

## CHAPTER 6.

# CULTURAL SHAPING OF STANDPOINT AND REASONING IN ANALYTICAL WRITING

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Argumentation refers to the verbal expression of a reasoning—a process through which the reasons that inform our statements are explored (Underberg & Norton, 2018). It is a communication process whose product, an argument, is defined in logic as “a set of two or more propositions related to each other in such a way that all but one of them (the premises) are supposed to provide support for the remaining one (the conclusion)” (Kemerling, 2011). In ordinary language, words and phrases are used to construe statements that build an argument (e.g., claims, allegations, thesis) but what distinguishes an argument from a mere set of statements is the contrast between statements assumed to be true and others used to support them. This contrast results from the relation of inference that is supposed to hold between them. As explained by Van Dijk, “Hierarchically speaking an argument has a binary structure consisting of Premises and Conclusion, where the Conclusion contains information that is inferred from the information contained in the Premises” (1980, p. 117).

The ability to build a sound argument convincingly linking premises and conclusion in such a way that what is offered as true by the arguer is accepted as true by the addressee is a valuable skill in different contexts (at home, at the working place, in social contexts). In the educational context where argumentation is most often formally introduced, practiced, and assessed, it is through analytical text writing—a kind of prose in which the topic is the protagonist.

Analytical writing (i.e., reflecting on a topic and/or supporting claims with sound reasons) is not confined to a single subject area. It is as important to science as it is to language and history, and it becomes increasingly linked to academic success across grade levels. The prevalence of analytical writing embracing argumentative patterns has been shown in several studies (e.g., Zhu, 2001, as cited in Biria & Yakhabi, 2013). A long-standing debate in the study of academic writing is concerned with the effect of different rhetorical traditions on the properties of the quality of argumentation for academic purposes. With

the establishment of Contrastive Rhetoric (CR) as a field of study in the late sixties (Kaplan, 1966) arguing for the culture-specificity of textual structures and argumentation patterns quite opposing positions were advanced. While some stressed the universality of academic discourse (e.g., Widdowson, 1979; Schwanzer, 1981), others consider reasonable to assume that different cultures would orient their discourse in different ways (Leki, 1991; Clyne, 1987) and still others argue that what is being identified as differing rhetoric might be merely non-skilled, developmental writing (Mohan & Lo, 1985).

Charles Bazerman (1988) added to the complexity of this debate highlighting the extent to which writers' plans, goals, and other process-based strategies are dependent on the particular purpose, settings, and audiences. By examining writing processes in different disciplines, he contends that the extent to which usages are universal or culture-bound relates to disciplinary knowledge and the relative stabilization of the disciplines. Recent developments pursue this direction tending to reject an either/or contrast—either universal or culture bound—in academic discourse, while stressing the role of educational systems on the rhetorical preferences of writers. On the one hand, it has been shown that rhetorical structures of scientific texts may show similar overall patterns of organization but different degrees of variation due to disciplinary (De Carvalho, 2001) and language differences (Suárez & Moreno, 2008). And, on the other hand, intercultural variation in the rhetorical decisions of writers due to topic content or level of schooling were found to be stronger than the similarities imposed by writers' being part of broadly defined cultural groups such as Oriental or Semitic (Clyne, 1987, Golebiowski, 1998). In her analysis of metatext use in research articles on economics written in English by Finnish and Anglo-American academics, Mauranen (1993), found that Anglo-American writers use more metatext than Finnish writers. She assumes that, despite a relative uniformity of academic papers obeying the requirements of genre in a particular discipline, there is significant intercultural variation in the rhetorical preferences of writers because "writing is a cultural object that is very much shaped by the educational system in which the writer has been socialised" (Mauranen, 1993, p. 112). In other words, we could argue that while there are some similarities across languages (perhaps rhetorical universals), there are different sociocultural and socio-rhetorical aspects (perhaps rhetorical specific) that affect the composition process of well-organized and canonically tailored written texts.

This study aims to intervene in the debate on the relative dependence of textual organization on different rhetorical/cultural traditions as well as on the influence of instructional practices on the rhetorical choices of writers. Our main goal is to determine the effect of two contrasting rhetorical traditions, the Israeli—one strongly influenced by Anglo-Saxon rhetorical preferences, and the Spanish one—typically following the Romance rhetoric, on the structure and

quality of the arguments deployed by Spanish and Israeli adolescents at the same grade level (10th-11th grade) producing an analytical essay on the topic of dress code. These students are at the last stage of compulsory education and, therefore, not yet acquainted with the conventionalized structuring of scientific texts that currently characterize publication (especially in higher education) in the different disciplines and professions. Thus, we expected that the essays produced by these adolescents will reflect culturally driven writing instruction practices rather than discipline-specific rhetoric grounded in crosslinguistic canons of argumentative essays.

