterns. The third interview tried to obtain the meaning the instructor gives to teaching academic rhetorical patterns to international graduate students. I asked the instructor to integrate the two previous interviews to explain her pedagogical philosophy. I added the fourth interview in order to ask the instructor

about the qualities of academic writing instructors and ideal writing programs for international graduate students.

The four interviews were conducted at Professor Sandra Rothschild's office during her office hours in a congenial environment. Each interview was tape-recorded and took about 30 minutes. All the tape-recorded interviews were transcribed carefully with the help of a transcriber and two native speakers of English.

During the four interviews, the instructor was very supportive. For example, she helped to analyze the interview data and to construct a model that presents her lived experiences of teaching English academic rhetorical patterns. In other words, the validity of this study was derived from the cooperation between the research participant (the writing instructor) and the researcher (See Appendix II for the time line of each interview conducted).

Regarding the data analysis, Rossman and Rallis (1998) state that phenomenological studies are open-ended and search for themes of meaning in participants' lives. This means that the researcher needs to approach the texts with an open mind and seek the meaning that emerges. First, I read the transcripts of the four interviews several times and marked those passages that stood out as interesting and important concerning the teaching of English academic rhetorical patterns. Then, these identified passages were assigned codes that could eventually be grouped into main themes and sub-themes. Based on these main themes and sub-themes, I constructed a model that represents the instructor's experiences in teaching English academic rhetorical patterns.

### Findings & Discussion

The purpose of this study is to understand an academic writing instructor's perceptions of her lived experiences teaching English academic rhetorical patterns to international graduate students in a U.S. educational setting. After reading the transcripts of the four interviews, I identified the following four major themes and eleven sub-themes:

Major Themes	Characteristics (sub-themes)
<b>Theme 1: The instructor's personal characteristics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching as a challenge</li> <li>• A great love for languages and other cultures</li> <li>• Encouraging international students</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 2: The instructor's awareness of the second language acquisition process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The instructor's awareness of culture-based rhetorical patterns</li> <li>• The instructor's awareness of linguistic differences</li> <li>• The instructor's awareness of lowering students' affective filters</li> <li>• The instructor's awareness of learning styles</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 3: The instructor's knowledge of teaching writing skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The instructor's variety of teaching techniques</li> <li>• The instructor's carefully organized evaluation sheet</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 4: The instructor's goal for teaching English academic rhetorical patterns to international students</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toward independent writers and readers</li> <li>• Additive enrichment approach</li> </ul>

In this section, more details of each theme and sub-theme are discussed. Then, at the end of this chapter, I will show a model that represents the instructor's experience in teaching academic rhetorical patterns to international graduate students (figure 1).

### **Theme 1: The instructor's personal characteristics**

It goes without saying that the instructor's personal characteristics affect her teaching of English academic rhetorical patterns to international graduate students. Within this main theme, three sub-themes were identified. They were teaching as a challenge, a great love for languages and other cultures, and encouraging international students.

#### • Teaching as a challenge

The instructor considers teaching a challenge. She originally had no intention of ever becoming a writing instructor, and had always been afraid of writing. Writing used to be her absolutely worst subject in college. However, when she was in the MA/ESL program, she became interested in writing through an encounter with a professor.

When I entered the master's program, I had to take a course, it was a required course, teaching writing, and it was taught by professor TM...and I had always been afraid of writing and didn't want to write, didn't like to write, and it was my absolutely worst subject in college. And yet when I took this course, I received feedback from him that I'd never received before in my writing, and it was wonderful. He was talking to my writing on paper, it was like we were having a conversation. It was a wonderful experience, and I found out that I was very successful at writing...

(from the first interview, March 20, 2001)

Thus the encounter with one professor made the instructor start the life of teaching English composition. Following the professor's suggestion, she became a graduate assistant teacher and started teaching English composition. She recalled her teaching experiences as follows:

I started teaching first year composition to native speakers, English 101 and 102, and found that it was very exciting and challenging...the next step for me was to teach some courses to ESL students which I did in the following year. And again I enjoyed the challenge and I enjoyed the success, and then there was suddenly an opening to teach 407a, 407b. And the department of composition asked me if I'd like to do that, and so I always like a new challenge. So I said, "sure." I knew the person who had taught it and I also had heard a lot from her students how unhappy they were that they didn't think they were learning anything, and so that just I wanted to try it even more because it was a challenge. So that I began teaching academic writing to international graduate students. (from the first interview March 20, 2001)

The instructor considers teaching composition a challenge. She seems to be enjoying this challenge. Her challenging spirit seems to be one of the reasons why she has kept teaching academic writing to international graduate students for more than ten years.

