

# Argumentation across L1 and L2 Writing: Exploring Cultural Influences and Transfer Issues

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## Abstract

Scholars suggest that what constitutes an effective argumentation is culturally driven and L1 specific rhetorical or argument patterns may influence written argumentation in a second language. The present study, thus, explores the argument preferences of people from the same cultural background across their L1 and L2 texts within a cultural-educational framework. First, participants are given a survey regarding their previous writing instruction that serves as the “small cultural context” to contextualize the findings; then, they write argumentative essays both in their L1 and L2. The texts are analyzed mainly in terms of argument structures based on Toulmin’s (1958) model of reasoning, Hinkel’s (1997; 2005) indirectness devices, Aristotle’s rhetorical appeals, and language style. Then, stimulated recall interviews are conducted to learn the reasons behind the participants’ use of detected patterns and their transfer. The results indicate common patterns used in both similar and dissimilar ways across L1 and L2, influenced by cultural as well as various other factors.

**Keywords:** Contrastive rhetoric, argumentative writing, transfer, writing instruction, second language writing

## Resumen

Hay expertos que sugieren que una argumentación eficaz se basa en la influencia cultural y retórica de patrones argumentativos de la lengua nativa, que influyen en la creación de textos argumentativos en una segunda lengua. Este estudio explora las preferencias de personas con un mismo bagaje cultural al construir textos argumentativos escritos en su primera y segunda lengua dentro de un marco cultural-educacional. Primero se les entrega a los sujetos una encuesta para saber cuál ha sido su preparación anterior para la escritura, lo que permite una aproximación a su contexto cultural, necesario para contextualizar los resultados de la investigación. Después, los participantes escriben ensayos argumentativos en su primera y segunda lengua. Los textos se analizan a base de las estructuras argumentales del modelo

de argumentación de Toulmin (1958), los planteamientos de Hinkel y la retórica de Aristoteles, y métodos estilísticos. Finalmente, se lleva a cabo entrevistas estructuradas para conocer los motivos por los cuales los participantes utilizaron cada patrón argumentativo y para comprobar si existe transferencia. Los resultados indican que los participantes han utilizado patrones comunes usados de modos tanto similares como disimilares en sus L1 y L2, lo que indica una influencia cultural así como la existencia de varios otros factores.

**Palabras claves:** Retórica de contraste, escritura argumentativa, transferencias, estructura, escritura en L2.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 *Argumentation across Cultures*

It has been reported in intercultural communication (IC) literature that argumentation and reasoning vary across cultures, even sometimes causing cross-cultural miscommunication and pragmatic failure (Fisher, 1980; Glenn, Withmeyer & Stevenson, 1977; Thomas, 1983; Walker, 1986). Similarly, contrastive rhetoric (CR) research has suggested that what is considered as effective writing differs from one culture to another, and conventions of writing are often shaped and passed to new generations through formal education in each society (Connor, 1996; Hinkel, 1994; Kadar-Fulop, 1988; Purves, 1988).

The findings of intercultural communication and CR studies have provided evidence for the existence of different argument patterns across cultures. For example, in terms of *directness*, it was claimed that arguments are more direct in Germany, Italy, Greece, France, (Tannen, 1998), and Northern European countries (Beltran, Salo-Lee & Maestro, 2002; Vasko, Kjisik & Salo-Lee, 1998) compared to those in the USA, while they are even more indirect in collectivist cultures such as Korean, Japanese, and Chinese for maintaining good relationships, harmony (Dillard & Marshall, 2003; Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988), and pragmatic space (Cavallaro, 2005). The Japanese were found to be more cautious and ambiguous in writing with their use of qualifiers such as 'maybe' or 'probably' (Hazen, 1986), rhetorical questions, disclaimers and denials, ambiguous pronouns, and the passive voice in greater frequencies than Americans (Hazen, 1986; Hinkel, 1997; 2005; Okabe, 1983). However, strategic use of hedging is also reported to be a common argument strategy in Anglo-American scientific texts to "protect the writer from the commitment of the truth-value of the proposition" (Hinkel, 1997: 364; Hyland, 1996) to distinguish

the fact from the possible; and to develop writer-reader relationship by functioning as direct appeals to the reader (Hyland, 1995, 1998; Lewin, 2005).

In terms of *argument orientation and argument structures*, Americans were observed to prefer a practical and scientific orientation, absolutism, and factual concrete evidence whereas Japanese were found to prefer a more humanistic aesthetic orientation and situationalism with lesser degree of warrants and backing and with more subjective evidence (Okabe, 1983). The Japanese were also found to accept a wider range of information as meaningful evidence than did Americans (Hazen, 1986; Kamimura & Oi, 1998; Okabe, 1983). Similarly, Taiwanese were found to use fewer claims and data, shallower levels of reasoning, and less diversity of argument structures; yet, more appeals to humanness than did the Americans (Cheng & Chen, 2009). Chinese students were also observed to use fewer uses of counterargument/rebuttal claims and data (Qin & Karabacak, 2010).

With respect to *thinking patterns, logic, and organizational structure*, Americans were claimed to prefer “hard-mind logic” with analytic thinking patterns and rational appeals while Japanese tended to use soft, “heart-like logic” employing affective appeals and presenting things in a holistic manner (Kamimura & Oi, 1998; Okabe, 1983: 32). As for other cultural groups, Connor & Laurer (1988) found that the number of data, warrants, and emotional appeals were lower in American compositions when compared to compositions written in the UK and New Zealand compositions. In addition, the pattern situation + problem + solution + evaluation was not used as consistently in the Finnish and German students’ compositions as it was in the British and American students’ compositions (Connor, 1987). The main claim was also more predominantly delayed in Finnish compared to that in British and German texts (Tirkkonen-Condit & Liefelaner-Koistinen, 1989).