### THE INFLUENCE OF RHETORICAL TRADITIONS ON WRITING

To be a proficient text-literate, one needs not only to be familiar with diverse types of texts, but also to command the writing patterns and procedures that better respond to the expectancies of readers that are part of the tradition in which these texts are nested. These texts implicitly broadcast the standards of text quality by translating knowledge into writing construed to fit a rhetorical tradition. Rhetorical traditions are grounded in the premise of bridging diverse voices through an act of persuasion as evident in the historical evolution of the field of rhetoric explained by Stroud as

part of the challenge of coming to terms with difference is the confrontation with something, be it a tradition, a thinker, or a text, that challenges one's own way of understanding the world, possible accounts of it, and our structures of reasoning and justification. Moreover, bridging such differences either by recognizing or accepting them rather than rejecting or dismissing them is a great achievement for it forces our thinking and writing to move away from the all too comfortable and familiar and obscure our standard of judgement. (2019, p. 120)

Rhetorical traditions have been studied from different perspectives and disciplines. The almost inevitable perspective is CR which began as a text analysis of writers who were not native speakers of the language. The assumption of CR was that rhetorical traditions are anchored in cultural and linguistic conventions of the writer's first language (Soler-Monreal et al., 2011; Connor, 2002; 2014). Aligned with Bazerman's observation that "[w]riting is a complex social participatory performance in which the writer asserts meaning, goals, affiliations, and identities within a constantly changing, contingently organized social world, relying on shared texts and knowledge" (2016, p.18), CR new directions have been on the process of composing quality written texts in meticulous description

of the complexity of the cultural, social, situational, and contextual factors affecting writing (Connor, 2004, p. 292; Connor, 2008, p. 304). Although the initial impetus of CR was to compare written texts by native and non-native (particularly ESL writers), more recently the comparisons expanded to varieties of the same language ascribing to one of two CR approaches—either analyzing L1 texts in different cultures which are geared to professional audiences of native speakers and follow the rhetorical contexts into which they are inscribed; or finding textual criteria that characterize the successful or unsuccessful writer in that L1 (e.g., Pak & Acevedo, 2008; Leki, 1991) as well as between languages (e.g., Arvay & Tanko, 2004; Burgess, 2002; Loukianenko-Wolfe, 2008; Martín-Martín, 2003; Taylor & Chen, 1991; Suárez & Moreno, 2008).

A different perspective is the Rhetorical Structure Theory (RST) proposed by Mann & Thompson (1987) that has been applied to different areas of science in different languages over the years. From its very inception, it was conceived to characterize the text's rhetorical components and their relations in search for universal/cross cultural and language specific textual organizations. For example, Scott et al. (1999, as cited in Taboada & Mann, 2006) use RST to analyze realization of the components involved in generation and enablement (purpose, means, result, and condition for generation; sequence, purpose, condition, and result for enablement) in Portuguese, French, and English. They provided an interesting mapping of semantics to syntax using RST to show that the three languages use the rhetorical relations differently: for example, Portuguese does not use means for enablement; English uses condition and result for enablement, but Portuguese and French do not.

RST conceptualizes the overall text structure as hierarchically structured in which certain elements are foregrounded (nuclei) and others are backgrounded (satellites). Nuclear elements are genre-specific compulsory components. For example, the sequence of events is nuclear in narrative texts—there is no narrative without events—while evaluative components, although adding to text richness are taken as satellite and optional in a narrative. As we shall see, in argumentative texts, claims and supports are nuclear components whereas counterclaims, in contrast, although useful for fulfilling the communicative purpose of argumentation, are dispensable if they follow a claim. This distinction is particularly useful for examining texts produced by inexperienced writers and serves to appreciate their awareness of genre constraints.

## MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RHETORICAL TRADITIONS

Connor et. Al. discuss the origins of CR stating: “[a]s Diane Belcher puts it, “in the beginning was Kaplan” (2014, p. 59). His “doodles” article (1966), though

controversial and even misunderstood, remains a ground-breaking study of student writing because it initiated the systematic analysis of the thesis that one's first language and culture influence the structure of discourse. Following in the footsteps of contrastive analysis (CA), which looked primarily at word- and sentence-level structures, Kaplan's work was the first to consider the above-the-sentence rhetorical structure of texts. Matsuda (2001) says that Kaplan's seminal work on CR was motivated by three different intellectual traditions: contrastive analysis, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, and the emerging field of composition and rhetoric at the paragraph level. Grounded in these traditions, Kaplan's pioneering work was criticized for both representing a deterministic view of culture and overgeneralizing findings based on essays written in English by students from different cultural/linguistic backgrounds disregarding other developmental and socio-cultural factors that influence writing (Casanave, 2004; see Kubota, 2010) such as the idea of culture as monolithic. Irrespective of the origin and historical evolution of CR, Kaplan's (1966) earlier model was concerned with paragraph organization. However, it advances—through rather sweeping overgeneralizations—useful categories of analysis to account for cultural differences in written texts especially those composed for academic purposes. According to Kaplan's model the following writing patterns can be identified across cultures.

1. In American (English) argumentative writing is linear, direct, and to the point, with the main thesis formulated at the beginning of the argument, and supporting arguments arranged hierarchically.
2. Semitic argumentative writing (Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaic) presents the argument in parallel propositions, or embedded in stories, not in hierarchical progression.
3. Oriental (Asian) argumentative writing approaches the argument in a circular, respectful, indirect, non-assertive, but authoritative way.
4. Romance (and German) argumentative writing favors a digressive style that requires readers to follow the argument to its conclusion.
5. Russian argumentative writing follows the Romance model, but with more freedom in dividing up parts of the argument as the author proceeds to the conclusion.

Forty years later, Rienecker and Jörgensen (2003), although going deeper into the major characteristics of each tradition, provide an account that pretty much coincides with Kaplan's in comparing the Continental (German-Romantic) with the Anglo-American traditions in scientific writing and coexist in the academic writing for higher education in the European context: The Anglo-American (problem-oriented) tradition and the continental (topic-oriented) tradition. The continental tradition emphasizes science as thinking, whereas the

Anglo-American writing “emphasizes science as investigation and problem solving focusing on the empirically based study, and the systematically and updated literature-based research paper” (p. 104). These two traditions are imparted differently in the writing courses to the extent that they result in two different systems of thinking and knowledge making.