- A great love for languages and other cultures

The instructor loves languages and other cultures, which is shown in her following words.

I've always loved languages and other cultures, and I've lived in other countries, and I speak French and Spanish, and when I graduated college, many eons ago, I was a French teacher. I taught French, French language in high school and in an elementary school...I love languages and culture. (from the first interview March 20, 2001)

Her love for other languages and cultures creates respect for her students' languages and cultures. She is fascinated with a variety of human languages and cultures.

- Encouraging international students

When she gives feedback to her students, her first priority seems to be encouraging them.

When I write my comments, I always write positive comments. I tell them the good they've done first. I praise them. I praise their effort. I praise their expertise. I praise their knowledge. I praise their whatever they've done well. And then, I point out a few of their major errors that they've made to work on first...Mine is a writing classroom...It is very difficult...When I give back the first paper that I've graded to them, I explain that this is the first time that they have probably received comments about their writing, about the whole text...I tell them I understand that but now, you know, a new level for them. And I try to joke with them about, you know, I should put my Kleenex box, in case anybody wants to cry, I'll give you five minutes to cry, but then let's move on. (from the second interview March 27, 2001)

She always encourages her students, and tries to sympathize with her students when they have difficulty learning the new paradigm of academic writing. She sometimes tries to joke in order to reduce the anxiety of her students. She does not challenge her students to perfection, but wants her students to improve their writing skills.

## **Theme 2: The instructor's awareness of the second language acquisition process**

The instructor is well aware of the importance of the second language acquisition process. From the interviews conducted, her awareness of the second language acquisition process seems to be comprised of four sub-themes. They are the instructor's awareness of culture-based rhetorical patterns, her awareness of linguistic differences, her awareness of lowering students' affective filters, and her awareness of learning styles. In this part, more details of each sub-theme are explored.

• The instructor's awareness of culture-based rhetorical patterns

When the instructor first started teaching, she was not really aware that ESL students' rhetorical patterns were different from English rhetorical patterns. However, through a workshop, she learned how difficult it was to write an English essay in Chinese rhetorical patterns. She recalled her experience of the workshop as follows:

Before you write, we're going to pretend we're in China. And you have to write it in this structure in this context. You know, you have to quote from famous people, you have to give historical references, and you have to, uh, you never use examples from your own experiences, and you do not state your thesis statement until the very end if at all, and my partner and I sat there, looking at a blank piece of paper for 10 minutes, because we could not get started. We didn't have historical information. We didn't have all this. We could not even get started, and so frustrating. And I suddenly realized that's what my students were facing. Because I had to face it right there...from that point, I realized I had to first make the students aware of what their rhetorical patterns were. (from the first interview Mach 20, 2001)

After this meaningful workshop, she has always tried to make her students aware of what their rhetorical patterns are. Thus, the challenge she faces is to make her students aware of the rhetorical patterns of English.

So it's not that I just give them the rules, but I will try to pull up the student's schema of what they expect in their first languages, what kind of rhetorical patterns are, they expect, and then tell them what English speakers expect and try to understand that these are cultural differences, and that way they will better understand that they're writing for a different audience for different expectations. And this is a very difficult concept to understand. (from second interview, March 27, 2001)

As can be seen from her words, she does not force her students to learn English rhetorical patterns. She tries to teach the difference between her students' first language rhetorical patterns and English rhetorical patterns. Because of her more than ten years of teaching experience, she seems to be able to identify cross-cultural differences in international students' rhetorical patterns as follows:

**Spanish speakers:**

The instructor seems to have difficulty teaching organizational patterns to Spanish speakers because of their writing tradition.