*Elaborative versus succinct language style* was another feature that was claimed to differ across cultures as an indicator of uncertainty tolerance versus uncertainty avoidance and high-versus low-context dependence, respectively (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988). While elaborative language use with frequent metaphors, idioms, clichés, set phrases, or proverbs was found in Arabic (Ostler, 1987), Turkish (Enginarlar, 1990) and Chinese texts (Matalene, 1985); Finnish communication was reported to be an example for succinct style in which only what is exactly necessary is said (Lewis, 2005).

Most cross-cultural studies on writing and argumentation, however, have also been criticized especially for their conceptualization and treatment of cultures as national entities (big culture) which resulted in stereotyping, overgeneralizations, and prejudices about cultures and rhetorical patterns (Leki, 1991, 1997); for disregarding

universal similarities between Western and Eastern texts (Cahill, 2003) and variations within the same linguistic or cultural societies (Comfort, 2001; Corbett, 2001); for considering transfer from L1 as only negative (Kubota, 1998), and for encouraging replacement of L1 with L2 writing conventions by idealizing the English writing norms (Kubota & Lehner, 2005).

## 1.2 Transfer of L1-specific cultural patterns to second language writing

Because writing is considered as a cultural phenomenon, it is suggested that once this cultural schema is formed in L1, it would influence writing in a second language (Connor, 1996; Kadar-Fulop, 1988; Kaplan, 1966; Purves, 1988). For example, Kaplan (1966), analyzing 600 ESL student essays, found common organizational patterns displayed by each cultural group such as *direct linear*, *parallel constructions*, *indirect*, *digression*, and concluded that L2 writing is largely influenced by transfer of L1 rhetoric. However, such studies comparing only ESL texts were often criticized for not providing direct evidence for transfer, but simply assuming that patterns found in L2 were caused by L1 rhetoric (Martin, 1992; Matsuda, 1997), and for ignoring other variables such as low L2 proficiency or the difficulties of writing in a second language (Mohan & Lo, 1985).

The best approach to understand any transfer across L1 and L2 is suggested to be the within-subject analysis of L1 and L2 texts as it offers the most direct and appropriate evidence by controlling the subject variable (Kubota, 1998). In terms of specifically argumentative writing, few studies compared the L1 and L2 argumentative essays written by the same individuals in terms of mainly organizational structures such as “claim + justification + conclusion” (Enginarlar, 1990; Choi, 1988) or macro-level rhetorical pattern and the placement of thesis (Hirose, 2003; Kubota, 1998; Uysal, 2008a; 2008b). However, *pragmatic aspects of writing* such as argument structures and reasoning, which are vital components of academic discourse (Nemeth & Kormos, 2001; Pera, 1994), and which often cause problems of persuasiveness, acceptability, and reasonableness for L2 writers (Rocci, 2006), were not investigated in these studies.

In addition, previous studies were mainly text-based, not asking writers about their textual decisions, which make it difficult to understand whether any common patterns found were actually cultural. Moreover, most of these studies used a homogeneous group of subjects in terms of L2 level and L2 writing knowledge and used the same topics in L1 and L2 essays, making it hard to claim that similarities found were due to transfer. Finally, most studies examined the texts in isolation, but not in relation to the cultural/educational contexts.

New directions in CR, on the other hand, suggest that CR needs to study both L1 and L2 writing, observe or interview L1 and L2 writers, examine influences of L1 writing development through quantitative as well as qualitative methods, and become more context sensitive, exploring how writing is tied to social structures of a given culture (Connor, 1996, 2002). Considering these suggestions and limitations of previous research, the present study focuses on the *pragmatic aspects* of texts across L1 and L2 using within-subject comparisons to obtain direct evidence for any transfer; it incorporates a heterogeneous group of subjects writing on different topics; it goes beyond textual analysis with stimulated recall interviews to explore the reasons behind the texts; and explains the results in relation to a “small cultural context” – the previous writing instruction in L1 and L2 (Holliday, 1994; 1999). The present study is part of a larger study exploring the relationship among culture and the organizational structures (Uysal, 2008a; 2008b), the writing processes (Uysal, 2008b), and argumentation in Turkish writers’ L1 and L2 writing. This article reports on the exploration of particularly the *argumentative patterns* in the essays.

## 2. Study

### 2.1 Participants

Eighteen Turkish native speaker adults (ten female, eight male) who live in the US were selected among volunteers. To make an assumption that the participants have acceptable writing knowledge and skills in their L1, only participants who hold at least B.A. degrees from Turkish universities were chosen. These participants constituted a heterogeneous group in terms of their knowledge and experience in English and in English writing. Among these, eleven participants had formal writing instruction in both Turkish and English, and seven participants had received writing instruction only in Turkish. The participants’ English language skills varied from low to high. Thirteen participants were currently in a graduate program or post-doctoral research position in an American university, and the others were housewives having attended ESL programs or were planning to apply to a graduate program (See appendix 1 for information about participants). This heterogeneity (L2 level, writing instructional background, disciplinary background, gender) was considered during both quantitative and qualitative analyses.