The globalization of communication and the homogenizing impact of the internet on people’s habits of reading and writing could make us doubt the current validity of these distinctions, in spite the social presence of writing. Yet, writing conventions are taught in schools. While many children read outside school for entertainment, few write/produce written essays outside school. In other words, writing, for most schoolchildren, is nearly always a scholastic activity and inevitably reflects the culture of the school system and reproduces culturally preferred discourse styles. Conventions of writing are often shaped by and passed on to new generations through formal education in most societies (Leki, 1991; Connor, 1996).

Studies show that rhetorical traditions still have a strong impact on the teaching of writing in the school years and at college. Schleppegrell and Colombi (2005) describe the Anglo-American writing programs (so-called “Style and Comp” classes) as a fixed discourse structure (topic sentence expressing a standpoint, two or three paragraphs of arguments for and against, and a conclusion), providing a mnemonic scheme for overall text organization. Their Latin American counterparts, in contrast, emphasize motivation, functionality, and creativity even for academic writing.

## **THE USE OF ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAYS TO CATCH CULTURAL DIFFERENCES**

In argumentative essays writers are expected to express their point of view on the topic and to use different strategies to persuade the audience of the validity of the point of view by the force of his argumentation (Tolchinsky et al., 2018). The audience are “[t]hose whom the orator wants to influence with his/her argumentation” (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1989, p. 55). Even though written texts are self-sustained/monological texts there is always a dialogical basis for persuasion to occur (Ramírez, 2010; Stavans et al., 2019). It is essential for the writer to think of the (potential) reader to choose the ideas to be presented (Chala & Chapetón, 2012; Bazerman, 2016). As any communication process, the quality of argumentation is subject to cultural differences. The strategies and linguistic means writers deploy to achieve their goals reflect the rhetoric of reference as a mode of “finding all available means” (Kaplan, 1966, p. 11).

Models of arguments (as well as of any other knowledge or skill such as reading or writing) are tools of thought that help organize phenomena even if they

are imperfect (Galbraith, 1999). In the present study we use Toulmin's model (1958) considered to be a precursor of argumentation studies. His top-down approach focuses on identifying the different components of an argument and the roles they play within it. We provide here a short definition of the model components that will be elaborated in the next section. The two main elements are the *claim*, an assertion that the writer makes on the topic, and the *grounds*, that explicitly support the claim. The four other elements (*qualifier*, *warrants*, *backing*, and *rebuttals*) are not indispensable and help to further ground and limit the argument. Although Toulmin's model was criticized because it does not capture the dialogical dimension that he attributes to argumentation at a conceptual level (Leitão, 2000), it provides a solid basis to analyze rhetorical arguments and serves to compare argument structure cross-linguistically.

Applying Toulmin's model, studies showed that Chinese students use fewer rebuttal claims and data (Qin & Karabacak, 2010). American students prefer a practical orientation, supported by factual concrete evidence whereas Japanese students prefer a more humanistic aesthetic orientation with lesser degree of warrants and backing and with more subjective evidence (Okabe, 1983). Japanese students were also found to be more cautious and ambiguous in their writing. They use more frequently qualifiers, rhetorical questions, disclaimers and denials, ambiguous pronouns, and the passive voice compared to American students (Hinkel, 2005).

Studies have also attempted to characterize general patterns of reasoning based on the placement of the different components in the text. For example, the emplacement of the thesis statement has been assumed as indicative of deductive or inductive reasoning. In inductive writing the thesis statement is in the final position whereas deductive writing has the thesis statement in the initial position. Hinds explains that "deductive writing has the thesis statement in the initial position" (1990, p. 89). Non-deductive development can be of two forms: inductive, "having the thesis statement in the final position" (Hinds, 1990, p. 89) or quasi-inductive, "getting the readers to think for themselves, to consider the observations made, and to draw their own conclusions" (Hinds, 1990, pp. 99-100). In a native English argumentative writing, the paragraph begins with a clear thesis statement, followed by paragraphs containing relevant and adequate support of the thesis statement. As emphasized by Bain (2010, as cited in Hussin & Griffin, 2012), a deductive pattern, where the placement of thesis statement usually comes at the beginning of the paragraphs, is preferred by native English speakers "to indicate the scope of the text" (Kamimura & Oi, 1996) pointed out two major differences in the organization patterns in argumentative essays between American and Japanese writers, in which the former prefer the General-Specific pattern while the latter subscribe either to Specific-General pattern

or the “Omission Pattern.” Another difference they found is that the American writers organize ideas in linear way, while Japanese writers organize in a circular way (Torres & Medriano, 2020).

In a similar vein, Drid (2015) suggests that the organization of argumentation in essays, namely choosing to state the writer’s claim early in the text or to postpone the statement of the point after advancing arguments, varies across cultures, engendering difficulties for learners of foreign languages. Delineating the senses of “induction” and “deduction” and scrutinizing their variants would make the comprehension of such cross-cultural disparities more lucid. Research indicates that induction and deduction, seen as two principal macrostructures of persuasive discourse, are end points of a wider continuum of argumentative text organizations with additional variants. Warnick and Manusov (2000), for instance, have investigated the variation of the justificatory macrostructures in relation to cultural beliefs and values in four cultural groups: African Americans, Asian Americans, Asians, and European Americans. Their study showed that the inductive and deductive modes of reasoning, which are the principal forms of argumentation known in the Western tradition, are not the sole patterns used in persuasion if one moves from one community to another.