As far as organizing ideas into groups and clearly stating what those organizational patterns are, I found my Spanish speakers have a lot of trouble

with this, because their writing system is such that the more the better, the more words the better, the more pages you fill the better, and just keep writing, and it's kind of random thoughts. They are redundant, they get off target, they get off focus, they ramble, they just don't have the grouping yet, the grouping patterns...My Spanish speakers have a lot of trouble on my first two assignments, which are three pages maximum. They can't do it. They just can't do it. Or if they do, they always write five or six pages. And one of my first comments is you haven't addressed the assignments on this first three pages. They usually choose very big topics and ramble. (from the first interview, March 20, 2001)

This example shows that the instructor is aware of Spanish speakers' writing tradition that allows them to write more without consistency, which does not meet the standard of English academic writing. The instructor first has to teach Spanish speakers how to reduce the amount of their writing that exceeds the page maximum. The instructor is aware that Spanish speakers have difficulty writing paragraphs with a clear focus.

My Spanish speakers, just kind of, spiral out of control. They just don't write with focus for a paragraph. They'll just throw ideas together, and they just spiral out of control...they also repeat themselves a lot. (from the second interview, March 27, 2001)

According to Kaplan's 1966 research, Spanish writers digress and introduce extraneous material more than English writers do. Kaplan's generalization might be valid because the instructor points out that Spanish speakers put extraneous information; random thoughts. However, Kaplan's generalization might be simplistic because it does not explain that Spanish speaker's writing tradition that accepts too much writing with random ideas, but interferes with English academic rhetorical patterns. The instructor is also aware of Taiwanese and Japanese students' weakness in writing academically as follows.

### **Students from Taiwan and Japan:**

The instructor is aware that Taiwanese and Japanese students are good at citations, but cannot interpret the citations with their own voices.

The information that they would put into their tasks was all other people's ideas. So and so said this, and so and so said that, and so and so found this, and so and so found that. And they thought that they were writing in academic texts. The problem was they didn't have a balance of their own voice and others...you need to choose other people's ideas, and group them. Then you need to look at that group and put your own interpretation of what you are seeing. That comes first, you own voice...citation, citation, citation...that's other people's voices, it's not your own. (from the first interview, March 20, 2001)

Taiwanese and Japanese students' weakness may come from their rhetorical conventions that allow them to simply introduce other people's ideas, but does not allow them to criticize them because critical thinking tends to be treated as insulting other people. The instructor is aware of Japanese students' textual flows.

Flow is extremely difficult. Explicit flow from one idea to another, extremely difficult for my Japanese students. (from the second interview, March 27, 2001)

Japanese students' weakness in textual flows seems to come from Japanese rhetorical conventions that can accept the omission of logical connectors and transitional sentences. On the other hand, the instructor is aware of Greek students' rhetorical patterns as follows.

**Greek students:**

Greek students seem to rely on their own interpretations without citations.

Personal logical thinking is all that's required of students who are from Greece...they think that just pure logic is enough...it is citing and sources in academic writing, and who you cite and how you cite, and how often you cite are also cultural...Greek, Greek, the personal logic development, but in academic writing here in the United States, we want outside sources quoted. (from the second interview, March 27, 2001)

While Taiwanese and Japanese students are weak in their own interpretations of academic texts and tend to rely on only outside information, Greek students seem to rely on their own interpretations without citations. Kaplan's 1966 study does not explore this contrast that has been identified by the instructor. The instructor is aware of Arab students' rhetorical conventions as follows.

**Arab students:**

The instructor points out that both Arab and Spanish speakers have difficulty writing expected English paragraphs because they are not good at grouping ideas into English paragraphs.

My Arab students, my Arabic speaking students and my Spanish speaking students have a lot of trouble grouping ideas into English, expected English paragraphs. They put one sentence in a paragraph. In other words, they have many, many paragraphs. They repeat a lot, and they don't group information, just throwing it together. (from the second interview, March 27, 2001)

According to Kaplan's 1966 research, Arabic speakers tend to make extensive use of coordination. Kaplan's generalization seems to be the same as the instructor's awareness because her Arabic speaking students repeat a lot in writing academically. The instructor is aware of East Asian students' rhetorical conventions as follows.



### **East Asian student:**

The instructor points out that East Asian students are good at grouping ideas into expected English paragraphs, but are weak in having adequate textual flows between paragraphs and in announcing the focus at the beginning of the paragraph.