### 2.2 Data Collection

Multiple data collection methods, both quantitative and qualitative, were used to provide in-depth information and to increase the validity of the findings through data

triangulation. The data was collected through three data sources. First, a background questionnaire adapted from Martin (1992) and Liebman (1992) was distributed to participants to elicit information about their previous L1 and L2 writing instruction for contextualizing the findings. Second, in a week, a total of thirty-six argumentative essays were generated by the participants in Turkish and English in different orders to counterbalance the effect of writing order on writing performance. Participants wrote on different topics in Turkish and English to prevent them from simply translating from L1, which would have potentially compromised claims about transfer. The topics were selected among the essay prompts of the TOEFL Test of Written English (TWE) test as Lee et.al, (2004) and Breland, et al, (2004) found that TWE topics have an acceptable level of comparability. The Turkish essay topic was: "When people succeed, it is because of hard work. Luck has nothing to do with success. Do you agree or disagree with the statement above? Argue your position to convince a Turkish reader by using the strategies that you think are appropriate." The English topic was: "When people move to another country, they should adopt the customs and the lifestyles of the new country to succeed. Do you agree or disagree with the statement above? Argue your position to convince an American reader by using strategies that you think are appropriate." And third, audio-taped stimulated recall (retrospective) interviews were conducted to collect data about the reasons behind the textual choices and to see any links between the patterns in L1 and L2 and the previous writing instruction. Retrospective interviews were chosen as they were found to be effective and less disruptive to make reports of thinking, revealing not only what happened, but also why it happened (Gass & Mackey, 2000; Greene & Higgins, 1994). Retrospective interviews were administered in two days after the writing activity as suggested by Bloom (1954).

### 2.3 Data Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyze the texts and the interviews. The texts were examined based on a simplified version of Toulmin's (1958) model of reasoning and argumentation, Hinkel's (1997, 2005) indirectness devices, Aristotle's rhetorical appeals, and some language features to form a potential framework for the analysis. However, no strict codification schemes were pre-established so as not to close down or restrict the text analysis due to the exploratory nature of the study. The argument structures subjected to analysis were as follows:

#### *I. Toulmin's model of argumentation (claims, qualifiers, evidence, and rebuttals):*

1. Analysis of the claims: First, openly and explicitly stated main and sub-claims were counted. The claims were identified as a position, assertion, or a thesis statement

put forward to be argued for (Connor & Lauer, 1988: 144). Then, claims were analyzed in terms of their degree of force or the number of qualifiers they included. The analyses were mainly based on Hinkel's (1997; 2005) categorization of indirectness and hedging markers as well as intensifiers and overstatements. First, the occurrences of each device in claims in each essay were counted and then the percentages were calculated by dividing the sum of the occurrences for each device into the total word count in the main and sub-claims; for example, 4 occurrences of downtoners in the claims of 40 words in one essay is calculated as  $4/40 = 10\%$ . The same computation was done separately for each of the indirectness devices and for each of the 36 Turkish and English essays of all participants. Non-parametric statistical comparisons of L1 and L2 essays were employed through the Mann-Whitney U Test to see whether L1 and L2 are similar or different in terms of the frequency of each device. The analyses included the following features:

a) Indirectness markers:

- Point of view distancing (e.g. *I believe/ think, I would like to think...*),
- Downtoners (e.g. *at all, almost, hardly, mildly, nearly, partly, slightly, somewhat, only, as good/well as, enough, at least, merely...*),
- Diminutives (e.g. *a little, a few, a bit, virtually...*),
- Discourse understatements (e.g. *fairly, pretty/quite/rather+ adjective, not (too bad..)*),
- Disclaimers and denials (e.g. *not mean to/imply/say, x is not y, not even, no way, not + adjective/verb/noun/adverb...*),
- Hedging (e.g. *may, can, likely, possibly, seemingly, about, in a way, kind of, more or less, most, by some/any chance, hopefully, perhaps, in case of, as is well known, as people say, apparently, basically, according to, actually, relatively, probably..*),
- Vagueness and ambiguity (*a lot of, approximately, around, many/much, number of, x or so, several, aspects of, seldom, usually/often/occasionally/sometimes..*), *good/bad, and so on, who knows... , whatever (pron) do(es), some...*),
- Syntactic markers and structures (*conditional tenses (If/unless) and the passive voice*),

b) Assertive devices such as intensifiers and overstatements (e.g. *all, every, every-prominals, none, no one, nothing, forever, extremely, absolutely, altogether, always, by all means, completely, definitely, enormously, entirely, greatly, never, severely, strongly, too+adjective, terribly, totally, very, certainly, for sure, indeed, no way ....*) as well as other assertive features (e.g. *must/should/have to...*) were counted.

2. Analysis of the evidence: The frequencies and types of evidence used (e.g. facts, personal experience, citations of authority, analogies, anecdotes....) were analyzed.



3. Analysis of the rebuttals: Rebuttals, which were defined as statements that are challenging or questioning the claim by presenting exceptions, different perspectives, opposite arguments and evidence to demonstrate the flaws of the opposite position, and then explaining why it should be rejected (Faigley & Selzer, 2006; Wood, 2006), were determined.

II. *Aristotle's rhetorical appeals*: Use of ethos, pathos, and logos was also examined and the frequency counts of each type of appeal were calculated. Faigley and Selzer's (2006) following descriptions for rhetorical appeals were used in analyzing the appeals:

- Ethos: use of persuasive reasons and examples coming from the trustworthiness and credibility of the writer as the authority himself,
- Pathos: use of persuasive reasons and examples derived from a community's most deeply and emotionally held values to invoke emotional response,
- Logos: use of reasons and examples emerging from intellectual reasoning based on facts and rational evidence.

III. *Rhetorical Questions*: A tendency of participants to use questions in the essays was observed during the text analysis. Therefore, the frequency and the functions of the questions asked by participants were also examined.