Two new terms are introduced based on the extent to which the writing pattern places burden on the writer or reader to achieve text semantic connect-edness: reader responsible as opposed to writer responsible texts, based on the division of responsibility between readers and writers, namely, “the amount of effort writers expend to make texts cohere through transitions and other uses of metatext” (Connor, 2002, p. 496; Hinds, 1987). McCool states that reader responsible cultures “emphasize flowery and ornate prose, subjects over actions, theory instead of practice, and an inductive or quasi-inductive line of reasoning” (2009, p. 2). Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) state that in English argumentation, statements of points of view are found to be explicit and are usually placed near the beginning of the text. In comparison, Japanese-speaking writers conceal their standpoints while presenting the different sides of an issue, with their position coming only at the end. Hinds investigated the two parties’ evaluation of the others’ style. He concluded that “Japanese readers found the linear, deductive argumentation style associated with English language texts to be dull, pointless, and self-involved. At the same time, English speaking readers perceived Japanese argumentative patterns to be circuitous, abstract, and occasionally evasive” (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005). Other studies modeling Hinds’ cross-linguistic typology are recorded. For instance, it is found that, unlike English texts which contain lucid, well-organized statements, German and Spanish texts put the burden on the reader to excavate for meaning (Clyne, 1987; Valero-Garces, 1996). This feature also characterizes writing in Hebrew (Zellermayer, 1988) and Arabic



writers who tend not to use deduction in their writing (Almehmadi, 2012). Understanding the contrasts between English and Arabic in the rhetorical organization of argumentative texts is of relevance to predict “anomalies” in EFL writers’ texts. Calling their divergences anomalies implies that they will fail to meet the expectations of English readerships if they happen to perform in English academic circles as international students.

## THE STUDY

Our main goal was to explore the influence of two contrasting rhetorical communities on the superstructure of analytical essays aimed at developing an argument following a similar prompt. For this purpose, we examined a corpus of 60 texts, 30 produced in Spanish-by-Spanish native speakers and 30 produced in Hebrew by native Hebrew speaking students in secondary school. All the students attended the same school level (10th-11th grade), two years before the end of compulsory education. We assumed that students at this school level, while having acquired experience in text writing of different genres, are more dependent on the local tradition of the teaching of writing with little to no exposure or familiarity with the more international standard of Anglo-centric scientific writing.

*Participants.* The Spanish sample included native Spanish speakers from León, Spain, a Spanish monolingual community. Parents had secondary or university studies. Participants were involved in a bigger project in which they produced five texts about different topics. The present study is based on a subsample of 30 texts randomly selected among those produced in response to the prompt “*What do you think about the freedom of a dress code?*” Results of a pilot showed that the selected topic triggered varied and rich responses. Students produced their texts in the context of their regular classes using a computer. They had 30 minutes to complete the task.

The Hebrew sample consisted of 30 Hebrew speaking 10th graders from Kfar Saba and Raanana high school in northern-central Israel. The students come from mid-high SES homes. Children were asked to write a text in response to the prompt “*What do you think about instituting a school uniform?*” Texts were produced during the Hebrew language lesson using pen and paper and students were given 30 minutes to complete the task.

*The teaching context.* The Spanish curriculum introduces “texts typology,” the explicit study of distinguishing features of different text types in elementary school. The typical structure of argumentative texts (thesis, different types of arguments, and conclusion) is described and illustrated by examples. Nevertheless, teaching of writing follows a communicative approach (Maqueo, 2006).

In light of this approach teachers emphasize the communicative objective of an argumentative text, richness of expression and topic content rather than text structure. Text production in class is not a frequent task but the texts analyzed for this study were produced in the contexts of a set of classroom activities in which both the communicative purpose and the readers were made explicit. The students were informed that their texts will be read by a group of future teachers and researchers to be acquainted with their opinions and ways of expression as part of their training.

The Israeli Hebrew writing curriculum of argumentative texts begins in middle school and lasts into the high-school years (7th to 10th grades). The teaching of argumentative writing is in context of other literacy related activities such as reading and responding to a text or discussing a controversial topic in class. Following these activities pupils engage in writing following the instructions regarding the structure of the argumentative texts as stating a claim to clearly establish a point of view, then the claim must be followed by supports in the form of facts, explanations, illustrations, and arguments, establishing a counterclaim and refuting it, and closing with a conclusion and a recommendation.

## **WHAT DO WE LOOK FOR IN THE TEXTS?**

The topic we used and the instruction we gave were intended to elicit argumentation. The dressing code and the extent to which it should be controlled at school has been debated in the media both in Israel and Spain and is a highly relevant and authentic topic among adolescents. It is a topic of controversial nature that calls for considering both individual/personal motivations and social impositions. On the other hand, we invited the students to express their own thoughts; that is, to manifest their own point of view on a topic warranting that the interlocutor might think differently. We expected they will try to persuade the reader of their own rightful position. We were specifically curious as to whether they will resort to individual or social constraints to support their own point of view; and what kind of facts/evidence will be included in their reasoning. Moreover, we were interested in seeing whether students will invoke possible objections to their point of view in the form of counterclaims so as to appreciate the extent to which they are probing “internal” interlocutors.

To address these questions, we focus on the superstructural level of texts. The superstructure has been defined as a schematic structure, including “those functions of macro-propositions that have become conventionalized in a given culture” (Van Dijk, 1980, p. 108). As such, it is accepted by adult language users of a speech community and, therefore, learned mostly through formal instruction. Thus, given its conventionalized nature, we assumed that the functional

categories the students include in their texts will reflect rhetorical socio-cultural differences. To interpret and characterize the functional categories in the text superstructure we followed Toulmin's model of argument structure and Van Dijk functional analyses and the distinction into nuclear and satellite components suggested in the RST theory.