In general, East Asian students can group ideas better into paragraphs. It's just that they don't have flow from one paragraph to another. They're totally disjointed. It doesn't matter where the paragraph in the whole text. They don't seem to have an overall textual flow. They have a grouping, but they don't announce, they don't know how to announce the focus at the beginning of the paragraph. (from the second interview, March 27, 2001)

While Arabic and Spanish speakers are weak in grouping ideas into expected English paragraphs, the instructor is aware that East Asian students are good at grouping ideas into paragraphs, but have difficulty in organizing the effective order of paragraphs within the whole text. East Asian students are also weak in announcing the focus at the beginning of the paragraph. According to Kaplan's 1966 research, Oriental writers tend to circle around a topic rather than approaching it directly. Kaplan's generalization seems to be partially true of the instructor's awareness because the instructor is aware that each paragraph tends to circle around in the whole text, even though each paragraph organization has effective grouping of information. On the other hand, the instructor is aware of Eastern Europe students' English academic writing as follows.

### **Eastern Europe students:**

It seems difficult for the instructor to characterize Eastern Europe students' English academic writing because her experience with these students is limited; most of them are all in hard sciences.

Eastern Europe, that's tough because most of my Eastern Europe students are all in hard sciences. And those, just because of the discipline, those students have been acculturated into the discipline to write in a very ordered way. So they have a better job. Focus sentences are tough for everybody though. (from the second interview, March 27, 2001)

The instructor is aware that Eastern Europe students have a better job in writing academically in the area of hard sciences even though focus sentences are difficult for them.

From the instructor's awareness of Spanish, Taiwanese, Japanese, Greek, Arabic, and East Asians students' rhetorical patterns, it is apparent that Kaplan's 1966 research is a valid foundation to understand cross-cultural rhetorical patterns, but may be simplistic. The instructor's awareness presents other perspectives, such as Spanish speakers' tradition that admits the excessive amount of writing, a contrast between Japanese, Taiwanese, and Greek students; Japanese and Taiwanese students rely on citations without their own interpretations while Greek students rely on personal logical thinking without citations, and a contrast between Spanish, Arabic, and East Asian students; Spanish and Arabic students are weak in grouping

ideas into paragraphs while East Asian students are good at it, but paragraphs are disjointed in the whole text.

- The instructor's awareness of linguistic differences

It goes without saying that the instructor has the knowledge of linguistics in order to teach English academic rhetorical patterns to international students. Especially the knowledge of transfer from their first languages to their second language, English, seems to be important for her teaching.

I have several students who have a lot of trouble with collocations. It's simply because they are translating a phrase word by word from their native language to English and it doesn't work because of collocations...I think most of their errors are influenced by their first language and their first culture...but I think it's part of the interlanguage. (from the first interview, March 20, 2001)

She seems to have knowledge of linguistics, such as collocations, interlanguage, and positive/negative transfer from L1 to L2 in order to teach writing skills effectively.

- The instructor's awareness of lowering students' affective filters

According to Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics (1992), to lower students' affective filters means to lower students' negative attitudes in class, such as a lack of self-confidence and anxiety. Thus the instructor always tries to reduce her students' affective filter in class by sympathizing and empathizing with her students.

Takaharu: OK, I see. How do you deal with these difficulties (teaching)?

Instructor: I point them out in class. I'll let the students see that there are differences. Uh, and I sympathize with them, and I empathize with them, and I try to steer them toward being more individuals.

(from the second interview, March 27, 2001)

As can be seen from this dialogue, the instructor always makes a great effort to lower her students' affective filters in class.

- The instructor's awareness of learning styles

The instructor is well aware of each student's learning style.

I think I have to always remember that not all the students are going to get the steps in that order, and whatever order they get them is just fine, and that they will not all get it by the beginning of the semester, and they might not even get it by the end, because it's a process. It's a slow process of acquisition and challenging.

(from the second interview, March 27, 2001)

The instructor seems to understand that each international student has a distinct learning style, and that learning academic writing is a slow process of acquisition.

### **Theme 3: The instructor's knowledge of teaching writing skills**

The instructor has her expert knowledge of teaching writing skills. Two sub-themes were identified in this category. They were the instructor's variety of teaching techniques and the instructor's carefully organized evaluation sheet.