IV. *Elaborated versus succinct language use*: The number of figurative or adorned language use (e.g. metaphor, sayings, clichés, proverbs...) was also noted (The repetitions of the same figurative lexical features were not counted).

The texts were first analyzed by the researcher, but to reduce subjectivity, the texts were also analyzed by two other coders independently. Then, the two coders and the researcher came together, compared the coding sheets, and negotiated on the initial disagreements. The other coders were two native English speaker PhD candidates who have been teaching rhetoric classes and tutoring in the writing center in an American university for several years. The percentage of agreements among the coders was 92% for finding main claims, 95% for finding sub-claims, 95% for finding evidence, and 92% for finding rhetorical appeals. Raters reached full agreement in terms of finding rebuttals and questions.

After the text analysis, stimulated recall interview results were transcribed and qualitatively analyzed by grouping the articulated reasons into emerging themes to see which factors had influenced the participants' writing choices. The background questionnaire about the cultural context was analyzed through frequency analysis of the items marked. Then, the survey and the interview results were compared with common textual patterns to see any links between previous writing education (small cultural context) and the patterns.



### 3. Results

First, in terms of personal variables, no significant differences in the patterns among participants according to gender (except that females used disclaimers & denials more in Turkish than in English,  $p < 0,05$ ), discipline of study, L2 level, and previous writing instruction was found in the quantitative analysis. In the qualitative analysis, on the other hand, L2 level, writing instructional background and discipline of study had some influence on some patterns which will be discussed in detail in the related sections below.

#### 3.1. Similarities across L1 and L2 essays

##### 3.1. 1. Explicit statements of claims and the use of indirectness devices

In terms of claims, all participants openly and explicitly stated their main and sub-claims (65 claims in Turkish, 77 in English) in both L1 and L2. The participants showed a strong tendency to use *assertive devices* such as intensifiers and overstatements as well as indirectness devices such as *disclaimers and denials* and *hedging devices* in both essays (See table 1). The Mann-Whitney U test also revealed that the frequencies of indirectness devices were mostly similar in both essays (Please see Appendix 2 for the statistical results).

**Table 1.** Participants' preferences of directness and indirectness devices in L1 and L2.

	Turkish		English	
	N: 18	%	N: 18	%
<b>Assertive devices</b>	18	100	16	89
<b>Disclaimers, denials</b>	16	89	13	72
<b>Hedging</b>	13	72	15	83
Point of view distancing	10	56	9	50
Downtoners, understatements, diminutives	10	56	6	33
Vagueness, ambiguity	9	50	13	72
Passive	6	33	3	17
Conditionals	4	22	4	22

Participants' explicitly stating their claims in their essays was directly linked to the previous educational context. For example, in the survey, the feature "clarity of main ideas," was found to be strongly emphasized in both Turkish (89%) and English classes (82%). In the interview, participants also said that they remembered both Turkish and English teachers valuing clarity and explicitness in their writing.

### 3.1. 2. Use of evidence

All eighteen participants supported their arguments with plenty of evidence in both their L1 and L2 essays, and a total of 130 pieces of evidence were counted. Participants used similar frequencies of evidence examples in their Turkish (N=66) and English essays (N=64). In terms of evidence types, regardless of their L2 level and writing instructional background, participants demonstrated a common preference towards particularly *assertions based on real-life situation, hypothetical situations, and anecdotes*.

**Table 2.** Common types of evidence in Turkish and English essays.

	Turkish		English	
	N= 66	%	N= 64	%
<b>Assertions based on real life situations</b>	20	30	31	48
<b>Hypothetical situations</b>	21	32	17	27
<b>Anecdotes</b>	11	17	8	13
Citations of others	5	8	1	1.6
Analogies	4	6	2	3
Facts	2	3	1	1.6
Assertions based on personal experiences	2	3	1	1.6
Assertions that cannot be argued	1	1.5	3	5

Examples of the common evidence types can be seen as follows:

#### 1. Assertions based on real-life situations:

*“...A typical example is in Turkey, people like to visit their friends during working hours, whereas in US, people really like to work and concentrate on their jobs during the working hours and spend the night out after work relaxing.”* (Erdem, English essay)

#### 2. Hypothetical situations:

*“Let’s imagine a student who has a very important exam. Imagine that this student missed the exam that he has been studying for weeks just because the alarm clock did not go off.....”* (Irem, Turkish essay)

#### 3. Anecdotal example:

*“Ahmet and Burak were PhD students at the same university... Ahmet started his PhD one year later than Burak. Burak’s professor suggested Ahmet’s professor to conduct a study like “donating money to the poor” four years ago. When Ahmet started to the program, right at that time, Ahmet’s professor gave this to Ahmet as a project.*

*The experiment was not a difficult one. After he worked for one year Ahmet discovered an unknown biological mechanism. His invention became the cover for “ Science” journal. Later he repeated this experiment on another biological system, when this also produced a successful result,*

*he published his second "Science" article, graduated and started a postdoctorate in a very good university. On the other hand, Burak, although he worked harder than Ahmet, could publish his first article just recently, and will graduate soon.*" (Ali, Turkish essay)

The survey and interview results indicated that writing education as well as some other factors influenced the frequency and types of evidence examples. In the survey, the item "using good examples and details to illustrate main ideas" was marked extensively as an emphasized feature in both Turkish (78%) and English writing classes (82%). Similarly, for the open-ended survey question about "effective ways of making an argument," giving examples was the most commonly mentioned way in both Turkish (72%) and English classes (80%). Parallel to these findings, all participants used numerous examples to illustrate their ideas. The stimulated recall interview about evidence types revealed that participants seemed to have developed a shared belief that using examples based on real-life situations is an effective method in convincing readers. English classes, where general real-life examples or factual and more concrete examples were preferred to personal examples, were also mentioned by four participants as the reason for their frequent use of real-life examples. One participant also said that because the English topic was related to her area of study, she used evidence from what she read in articles in classes.