We looked at the type of component, that is, the functional category realized by each macro-proposition in the text and the emplacement of the component meaning the location of the functional category in the text. In addition to establishing the functional category realized in the last macro-proposition, we analyzed which functional category was used as the first (opening) macro-proposition and which was used as the last (closure) macro-proposition in the text.

We assumed that the identification of the different functional categories included in a text (i.e., the specific articulation of the superstructure) will show the *general architecture* of the text. Concomitantly, the focus on the type of component that appears in the *opening* and *closure* emplacement in the text will cue the type or reasoning, whether deductive or inductive, and will frame (package) the general architecture of the texts. In what follows we elaborate on the types of components we distinguished to further clarify the above assumptions will be clearer.

*Types of components.* We distinguished two nuclear components (i.e., components that must be realized in the text) that are compulsory for building the argument structure: claims and grounds. Claims are the assertion that authors wish to prove to their audience while grounds are the reasons, fact or evidence that support the author's claim.

The nuclear components constitute what Van Dijk defines as premises and conclusion (claims according to: Stavans et al., 2019; Toulmin, 1958) where the information of the latter can be inferred from the information of the former. The premises may often feature a certain setting (like the setting in narratives), in which the topic is introduced, who or what objects or notions are involved and what are the intention and the writer's point of view on the topic. Premises, accordingly, require facts which contain descriptions or assumptions about states or events that the speaker considers to be true or established and directly acceptable by the hearer. These are termed as *grounds* by Toulmin (1958) or *support* by Stavans et al. (2019).

The satellite components defined by Toulmin (1958) are the warrants, in charge of establishing the connection between claims and grounds. Accordingly, the warrant is a third important but dispensable component of the argument structure because it can be implicit (i.e., not realized in the texts but inferred by the reader). In his analysis, Van Dijk explains that to be able to draw a particular conclusion from particular facts, the argument needs a more general assumption about the relationship between these kinds of facts and claims. In Toulmin's

analysis, backing refers to any additional support of the warrant (the connection between grounds and claims) but in Van Dijk's consequent analysis not only warrants but also facts (descriptions that support the premises) may need further motivation or backing. In many cases, the warrant is implied, and therefore the backing links to the claim by giving a specific example that function as warrant. Backing must be introduced when the warrant or the facts by themselves are not convincing enough to the readers or the listeners.

We also looked for the presence of counterclaims or rebuttals, in Toulmin's (1958) terminology. This category may increase the writer's probability to persuade the reader. The rebuttal is an acknowledgement of another valid view of the situation and would be equivalent to a counterclaim in Stavans et al. (2019) terminology introducing a greater degree of text autonomy with a multivoiced text that can invite dialogue with different potential readers (Leitão, 2003).

In Toulmin's model there is another component—the qualifiers, that restricts the instances the claim covers in cases where it may not be true in all circumstances. In this study we did not examine the use of qualifiers.

Given our special interest in the perspective from which the students define their point of view we further examined whether the claims that reflect the author point of view on the topic were based on individual-personal perspectives or on socially constrained perspectives. Claims as the one in (1a) produced by a Hebrew speaker student and in (1b) by a Spanish student were categorized as personal whereas claims as the one in (2a) produced by a Hebrew speaker student and in (2b) by a Spanish student, respectively were categorized as socially driven:

(1a) ani xoshevet she'hayeldim tzrixim lakaxat haxlatot al ma lillbosh

I think that the kid should make the decisions about what to wear.

(1b) yo creo que todas las personas debemos poder llevar lo que cada uno crea conveniente

I think that all the people (we) must be able to wear whatever one thinks (it is) convenient.

(2a) lesikum,daati hi shanaxni tzrixim tilboshet axida bebeit hasefer bishvil hashayaxut vehabetixut shel hatalmidim

To sum up, my opinion is that we need to use school uniforms for the unity and the security of the students.

(2b) pero dentro de la ropa que te guste llevar tienes que adaptarte al sitio al que vas a ir

[B]ut among the clothes you like to wear you have to adapt to the place you are going to go.

A third kind of claim contained a reflection on the topic but without personal evaluation whereby rather than expressing the student's point of view on the issue at stake either for individual or social reasons, these thematic claims reflected a generalization on the topic. Claims as the one displayed in (3a) produced by a Hebrew speaking student and in (3b) by a Spanish student, respectively were categorized as thematic.

(3a) haim ei paam xashavtem al hamashmaut belilbosh tilboshet axida bebeit hasefer?

Have you ever thought about what it means to wear a uniform at school?

(3b) La manera de vestir ha sido un tema de debate entre la gente en los últimos años

The way of dressing has been a topic of debate among people in the last years.

We could make a similar distinction in terms of the individual or socially driven for the grounds students use to support their claims. Supports such as those expressed in (4a) and (4b) were considered as personal and those in (5a) and (5b) as socially driven.

(4a) ledaati lilbosh tilboshet axida ze lo raayontov ki talmidim tzrixim lihiyot xofshii lilbosh et ma shehem rotzim

In my opinion it is not a good idea to wear uniforms because students must be free to be able to dress as they want.

(4b) siempre la ropa define, en parte, tu personalidad

Always the clothes define, in part, your personality.

(5a) ledaati ze rayon metzuyan. Reshit, kol hatalmidim shelovshim tilboshet axida margishim shyaxut lekvutza

In my opinion it is a great idea. First of all, students who wear a school uniform feel a part of the group.

