Raising EFL Learners' Pragmatic Awareness of Intercultural Rhetoric in Writing

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to explore the effectiveness of raising Iranian learners' pragmatic awareness of intercultural rhetoric in enhancing their L2 writing ability, complexity, and accuracy. To this end, two 25-member groups of EFL learners who were taking Basic Writing course at Islamic Azad University, Roudehen Branch, were selected based on their performance on a language proficiency test (PET). They were assigned as one control and one experimental group and took a validated, researcher-made pretest/posttest (with the reliability of 0.73) at the outset of the study. The experimental group received the explicit instruction of the teacher on IR followed by a task related to the content of the instruction while the control group's practice in writing was limited to doing the exercises in their course book without receiving the explicit instruction on IR. Following the termination of the nine-session treatment, the posttest was administered and the collected data underwent data analysis. The results indicated that pragmatic awareness of IR in writing was significantly effective in improving the Iranian EFL learners' writing ability as well as the accuracy of their written output. However, no significant influence of rhetorical awareness raising on learners' writing complexity was investigated in this study.

Keywords: intercultural rhetoric, pragmatic awareness raising, awareness raising, complexity, accuracy

1. Introduction

Learning to write in a foreign language is not an isolated classroom activity, but a social and cultural experience. The ability to express oneself in written English is becoming prominent in the globalized community where people often become known through their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary in writing, as well as their rhetorical competence, and are judged accordingly. Similarly, learning to write acceptably is of paramount importance for EFL learners who are often obliged from the beginning of their education at college to write all their papers and assignments in English although they may not have been instructed sufficiently how to do it. In other words, they are expected, if not how to write like English native speakers, at least how to be most effective when addressing an English-speaking audience.

The issue of how to express oneself in written English becomes more serious to EFL learners in Iran, where little explicit instruction in L1 composition writing is given at schools. On the other hand, Iranian EFL students are usually instructed to attend to the grammatical structures and lexical selection in their act of English writing, but they seem less concerned with rhetorical arrangement and the use of discourse markers in organizing their written products. Undoubtedly, a successful experience of teaching English writing to Iranian EFL learners would require them to be aware of the rhetorical features that govern acceptable writing in the target language. This surely necessitates the writer's awareness of the rhetorical variations in the target language (Hyland, 2003), namely Contrastive/ Intercultural Rhetoric.

Contrastive rhetoric (CR) has recently abandoned the strong view (Kaplan, 1966) that people in different cultures have different world views and cultural backgrounds. Rather, CR now suggests that different rhetorical modes are available to all writers but they do not occur with equal frequency or in parallel distribution (Kaplan, 1987). Perhaps this revisited Kaplan's stance inspired Connor (2004a, 2004b) to suggest the term intercultural rhetoric (henceforth IR) to better describe the broadening trends of writing across languages/cultures. IR is typically defined by Connor (2011) as "the study of written discourse between and among individuals with different

cultural backgrounds" (p. 2). In other words, the new trend in CR, suggested as IR, encompasses rhetorical concepts used by all writers to write across cultures, regardless of their cultural background. This necessitates giving more attention to the changing definitions of culture and their impact on research and practice in IR and also recognizes that IR should not be seen in its CR state (Connor & Traversa, 2014).

Employing intercultural rhetorically-oriented writing instruction, as Walker (2011) argues, can enable students to better comprehend how rhetorical styles differ from one writer to another with respect to his/her linguistic and cultural background and how such differences influence written communication. In a plain way, learning the rules of composition in a globalized community is related, to a certain extent, to learning the rhetorical conventions of writing across languages, and this need requires L2 learners to learn the rhetorical organization of the English written text (Marandi, 2002; Shen & Yao, 1999), no matter to which cultural community they belong. In fact, IR-oriented writing instruction is believed to help L2 learners to write more easily and to produce more fluent, target-like written output (Walker, 2004, 2011; Yoshimura, 2002).

Given the importance of teaching English rhetorical arrangement in EFL writing classes, the next issue this paper deals with is methodological one: How can EFL teachers raise learners' awareness of rhetorical conventions of English writing? Does the traditional, product-oriented approach to writing help improve the learners' written output? Does it suffice to raise the learners' awareness of the similarities and differences between the rhetorical organization of the target language (L2) and that of their own language (L1) to enhance the quality of their L2 writing? Isn't providing learners with the opportunity of practicing their attained knowledge of IR more helpful than the mere rhetorical awareness raising?