- The instructor's variety of teaching techniques

The instructor has a variety of teaching techniques. For example, putting the focus sentence at the beginning of the paragraph is difficult for every student. She uses the following techniques in order to teach that skill.

The way I teach them is, first of all, I have them working in groups, to put a paragraph together. Do you remember the comparison paragraph? They had all the ideas for comparing vowels and consonants or fusion and fission. Well, they're working so hard on comparing, and then, at the end, I'll change them to go back to the beginning and put a focus sentence there, to let the reader know, and what I might do in the future is just to take a well-written paragraph and cut into individual sentences, and say, arrange these or give them individual sentences of the paragraph, and I'll say, put these together and then write a focus sentence for it. So there're lots of things I can do for that. (from the second interview, March 27, 2001)

This is one of her teaching techniques used to teach English academic rhetorical patterns.

- The instructor's carefully organized evaluation sheet

The instructor uses her self-made evaluation sheet for her students (See appendix III). She keeps revising the evaluation sheet in order to meet the needs of her students.

(Showing the evaluation sheet to me) All right, now, as you see, I also added a column for comments here. So I can just make brief comments about what is missing or what is really good here...and then, I have added, you'll be interested as a Japanese speaker. Ok, adequate balance of own voice and others. (from the first interview, March 20, 2001)

Her self-made evaluation sheet for students is well organized and persuasive because the current version is created through more than ten years of her teaching experiences and the dialogue between her and her international students. For example, the instructor has recently added one column in her evaluation sheet; adequate balance of own voice & others', because Japanese and Taiwanese students rely on citations without their own interpretations while Greek

students rely on their own personal logic without citations. She can point out what is wrong with her students' English rhetorical patterns by using her self-made evaluation sheet.

**Theme 4: The instructor's goal for teaching English academic rhetorical patterns to international students**

In this section, the instructor's goal and meaning of teaching English academic rhetorical patterns to international students are identified.

• Toward independent writers and readers

In the second and third interviews, she explained her goal as follows:

My goal is to help them improve the demonstration of their knowledge, or the sharing of their knowledge, just to help them improve it to become more independent writers, so they don't have to depend on their advisor, their professor, you know, to make their changes, the writing center, other people, native speakers...my goal is for them to become more independent of other's input. (from the second interview, March 27, 2001)

My goal of teaching English academic rhetorical patterns is two-fold. One is so that they will be able to easily demonstrate their knowledge to their professors who are mostly English speakers and have English rhetorical expectations. So to make it easy for them to demonstrate their expertise in the subject, and the other is that once they can communicate easily, using English rhetorical patterns, they will be able to read better. They will know how to read an English academic text more easily and, just faster. (from the third interview, April 3, 2001)

In other words, her goal for teaching English academic rhetorical patterns seems to help her students become independent writers and readers in order for them to demonstrate their knowledge to the audience.

• Additive enrichment approach

The instructor is aware that L2 writers have difficulty acquiring new rhetorical patterns because it requires changing thinking patterns.

The rhetorical patterns follow thinking patterns. Thinking patterns are encultured...they need to change their thinking patterns...but, to actually have to change their thinking patterns is almost an impossibility. We are trying to add to their repertoire of thinking patterns. (from the third interview, April 3, 2001).

Thus, she attempts an additive enrichment approach that tries to maintain both her students' native rhetorical patterns and English rhetorical patterns.

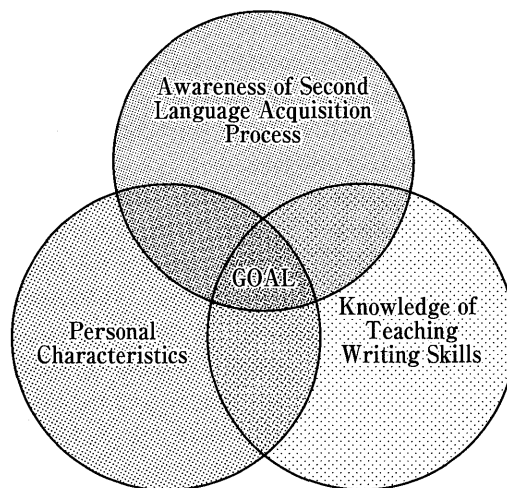
I need to change their paradigms. It means I need to change their paradigms. I need to make them aware of what their current paradigms are, their rhetorical paradigms, and then to convince them that there are other paradigms and to help them discover what English patterns are. (from the third interview, April 3, 2001)