(5b) lo más normal es que la gente se te quede mirando y hagan comentarios inadecuados e incluso falten el respeto a esa persona

[T]he most normal (thing) is that people stare at you and make inappropriate comments and even disrespect that person.

According to the model of reference we used for characterizing and interpreting the text's functional categories, claims are to be supported by facts of empirical evidence of some kind. Thus, we also identified factual supports illustrated in (6a) and (6b) by Hebrew speaking and Spanish speaking students respectively.

(6a) benosaf, harbe mexkarim her'u shetilboshet axida behexlet toremet lkeshet bein hayeladim

In addition, many studies have shown that a uniform definitely contributes to the connection between the children.

(6b) este tipo de problemas suele ocurrir a la gente que viste de negro, a la gente que viste con ropa corta y a muchos tipos de personas

[T]his kind of problems often occur to people who wear black, to people who dress in short clothes, and to many types of people.

Each of the authors independently divided the texts into macro-propositions and attributed a functional category according to the above explained criteria. Inter-rater reliability was achieved by parallel coding of 10% of the sample and reaching agreement on 92% of the coded macro-propositions.

## WHAT DO WE FIND IN THE TEXTS?

Israeli texts were shorter and contained fewer macro-propositions ( $M=8.43$ ,  $SD=1.57$ ) than those of their Spanish cohorts ( $M=11.47$ ,  $SD=13.73$ ). Under this rather trivial difference, we have found two rhetorical worlds. Israeli 10th graders' texts are *to the point*, they express in a short direct, and linear manner their claims and supporting grounds motivated mainly by personal preferences. They guide the reader to differentiate between opinion from conclusions and enumerating reasons. They relate to social equality, bullying, safety, and identity.

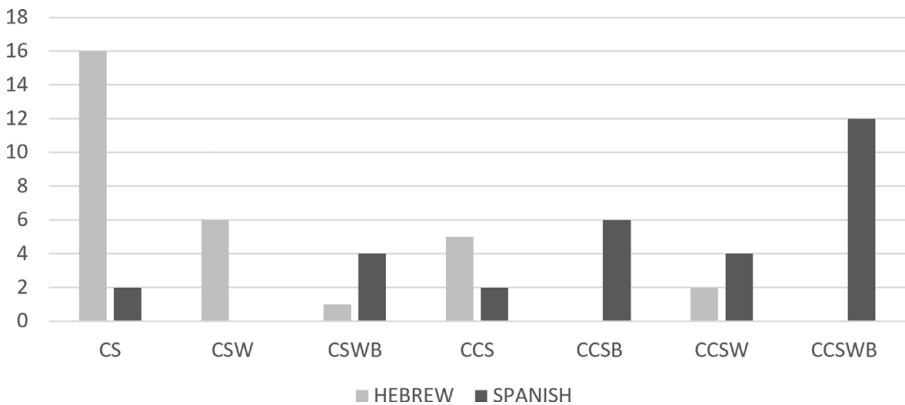
In contrast, Spanish texts appear as more convoluted reasoning mainly motivated by socially motivated constraints. The reader is challenged to distinguish between ought to be assertions, personal opinions and conclusions. At times, students resort to popular sayings as support to their claims and their digressions take them to include themes such as slavery, civilization, national freedom, and, in one case, suicide.

Despite this diversity, the two rhetorical worlds share two features which would be part of a robust and rich argumentative text architecture as would be expected in fully fledged scientific and academic texts. First, there is a substantial scarcity of counterclaims or attending to alternative views on the same phenomenon,

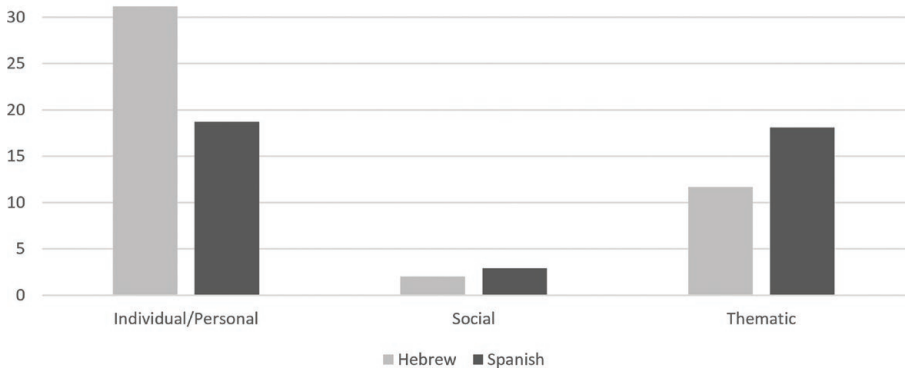
rendering a biased and author-centric argument. Second, and equally surprising, there are fewer than expected empirical evidence as supporting grounds, rendering rather formulaic and prescribed and at times populist support to the claims.

Figure 6.1 showcases each group's distribution of the components in the texts including: claims (all three types summed up) and counterclaims (all types summed up), support (all types summed up), and warrants and backings (which constitute the general architecture of the texts).