Hypothetical examples, on the other hand, were found to be used as a compensation strategy when a real-life example cannot be found. One participant also said that he was probably influenced by texts in economy in which a simple imaginary situation is presented to refute an opposite argument. Anecdotal evidence was used mostly because of its perceived effectiveness and practicality. Previous writing experiences such as writing narratives; reading experiences such as reading articles in physics in which stories are invented to explain experimental findings; and the formality of the topic (mentioned by 4 participants) were found to be the other factors behind the use of anecdotes.

### **3.1.3. Use of rebuttals**

Rebuttal was a common strategy used by 61% of the participants. Ten rebuttals were found in Turkish and nine rebuttals were found in English essays. Similar to this finding, in the survey for the open-ended question asking the major ways to persuade an audience according to Turkish and English writing teachers, refuting the opposite claim was the second most commonly mentioned way (28% for Turkish and 40% for English). In the interview, participants said that especially in English, rules related to rebuttals were very clear and the opposite idea should be presented in argumentative essays all the time, but they did not recall such specific instruction in Turkish. However, as the participants who did not receive any English writing education also

used rebuttal, this means this strategy exists in Turkish argumentation as well, but might not be specifically emphasized in classes.

### 3.1. 4. Aristotle's rhetorical appeals

Aristotle's rhetorical appeals were used similarly by 89% of participants across their Turkish and English essays. Especially, 'logos' was extensively used by 72% of participants in both their essays. Because analysis of this category took longer time than expected, no questions were asked in the interview related to rhetorical appeals. Seventeen participants (94%) used logos in their Turkish essays as a primary appeal, and twelve participants (67%) used logos as the primary appeal in their English essays. Ethos was also observed in two participants' (11%) English essays as the primary appeal.

**Table 3.** Similar essays by participants in terms of rhetorical appeals in Turkish and English.

Names of the participants	Turkish essay	English essay
1.Sebnem	Logos, ethos	Logos
2.Ali	Logos, pathos	Ethos, pathos
3.Okan	Logos, ethos	Logos
4.Sedat	Logos, ethos	Logos
5.Sinem	Logos	Logos, pathos
6.Merve	Logos	Logos
7.Esen	Logos, pathos	Logos, ethos, pathos
8.Erdem	Logos	Logos
9.Berk	Logos	Logos
10.Irem	Logos	Logos
11.Ufuk	Logos	Logos, pathos
12.Zafer	Logos, ethos	Logos, ethos
13.Banu	Logos	Logos
14.Taner	Logos,ethos	Ethos, logos
15.Leyla	Pathos, ethos	Ethos, logos
16.Nevin	Logos	Ethos

### 3.2. Differences across L1 and L2 essays.

#### 3.2.1. Assertiveness devices

Although the majority of the participants used assertiveness devices in both their essays, the frequency of assertiveness devices was found to be significantly more

frequent in Turkish essays ( $p < .001$ ) than that in English essays according to the Mann-Whitney U test (Please see Appendix 2). The results did not correlate exactly with the previous writing education. While participants did not recall any specific instruction on indirectness, hedging, or assertiveness markers in Turkish, four participants recalled that in English writing classes, “avoiding passive voice,” “using short clear sentences,” and “being open and assertive while writing ideas,” were specifically mentioned. In a similar way, passive voice was used less in the English essays; yet, the English essays included more vagueness markers and hedging, but not assertive devices conflicting with the specific instructions of English writing teachers. Confidence of writing in L1 and writing for a Turkish audience, on the other hand, were mentioned as the main reasons for the use of more assertive devices in L1 than that in L2.

### 3.2.2. Evidence types

Within-subject analysis of each participant's essays revealed differences across L1 and L2. For example, while seven participants (38%) used one or more examples based on real-life events in both their essays, only five participants (28%) used hypothetical situations, and 3 participants (17%) used anecdotes in both essays. *Citing or quoting authority* and *analogies* seemed to be preferred more in Turkish whereas *real-life examples* were preferred more in English essays. Similarly, citing others was found to be stressed especially by Turkish teachers as an effective argument strategy. In the interview, participants said that they remember Turkish writing teachers often telling them to explain their point by supporting it with famous people's words, for example Atatürk's sayings (the founder of the Turkish Republic). English classes, on the other hand, emphasized the use of more real-life, factual and more concrete examples instead of personal examples and citations of authorities.

### 3.2.3. Rhetorical questions

The data indicated a tendency among participants to ask questions as a rhetorical strategy to support their claims especially in Turkish (35 questions by 61% of participants), but not in English (6 questions by 33% of participants) (see appendix 2 for statistical results). Within-subject analysis showed that only 6 participants (33%) used questions in both their essays. From the interviews, it was found that these questions often functioned as direct appeals to the audience to help raise the readers' interest and to create a sense of suspense, to provoke thoughts/doubts to refute the opposite argument, to make a point, or to strengthen the argument. In terms of the reasons, eight participants said that they believe questions are more convincing, natural, easier, and effective to help raise readers' interest. Participants also seemed to be influenced by the encouragement of Turkish teachers to ask questions especially to create suspense or raise interest; however, asking questions was not something

encouraged in English. Six participants also said that this might be related to their previous reading experiences with especially Turkish editorials (four participants) in which authors often ask questions as if they are talking to the reader. One participant also said he likes reading the works of philosophers such as Nietzsche in which questions are valued as objective while answers are subjective and not real. Interview results revealed that the audience had the most influence in lower frequencies of questions in English essays. For example, some participants said they intentionally avoided using questions in English essays because they were writing for an American audience and thought Americans would not appreciate it.