Then after a while, my students would say, "Oh, yes, this makes perfect sense and when I go back to my home country, I'm going to write in this way you'd taught me," and I say to them, "No, you can't. You have to use your own culture's rhetorical patterns. (from the first interview March 20, 2001)

I think once the students realize that there are rhetorical patterns and that these rhetorical patterns are culture-based, that I'm not challenging them as individuals, but I'm asking them to add to their repertoire of rhetorical patterns. Don't give up your old; just add the new English rhetorical patterns. (from the second interview March 27, 2001)

She wants her international students to add English rhetorical patterns to their repertoires of native rhetorical patterns, while she thinks her students should take good care of their own native rhetorical patterns. Her additive enrichment approach seeks to maintain two paradigms for her students. One is their own rhetorical patterns that come from their native languages. The other is an English rhetorical pattern that needs to be learned.

Given the aforementioned main themes and sub-themes, the following figure seems to be adequate in order to show the instructor's perception of her experience teaching English academic rhetorical patterns to international graduate students.



**Figure 1: The academic writing instructor's perception of her experience teaching English academic rhetorical patterns to international graduate students**

Figure 1 presents a model for the academic writing instructor's perception of her experience in teaching English academic rhetorical patterns to international graduate students. This model was derived through the process of identifying main themes and sub-themes from the phenomenological interview data. The center of this model shows the instructor's pedagogical goal for teaching English academic rhetorical patterns to international graduate students. The instructor has two pedagogical goals. One is that she wants her students to be independent writers and readers in order for them to demonstrate their knowledge to the academic audience. The other is her additive enrichment approach that tries to add English rhetorical patterns to her students' repertoires of native rhetorical patterns, with the emphasis on the respect for her students' rhetorical patterns of their first languages.

What drives the instructor's pedagogical goals? The instructor seems to have effectively integrated three main themes to achieve her pedagogical goals: (1) the instructor's personal characteristics, (2) the instructor's awareness of the second language acquisition process, and (3) the instructor's knowledge of teaching writing skills.

The instructor loves and respects her students' languages and cultures, always encourages her students, and is willing to talk with her students about their problems learning academic English skills even after class or everywhere on campus. The instructor offers her students good learning opportunities by devoting more time in order for her students to get adapted to the new academic audience. I still remember that even after class the instructor gave a lecture to me for more than one hour on the difficulty in learning new rhetorical structures.

The instructor is aware of the second language acquisition process that enhances her theoretical and practical knowledge in understanding L2 writers' learning process. The instructor is aware of the unique expertise of L2 writers because she can identify her students' cross-cultural rhetorical patterns, such as Spanish speakers' excessive amount of writing, a rhetorical contrast of academic citations between Japanese and Greek speakers, and a rhetorical contrast of paragraph organizations between Arabic and East Asian students. The instructor's awareness of L2 writers' cross-cultural rhetorical structures supports Connor's 1996 research that states "each language has rhetorical conventions unique to it, and the linguistic and rhetorical conventions of the first language interfere with the writing in the second language" (p. 5). On the other hand, the instructor's awareness tells us that the generalization Kaplan made in his 1966 study is valid but simplistic. In addition to the awareness of cross-cultural rhetorical structures, the instructor is aware of her students' individual linguistic and learning differences, and tries to lower her students' affective filters in her teaching practice.

The instructor has expert knowledge of teaching writing skills with more than ten years of her teaching experiences, which is created through the dialogue between the instructor and her students in the cultural dynamics of L2 writing. For instance, the instructor's students' weakness in learning L2 writing is reflected in her well-organized evaluation sheet, such as "Adequate balance of own voices and others" in for Japanese, Taiwanese, and Greek students.

The integration of the three main themes creates an in-depth understanding of her international graduate students who have already acquired expert knowledge in their L1, but are restructuring their knowledge in L2. These three traits also represent qualities the ESL writing instructor should have in multicultural educational settings.