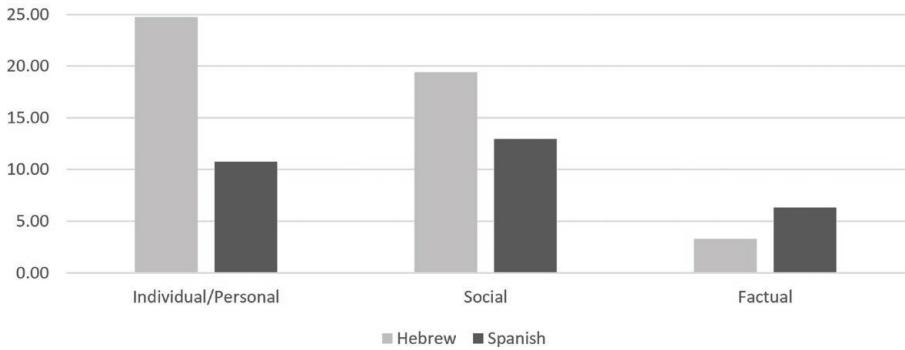
Text architecture differs across the two group of participants. While half of the texts produced by Israeli students conform to the basic structure of an argument—including only claims and support, a similar number of texts produced by Spanish students include all types of components. Yet, texts containing claim, support, and warrant were produced only by Israeli students. Texts with counterclaims and support (CCS) were more frequent in the Israeli group than in the Spanish, whereas text constituting the architectures that include a counterclaim with a support followed by either warrant or backing (CCSW, CCSB) were more frequent among the Spanish texts than among the Israeli ones. The larger presence of counterclaims in the Spanish texts as compared to the Israeli ones may indicate that Israeli students are less prone to provide alternative views or anticipate objections to their own thoughts on the topic at stake. Rather, their basal architecture renders formulaic and somewhat shallow but felicitous argumentative texts.



*Figure 6.1. Texts “architecture” by number of texts in each group (Hebrew and Spanish) containing different combinations of components. Note: CS=Claim and Support; CSW=Claim, Support, and Warrant; CSWB=Claim, Support, Warrant, and Backing; CCS=Claim, Counterclaim, and Support; CCSB= Claim, Counterclaim, Support, and Backing; CCSW=Claim, Counterclaim, Support, and Warrant; CCSWB Claim, Counterclaim, Support, Warrant, and Backing*



*Figure 6.2. Distribution of the proportion of the three types of **claims** (Individual/Personal, Social, and Thematic) in the texts of each group*



*Figure 6.3. Distribution of the proportion of the three types of **support** (Individual/Personal, Social/Moral, and Factual) in the texts of each group*

Our second concern en-route to deciphering the diversity of these rhetorical worlds was to look closely at the types of claims that were deployed by each group. Figure 6.2 displays the proportional distribution of the three types of claims (individual/personal, social, and thematic) in the texts of each group.

Nearly 30% of the texts of Israeli students frame their claim regarding their point of view on the school uniform as a dressing code on personal preferences such as their right to choose or their ownership on a decision that pertains to them as individuals, whereas almost 12% of their texts grounded their claims in a more general theme to justify their own perspective. Moreover, claims based on issues of socially driven constraints were scarce and negligible. In contrast, the Spanish students showed a balanced distribution (around 18%) of claims that uphold their standpoint on the topic resorting to personal rights and to



reflections on general themes. Very few texts (around nearly 3%) include social considerations to defend their standpoint. In all, the main perspective taken by the Israeli students compared to their Spanish cohorts is one that centers more on the author's identity and thematic emphasis and much less on social considerations whereas the Spanish perspective is more balanced in the perspective taken by the author on the individual and thematic considerations and much less on the social ones, similar to that of the Israeli cohorts.

In a similar vein, we looked at the distribution of the different types of support/grounds components in each group as illustrated in Figure 6.3.

In general, both groups resort predominantly to two types of support—that of a personal nature and that of a socio-moral justification to their claims. Our findings show that Israeli students are more inclined to support their standpoint on justification of personal preferences (almost 25% of the texts) and slightly less on justifications of socio-moral reasons (less than 20% of the texts). To our surprise, about 3% of Israeli students resorted to facts or other kinds of empirical evidence to support their claims. Among the Spanish students, there is a slight preference for justifications of the socio-moral reasons (almost 13% of the texts) followed by personal motivations (almost 11%) and only about 6% of the texts included factual support to the students' standpoints. Like the immature albeit felicitous content of the claim component, the supports follow the very author-centered and shallow text in terms of its sophistication and quality.

Finally, we explored the distribution of the functional categories in the opening and closure emplacement to reveal a more culture-based rhetorical tradition (Table 6.1).

**Table 6.1. Type of Component in Text Opening and Closure by Language**

Type of component	Opening		Closure	
	Hebrew	Spanish	Hebrew	Spanish
Claim PoV Individual	23,33	16,67	83,33	33,33
Claim PoV Social	3,33	0,00	3,33	3,33
Claim Thematic	70,00	83,33	0,00	13,33
Counterclaim	0,00	0,00	0,00	10,00
Support Personal	0,00	0,00	6,67	6,67
Support Social	0,00	0,00	3,33	6,67
Support Factual	0,00	0,00	0,00	3,33
Warrants	0,00	0,00	3,33	3,33
Backing	0,00	0,00	0,00	13,33

We have found that in all the texts, by both Israeli and Spanish students, the macro-proposition in a text initial position (opening emplacement) is a claim. However, in the Hebrew texts 70% of the claims in opening position are of the thematic type and 23% advance a point of view of a personal preferences nature. The preferences for a thematic claim, that is the preference to start a text with a reflection on the topic, is more pronounced in the Spanish texts with more that 80% of the texts using this type of opening. In that sense the opening of the argumentative texts of both rhetorical worlds is similar. However, the distribution of the components differs in the closure emplacement. Although the preferred way of closure is still a personal claim, there are texts that close by means of other resources. Overall, the characterization of emplacement reflects on the reasoning that is recruited in construing an argument. As indicated earlier, an argument that opens with an explicit or implicit claim (individual, social, or thematic) and closes with any kind of support reflects deductive reasoning while a text where the claim is in the closure reflects an inductive reasoning.