### 3.2. 4. Elaborated language style

A tendency to use more literary language, such as clichés, figurative language, and metaphors was observed in sixteen participants' essays (89%), especially in Turkish. A total of 47 as opposed to 12 instances of adorned language were counted in Turkish and English essays respectively, and used by only 6 participants (33%) in both essays (see appendix 2 for statistical results). The analysis for this category was done only by the researcher as translating such language would result in loss of meaning. In terms of the reasons, the survey item "using beautiful language" was marked by (67%) for Turkish classes, and (55%) for English writing classes as an emphasized writing feature and except for two, all participants who marked this feature used such language in their essays. Interviews revealed that especially previous literary experiences such as reading old Turkish literature pieces and fiction, and writing poems had an influence on use of such language in the Turkish essays. As for the reasons of not using such language in L2, the major reason articulated was participants' lack of such vocabulary and phrases in English as it was their second language.

## 4. Discussion and Conclusion

In general, despite the differences in their L2 level, previous L2 writing history, and topics, participants' texts demonstrated some common argument patterns especially in L1 essays. These patterns were similar to both stereotyped English and Confucian or Arabic argument traditions parallel with Turkey's geographical and cultural position right in the middle of the East and West. Similar and dissimilar uses of the common patterns across L1 and L2, on the other hand, were found to be influenced by cultural as well as various other factors such as audience, L2 level, disciplinary background, and previous reading experiences.

In terms of similarities or a possible transfer across languages, L1 and L2 essays were similar for most categories such as *explicit statement of claims*, *use of similar*

*frequencies of indirectness devices and hedging, the extensive use of examples, rebuttals, and the use of Aristotle's rhetorical appeals.* This result pointed to a possibility of bi-directional transfer as most patterns were traced to both L1 and L2 instructional contexts. For example, the common use of *explicit and clear claims, rebuttals, and having plenty of examples* in the essays were features emphasized in English as well as in Turkish writing classes as major ways of making an effective argument. This may also indicate that as a result of globalization, some writing patterns are getting more homogeneous among cultures and because Turkey has been under a strong Western influence for years, many stereotyped Anglo-American argument elements may be shared by the Turkish participants.

As for the dissimilarities, differences were found in the uses of *assertiveness devices, some evidence types, rhetorical questions, and adorned or elaborated language* across L1 and L2, and cultural educational factors played an important role in these differences. For example, use of *adorned language, questions, certain types of evidence (e.g. quoting citations of authority)* which were used more frequently in Turkish essays were also mostly encouraged in Turkish writing classes, but not in English. Adorned language use was also previously reported by Enginarlar (1990) to be a possible cultural feature of Turkish writing and writing has been described in the Turkish curriculum as “an art, not science” (Girgin, 2003:83-84). Therefore, the participants’ tendency to use a more literary and adorned language in Turkish might have cultural grounds. Use of questions as a rhetorical strategy in Turkish essays seems to be another culturally driven preference. Questions were also reported to be common in Turkish editorials by Uysal (in press). In this respect, Turkish participants’ preferences were more similar to Asian and Arabic traditions than Western and Anglo-American argumentation because use of adorned language, questions, citations and anecdotes as evidence were suggested to be rhetorical characteristics of traditional Chinese discourse (Matalene, 1985; Scollon & Scollon, 1991) and observed in the essays of Korean, Japanese, Indonesian, and Arabic students (Hazen, 1986; Hinkel 1997; 2002; Ostler, 1987). Assertive markers and overstatements—another common pattern found especially in Turkish essays, were also observed in Arabic rhetoric (Sa’addeddin, 1989). However, it is important to note that adorned flowery language is disapproved by English and Northern European cultures which prefer a simple and straightforward language due to their low-uncertainty tolerance (Hendriks et al, 2005). Use of questions, on the other hand, differ across genres and disciplines in Anglo-American academic writing. For example, while questions are discouraged for being too personal, and for expressing hesitation, uncertainty, and indirectness (Hinkel, 1997) especially in hard sciences, they are frequently used in Anglo-American conference proposals (Uysal, 2011) and research articles in social sciences with various strategic argument functions (Hyland, 2002).



Although cultural context was linked to the aforementioned patterns and their dissimilar use across languages, culture was not the mere reason for the dissimilarities across L1 and L2 writing. For example, the *confidence in L1 writing* resulted in more extensive use of assertive markers in L1 and *limited L2 vocabulary* caused lower frequency of adorned language in L2. Moreover, *previous reading experiences* with Turkish texts such as editorials or discipline-specific articles also had an impact on the patterns of asking rhetorical questions, adorned language style, certain evidence types such as anecdotes and hypothetical situations, providing support for the strong relationship between reading and writing (Grabe, 2003; Krashen, 1984; Leki, 2001). Half of the participants also stated that they took the *audience* into consideration while writing, and from their accounts it was evident that some of their writing choices were informed by the audience as well as by their *discipline-specific practices*. For example, it was found that participants consciously avoided questions in English essays because they thought it would not be approved by the American audience and they chose certain evidence types with the influence of the established argument practices in their own profession (e.g. use of hypothetical situations to support a case in economics, and anecdotes to explain experiments in physics).