Perhaps the driving impetus to conduct the present study was removing the major drawbacks to CR/IR in writing; that is, perspectivism and focus on form rather than content and rhetorical strategies (Hyland, 2003; Weigle, 2002). This led the authors of the paper to apply a practical mode of rhetorical awareness raising, namely pragmatic awareness of IR, through which the learners could find the opportunity to apply the knowledge of IR

they newly acquired in the act of writing. This required the researchers to design an experimental study in which the learners could receive the explicit instruction of the teacher in IR followed by a task to perform based on the content of the instruction. Accordingly, the purpose of the present study was to answer the following research questions:

1. Is there any significant difference between the writing performance of EFL learners who do not receive pragmatic awareness of IR and those who receive it?
2. Does raising EFL learners' pragmatic awareness of IR in writing have any statistically significant effect on the complexity of their written output?
3. Does raising EFL learners' pragmatic awareness of IR in writing have any statistically significant effect on the accuracy of their written output?

To answer the proposed research questions, the following null hypotheses were formulated:

1. There is no statistically significant difference between the writing performance of EFL learners who do not receive pragmatic awareness of IR and those who receive it.
2. Raising EFL learners' pragmatic awareness of IR in writing has no statistically significant effect on the complexity of their written output.
3. Raising EFL learners' pragmatic awareness of IR in writing has no statistically significant effect on the accuracy of their written output.

2. Intercultural Rhetoric and Pragmatics

The recent theories of contrastive rhetoric, as Purves and Purves (1986) note, conceptualize the nature of writing not merely as a skill, but rather as a culturally-determined, cognitive activity which entails a complex body of knowledge: semantic, formal, and social. As a consequence, the notion of L1 rhetorical transfer has been recently expanded to include linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural dimensions of language, comprising not only lexical, grammatical, and syntactic elements, but also discourse structures and stylistic choices, based on culturally-determined rhetorical preferences and conventions (Davies, 2003).

In the same vein, Connor (2002) argues that researchers in contrastive rhetoric have certainly not interpreted all differences in L2 writing as merely

stemming from the L1 or from the national culture. Instead, these researchers have explained such differences in written communication as often originating from various sources, including the L1, educational background, national culture, disciplinary culture, genre characteristics, and mismatched expectations between readers and writers. "Contrastive rhetoric is thus in a position similar to that of intercultural research on spoken language or intercultural pragmatics analysis" (Connor, 2002, p. 504).

More specifically, as Swales (1990, p. 64) suggests, contrastive rhetoric is "an investigative area that is directly relevant to a pedagogically-oriented study of academic English" because of the insights it offers into differences between languages at the discourse level. This knowledge can be applied to L2 writing pedagogy by informing and educating L2 students about the rhetorical traditions of both their native language and the target languages while appreciating their own native rhetorical traditions, teaching them to identify cross-cultural differences (and similaries) and to make the transition to the organizational patterns of the target language (Leki, 1991). In the same vein, Li (2008) argues that the goal of CR is practical rather than theoretical. CR/IR attempts to address the immediate concerns in L2 writing classrooms; therefore, the texts for study are those written by both ESL/EFL students and (recently) native speakers of English learning other languages.

In orientation, as Davies (2003) maintains, contrastive rhetoric is essentially pragmatic and pedagogical, not only in a methodological sense, but in providing teachers and students with knowledge of how discourse structures and stylistic choices are reflected in written products (constrained by those choices culturally/ sociologically available). According to Grabe and Kaplan (1996, p. 200), "contrastive rhetoric focuses attention on seven types of knowledge in the teaching of writing":

(a) knowledge of rhetorical patterns of arrangement and the relative frequency of various patterns (e.g. exposition, argument, classification, definition, and the like);

(b) knowledge of composing conventions and strategies needed to generate text (e.g. pre-writing, data-collection, and revision);

(c) knowledge of the morphosyntax of the target language, particularly as it applies to the intersentential level;

(d) knowledge of the coherence-creating mechanisms of the target language

(e) knowledge of the writing conventions of the target language in the sense of both frequency and distribution of types and text appearance (e.g. letter, essay, report);

(f) knowledge of the audience characteristics and expectations in the target culture; and

(g) knowledge of the subject to be discussed, including both what everyone knows in the target culture and specialist knowledge.