Our results indicate that most of the students follow a deductive reasoning, moving from a thematic-driven assertion supported by personal justifications. To confirm this impression, we look *at each text* to examine the transition between the opening and the closure emplacement. Texts that open with a thematic claim and close with any kind of claim expressing the student point of view, a warrant or a backing were categorized as a deductive reasoning transition. Texts that open with any kind of claim expressing the student point of view and close with a thematic claim were categorized as displaying an inductive reasoning transition. Texts in which both opening and closure contained claims, or support of similar type were categorized as neither deductive nor inductive reasoning transition (Table 6.2)

Most Hebrew texts follow a deductive reasoning, moving from thematic claims in the opening macro-preposition to personal points of view claims followed by support. There is not such clear preference among the Spanish students, half of the texts follow a deductive pattern, but an almost identical number of students use the same type of claim at both the opening and the closure emplacement.

**Table 6.2. The Distribution of Texts by type of Reasoning/Transition and Group**

Type or Reasoning	Hebrew (n = 30)	Spanish (n = 30)
Deductive	21	15
Inductive	4	1
Neither/nor	5	14
Total	30	30

## TWO RHETORICAL WORLDS

Both Israeli and Spanish students were able to build an argument, they could produce a set of statements they assume to express their own thoughts on the topic of a dress code, and another set of statements that supported these thoughts. They were able to create the binary structure that defines an argument (van Dijk, 1980). However, beyond this basic common ground the texts of these adolescents highlight two contrasting rhetorical approaches.

Texts differed in their overall architecture, in the perspective from which the standpoint was expressed, in the type of supports students offered, in the pattern of argumentation and in the quality of their prose. Israeli students' standpoint was mainly based on individual considerations while Spanish students' framing of their point of view was more diverse, some viewpoints were driven by individual concerns, others by social impositions. The texts also differed in the type of supports used to ground the standpoints, again basically personally grounded justifications to the claims in the Israeli texts, and socially constrained justifications in the Spanish ones. There was also a clear distinction in the general pattern of reasoning, with Israeli texts offering a deductive reasoning pattern whereas Spanish texts are diverse, half following a deductive the other half advancing a neither deductive nor inductive, both opening and the closure contained claims, or support of similar type.

These differences have implications in terms of the audience for which the texts are intended and as such, beyond the differences in features of the superstructure there were notable differences in the kind of prose. Israeli instructional material and curriculum, as previously described, advances a highly structured argumentative text. Thus, Israeli productions were easy to follow, and to interpret both in content and structure. In contrast, Spanish texts illustrate McCool's description of a reader-responsible culture in their emphasis of "flowery and ornate prose" (2009, p. 2), their appeal to sayings, and reference to big topics that sounded weird (and unnecessary) in relation to a discussion on the dressing code was rather disconcerting. We suppose that these extravagances result from students' effort to imbue their texts of relevant content, to escape from colloquial discourse attending to the requirement of formal uses of language.

These findings point currently at the relevance, albeit with limitations and old in its framing, of the validity of some of the gross distinctions made by Kaplan (1966/1980) and Rienecker and Jörgensen (2003). The basic distinctions were also observed and used to profile our texts as following either the Anglo-American or the Romance rhetoric. Still, our findings call for a deeper characterization of the argument structure. For instance, the kind of grounds students that belong to each cultural group used to support their claims and/or the use of qualifiers, which

in turn reflect the writers' attitude toward the scope, certainty, or prescriptiveness of the state of affairs they used to justify their claims. These and other more fine-grained distinctions would complete the characterization of how writers from differing cultural traditions engaged in participatory text production carry on their "social participatory performance" (Bazerman, 2016).

In a more speculative vein, our findings point at the weight of pedagogical planning and practices exercised in the teaching of writing which is conservatively ordained by rhetorical conventions. There are different approaches to teaching writing taken by the Israeli as compared to the Spanish teachers. In the Israeli context, the teaching objectives in the writing of an argumentative text are highly structurally oriented but the practice of these objectives is embedded in multiple literacy activities around and towards the production of the texts, including reading, discussions, resource search, debates, and technologically grounded work in the classroom. These approaches and methods towards writing an argumentative text are eying the long-term expectations of the higher education system whereby the favored rhetorical tradition is the Anglo-American one. The outcome of such teaching practice suggests that the students shift away from the Semitic rhetorical features of Hebrew speakers' writing when producing a text in English as shown by Zeller Mayer (1988). While these observations illustrate the influence of the specific rhetoric in another language these may transfer when observing Israeli adolescents write in their first/native language. In contrast, the Spanish teacher's communicative approach, focusing on topic content, purpose, and motivation rather than on structural aspects seems to preserve many aspects of Romance rhetoric tradition.

To conclude, Bazerman and Prior stated: "To understand writing, we need to explore the practices that people engage in to produce texts as well as the way that writing practices gain their meaning and functions as dynamic elements of specific cultural settings" (2003, p. 2). Rhetorical structures are intricately related to cultural traditions for expressing, perceiving, and understanding the world. This relation as explored in this chapter, ascribes to the need to explore genre as well as text analysis in a sociocultural manner especially when the task at hand requires participatory writing in different languages, cultures, and rhetorical traditions, as a fundamental human need.

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