The findings regarding the relationship among reading practices, audience concerns and discipline-specific experiences and participants' writing choices provided further support for the socio-cultural views of writing. As Hyland (2001) suggests, reading experiences shape people's rhetorical conceptions and influence writers' construction of the audience because these "texts are also written to be understood within certain cultural contexts;" thus, they represent "the shared group values and beliefs through their routine rhetorical operations" (Hyland, 1997: 19). The results pointing out to participants' employment of different strategies for different audiences also reinforced the claims of the social constructivist theories of writing which view writing as an activity shaped by different purposes in different social contexts and influenced by the constraints of the relationship between reader and writer (Halliday, 1994; Hyland, 2003; Nystrand, 1986, 1989).

## 5. Implications of the Study

The findings of this study provided support for the claims of intercultural communication and contrastive rhetoric research regarding the existence of shared argument patterns in texts of individuals coming from similar cultural backgrounds and the relationship between culture and written argumentation. However, besides culture, various other factors such as previous reading habits, audience, and L2 level were also discovered behind the use of these patterns across L1 and L2. Thus, this study once again emphasized the complexity involved in second language writing.

In terms of future Intercultural communication and CR research, first, the study confirmed that cultural background affects not only organizational textual features, but also pragmatics and argument structures; thus, future CR studies should focus more on the use of these features across cultures. Second, in terms of the methodology of research, this study put forth that only by qualitative methodologies such as stimulated recall interviews, can we exactly understand which observed patterns in texts stem from cultural influences and which patterns stem from other factors. Third, to explore transfer issues, a within-subject research design should be adopted because it would be very misleading to compare L2 essays of different language groups as developmental factors in L2 proficiency and many other factors might play a role in the shape of L2 essays. Finally, while investigating transfer from L1 to L2 and vice versa, further research should group the subjects according to their L2 proficiency, and L2 writing education history, and have subjects write on different topics to better understand how these various factors are interacting with each other during any possible transfer of cultural patterns across writing.

When it comes to pedagogical implications, as pragmatic conventions of hedging and argumentation acquired in ones' first language are likely to transfer into and influence writing in a second language, this situation may cause problems in terms of inappropriate pragmatic performance, misunderstandings and even socio-pragmatic failure in cross-cultural communication (Zegarac & Pennington, 2000:166; Thomas, 1983). Such cross-cultural conflicts or socio-pragmatic failure especially in international academic contexts often cause disadvantages for non-native speakers (NNS) such as having difficulties in the writing component of international tests of English or publishing in English academic journals, which are often evaluated according to English Native Speaker (NS) criteria of persuasiveness. Therefore, awareness raising activities in ESL/EFL writing classes on cultural differences between L1 and L2 argumentation are very important for students to be able to meet reader expectations by avoiding negative transfer of the conflicting structures from L1, but at the same time to be able to use any conducive L1 pragmatic features in L2 writing by code-meshing (Canagarajah, 2006).

Unfortunately, this study revealed that participants received almost no instruction on the pragmatics of writing such as hedging, indirectness or assertiveness markers, and rhetorical questions in their previous writing classes except for some suggestions on avoiding passive voice and ambiguity in English. Structuring of argument, reasoning, organization, relating text to audience, use of appropriate degree of persuasiveness, hedging and directness, on the other hand, are suggested to play a key role in success of argumentative writing in English (Flowerdew, 1999; Swales, 1990). For example, Hyland (1997) claims that hedges play a critical role on the credibility and effectiveness of an argument especially in making claims and drawing conclusions whilst exaggeration, overstatements or broad generalizations, flowery language, and overuse of rhetorical

questions, which were found in L1 essays of Turkish participants as well as Asian and Arabic writers, are discouraged in written English academic discourse (Hinkel, 1997). Therefore, any ESL/EFL academic writing instruction should include explicit teaching of the effective pragmatic argument features to help students establish a balance between hedging and toning down the claims and being clear and assertive. In addition, instruction should include more detailed and systematic explanations of what constitutes an appropriate argument, effective evidence, proper rhetorical appeals, and rebuttals in English or Aristotelian argument so that students can better function in English academic discourse community and publish their future work in international scientific journals (Hyland, 1995).

Nevertheless, while teaching English argument conventions, what students bring from their L1 writing can also be used as a resource so that English conventions would become an additive rather than a subtractive force (Kubota & Lehner, 2004). This study found that adorned language use, questions, and anecdotal examples are rooted in L1 culture; however, these may also be used to enrich students' academic writing and to add creativity as long as these features are used in right amounts without causing interference in communication. For example, Hyland (2002) suggests that strategic use of questions as direct appeals to engage the audience in the discussion with the purpose of getting attention, framing and organizing the discourse, creating a niche, expressing an attitude or counterclaim, setting up a claim, and pointing forward to further research are effective argument strategies frequently used in Anglo-American articles in social sciences. Thus, use of questions with appropriate functions can be integrated into L2 writing as well. In addition, in the present study, a few participants stated that in academic writing, they often use stories to explain their points or experimental findings, which implies that using the L1 strategy of telling anecdotes may also be conducive for the English academic writing. Yet, it is important to establish a balance between the use of L1 and L2 writing strategies according to task or disciplinary requirements and audience expectations. Therefore, students should be taught when it is appropriate to implement their L1 strategies and when not to create a balance between expressive, literary or more emotional writing which is encouraged by certain L1 cultures, and a more objective scientific writing in English. This would also contribute to negotiate the norms, to add more creativity and diversity to written academic discourse to establish "*World Rhetorics*" (Kachru, 1995), and to prevent the loss of various cultural rhetorical richnesses in the current dominance of English in the academia.