### Conclusion

The study clearly shows that the experienced academic writing instructor has two pedagogical goals: "toward independent writers and readers," and "the additive enrichment approach." In order to obtain these goals, the instructor has effectively integrated three pedagogical traits: her personal characteristics, her awareness of the second language acquisition process, and her knowledge of teaching writing skills. Furthermore, this study proves that the rhetorical conventions of the first language tend to interfere with L2 English academic writing.

At the same time, we may need to consider an ideal writing program for international graduate students in a U.S. educational context, such as a program where the course professor and the writing instructor can collaborate together to help those students, and a program in which they can learn both oral presentation skills and writing skills. Thus, the graduate school system itself may need to reconsider the importance of academic writing skills, so that international graduate students can really function as a resource, not a problem in their own fields.

### Notes

1. Hinds (1987) explicates the Japanese classical overall organization (*ki-shoo-ten-ketsu*).  
A. *ki* First, begin one's argument; B. *shoo* Next, develop that; C. *ten* At the point where this development is finished, turn the idea to a subtheme where there is a connection, but not a directly connected association to the major theme; D. *ketsu* Last, bring all of this together and reach a conclusion (p.150).

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## APPENDIX I. Phenomenological Interview Questions

### Interview questions for the first interview

1. How did you come to be an academic writing instructor?
2. Why did you enter the MA/ESL program?
3. Could you tell me about the variety of teaching experiences in terms of working with ESL students on English rhetorical patterns?

### Interview questions for the second interview

1. What are the details of your current challenges and outcomes in terms of teaching English academic rhetorical patterns?
2. Can you identify cross-cultural differences in paragraph organization?
3. How do you deal with students' difficulties?
4. What have you learned from your international students in terms of teaching English rhetorical patterns?
5. How do you teach English rhetorical patterns?
6. What is your difficulty in teaching English rhetorical patterns?
7. Why is teaching English rhetorical patterns important for international students?

### Interview questions for the third interview

1. Given what you have said your teaching experiences from the past to the present, what is your goal for teaching English academic rhetorical patterns to international graduate students?
2. What does teaching English rhetorical patterns to international students mean to you?

### Interview questions for the additional interview

1. Do you have some implications for future programs?
2. What qualities should academic writing instructors have for international graduate students?

## Appendix II. The time line of each interview conducted

### Time line

Tasks	March 20, 2001 Tuesday 3:00-3:30pm	March 27, 2001 Tuesday 3:00-3:45pm	April 3, 2001 Tuesday 3:00-3:20pm	April 10, 2001 Tuesday 3:00-3:20pm
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1 <sup>st</sup> interview tape-recorded	X			
2 <sup>nd</sup> interview tape-recorded		X		
3 <sup>rd</sup> interview tape-recorded			X	
4 <sup>th</sup> interview tape-recorded				X

**Appendix III. The instructor's evaluation sheet**

		EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	COMMENTS	
INFORMATION	25	Fulfill the assignment					
	24	Awareness of audience/purpose					
	23	Clear thesis;focus on thesis throughout					
	22	Adequate sources of information					
	21	Adequate scope of information					
	20	Adequate supporting information					
	19	Adequate balance of own voice & other's					
	18	Effective introduction					
	17	Effective conclusion					
	16	Effective visuals					
	15	Adequate title					
	ORGANIZATION	25	Effective overall order of information				
		24	Effective grouping of information				
		23	Adequate flow between sections/paragraphs				
22		Adequate headings/focus sentences					
21		Effective order within sections/paragraphs					
20		Adequate flow within sections/paragraphs					
19		Appropriate placement of visuals					
18							
STANDARD GRAMMAR & MECHANICS	25	Sentence structure					
	24	Articles & noun forms					
	23	Verbs & verbals(tense,aspect,voice,chains)					
	22	Agreement inflection (S/V, n/pro, n/adj, adv)					
	21	Prepositions,& idioms, collocations					
	20	Spelling					
	19	Punctuation/capitalization					
ACADEMIC STYLE	25	Formal sentence combining					
	24	Academic variety of sentence structures					
	23	Academic citation strategies					
	22	No suspected plagiarism					
	21	Formal usage					
	20	Precise/concise word choices & relationships					
	19	Academic voice/tone/qualification					
	18	Format/spacing/indentation/margins/font					
TOTAL							