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## Appendix 1

Name	English level (Length of stay in the US, length and quality of English instruction in Turkey, self-evaluation etc.)	Formal writing instruction in L2	Education-vocation
Ayşe	Five years of English instruction in a vocational high school in Turkey (3 hours a week), three months of ESL course in the US, has been in the US for 5 years, ranks her English 5 out of 10.	None	B.A. in Embroidery Teaching, currently a housewife.
Sebnem	Went to an English medium high school in Turkey, stayed in Britain for 2 years, has been in the US for 2 years, ranks her English 9/10.	None (skipped the preparatory class where writing instruction was given)	B.A. in English literature, MA in Cultural Studies from Britain, currently Ph.D. student Communication Studies in the US.
Ali	Went to an English medium junior high school and then a science high school in Turkey, published several articles in English, ranks his English 8/10.	Yes	B.A. in Physics, Ph.D. in Physics from an American University, currently a post-doc researcher.
Okan	Went to a general high school, but then an English medium university in Turkey, has been in the US for 4 years, and took ESL classes for 1 year.	Yes (both in Turkey and in the US)	B.A. in Physics, currently a Ph.D. student in Physics in the US.
Sedat	Went to a general high school, but then an English medium university, ranks his English level 9/10.	None (skipped the preparatory class)	B.A. in Psychology and Biology, currently Ph.D. student in Psychology
Sinem	Went to a general high school, but then went to an English medium university, has been in the US for 1.5 years, ranks her English 7/10.	Yes	B.A. in Physics, currently Ph.D. student in Physics in the US.
Merve	Graduated from an English medium high school and university, has been in the US for three months, ranks her English 7/10.	Yes	B.A. in Electrical-Electronic Engineering, has just applied for MA in computer sciences.
Esen	Went to an English medium high school and partly English medium university, has been in the US for a month, ranks her English 6/10.	None	B.A. in Physical Engineering.
Erdem	English medium high school and university, has been in the US for 1,5 years, ranks his English as 8/10.	Yes	B.A. in Economics and Mathematics, currently Ph.D. student in Economics in the US.

Berk	Went to an English medium high school and a university in Turkey, has been in the US for 1, 5 years, ranks his English as 9/10.	Yes	B.A in Economics, currently PhD student in Economics in the US.
Irem	Attended an English medium high school and University, has been in the US for three months, ranks her English as 5/10.	Yes	B.A. in Economics, Ph.D student in Economics in the US.
Ufuk	Attended a general high school and a Turkish medium University, went to ESL classes for three semesters in the US, has been in the US for 3,5 years, ranks his English 8/10.	Yes	B.A. in Electrical-Electronic Engineering, Ph.D. student in Physics in the US.
Zafer	Attended a general high school, English major in the university, has been in the US for 3,5 years, ranks his English as 10/10.	Yes	B.A and M.A in English Language Education, Ph.D student in Foreign Language Education in US.
Banu	Attended a general high school and Turkish medium university, has been in the US for one year. Attended to several short-term ESL classes in churches, ranks her English as 5/10.	None	B.A. in Agricultural Engineering. Currently a housewife.
Taner	Attended a general high school and a Turkish medium university. Attended to a TOEFL preparation course for a year in Turkey, has been in the US for 4,5 years, ranks his English as 6/10.	Yes (as a part of TOEFL preparation program and has been going to a Writing Center in the US)	B.A in Science Education. Ph.D student in Science Education in US.
Derya	Attended a religious high school in Turkey, has been in the US for 2 years, attended ESL classes in churches for a few months, ranks her English as 5/10.	None	B.A. in Theology, currently a housewife.
Leyla	Went to a general high school and a Turkish medium university, Attended a TOEFL preparation course for a year in Turkey, has been in the US for 4 years, ranks her English as 5/10.	Yes (as part of TOEFL preparation program, has been going to Writing Center in the US)	B.A in Biology Education, Ph.D. student in Science Education in US.
Nevin	Went to a general high school and a Turkish medium university. Has been in the US for 1,5 years. Attended two ESL classes at college, ranks her English as 4/10.	None	B.A. in Agricultural Engineering, M.A. in Plant Protection and Entomology, currently a housewife

Note: In general and vocational high schools in Turkey, English is taught only for 3-4 hours a week, but in English medium high schools it is taught for at least 8 hours a week following a preparation class in which English is taught for 24 hours a week.

## Appendix 2

The Mann-Whitney U test results for indirectness and assertiveness devices, rhetorical questions, and adorned language.

T=Turkish essay

E=English essay

Variables	Groups	N	Mean Rank	U	Z
Assertive words	T	18	25.6	34.5	-4.035**
	E	18	11.4		
Point of view distancing	T	18	20	136.5	-0.853
	E	18	17		
Disclaimers/denials	T	18	22	100.5	-1.954
	E	18	15		
Hedging	T	18	19.6	142.5	-0.621
	E	18	17.4		
Downtoners/dimunitives	T	18	21.5	107.5	-1.939
	E	18	15.5		
Vagueness/ambiguity	T	18	17	136	-0.857
	E	18	20		
Passive	T	18	20.6	124	-1.659
	E	18	16.4		
Conditionals	T	18	18.8	157	-0.230
	E	18	18.2		
Rhetorical questions	T	18	20.5	126	-2.088*
	E	18	16.5		
Adorned language	T	18	24	64	-3.202**
	E	18	13		

\*\*2-tailed  $p < 0.01$

\* 2-tailed  $p < 0.05$

Note: Rhetorical questions and adorned language use were proportioned to the total word count in the essays of each participant.