Although research in contrastive rhetoric has proven effective in establishing correlations between culture and writing, its practical uses for ESL/EFL teachers are not exactly clear (Leki, 1991), and its "applications to classroom instruction have not developed correspondingly" (Raimes, 1991, p. 417). In fact, as Oi and Kamimura (1997) declare, there have been few systematic attempts to apply the findings of contrastive rhetoric to L2 composition pedagogy. "Simply discussing English rhetoric and differences between L1 and L2 composition styles may be of limited value. More in-depth writing instruction appears necessary to reinforce and have students internalize CR principles so that they could compose rhetorically smoother English essays (Walker, 2011, p. 77).While expecting that logical patterns of organization differ cross-culturally and cross-linguistically, the writing teachers should produce an effective pedagogy to teach these notions to ESL students. But perhaps because of the complexity of the issue, there have not been many presentations of ways that reflect the fruit of contrastive rhetoric research (Oi & Kamimura, 1997).

2.1 Awareness raising in writing pedagogy

In applying the results of research in CR to the L2 writing classroom, as Davies (2003) notes, one critical issue to address is the role of language awareness, or consciousness raising, and explicitness in classroom instruction. In ELT contexts, language awareness is defined as "an interface mechanism to promote heightened awareness of language forms between the first language (L1) and the target language (TL) and thereby assist second-language (L2) learning" (Masney, 1997, p. 105). Perhaps the most prominent work on attention involves the distinction between procedural and

declarative knowledge (Anderson, 1983, cited in Ellis, 2008), the latter requiring some or all of a person's attentional resources while the former makes little or no demand on them. In composition pedagogy, as Davies (2003) notes, explicit classroom instruction generally contributes to declarative knowledge, whereas systematic practice by the individual generates procedural knowledge. In other words, the development of students' procedural knowledge of IR requires that they have extensive practice in actual writing (pragmatic/practical aspect of IR) after providing them with explicit instruction that will enhance their declarative knowledge. In this regard, effective instruction, as Wishnoff (2000) argues, means raising the learners' awareness of intercultural communicative variations that could be extended to written discourse.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

Fifty Iranian undergraduate students of TEFL at Islamic Azad University, Roudehen Branch, participated in this study. They were sophomores, taking basic writing course at the time of the research. The students consisted of both males and females ranging in age from 19 to 27. They were drawn from the original pool of 68, based on their performance on a language proficiency test, namely Preliminary English Test (PET). The participants whose scores fell within one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected as the main participants of the study and were then divided into two groups of 24 members through stratified random sampling. One group was assigned as the control group and the other as the experimental group. After checking the normality assumption through Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (p-value< .05), the parametric test of independent samples t-test was conducted for determining the homogeneity of the two groups at the outset of the study. As displayed in Table 1, the Leven's F value for testing the homogeneity of variances was not significant on the PET ($F=.261$, $p=.612>.05$), indicating that the two study groups were homogeneous in terms of their language proficiency.

Table1. Independent samples T-test for confirming the homogeneity of the study groups

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Proficiency (PET)	Equal variances assumed	.261	.612	-.023	48	.981	-.0400	1.11001	-3.478	3.3982
	Equal variances not assumed			-.023	47.78	.981	-.0400	1.11001	-3.478	3.3986

3.2 Instruments

To collect the required data for conducting different stages of the research, two instruments were used: (a) a language proficiency test, and (b) a researcher-made writing pretest/posttest. Moreover, a set of writing tasks based on the content of instruction were presented to participants of the experimental group to perform after the teacher's explicit instruction in IR.

3.2.1 The preliminary English test (PET)

To select homogeneous subjects in terms of their general English proficiency, the Preliminary English Test (PET) developed by University of Cambridge ESOL Examination was used at the outset of the study. Before administering the PET, the First Certificate in English, the FCE mock test was piloted with 18 candidates. Since the group's mean score was almost

low on the test, a less difficult standardized English language proficiency test, namely PET, was alternatively selected.

3.2.2 The writing pretest/posttest.

In order to estimate the participants' writing ability in each group prior to the treatment, a pretest was developed and validated by the researcher through receiving the meticulous comments of two experienced professors (One Iranian and one American). The test battery included two sections that were administered in 80 minutes on the whole. Section A consisted of six parts: (a) rewriting six sentences, using the given structures in parentheses, (b) completing five incomplete sentences using one's own words, (c) finding and correcting errors in a given paragraph (five items), (d) writing the topic sentence for a paragraph that lacks it, (e) filling in the blank spaces of a paragraph with the related words (17 items), and (f) putting the sentences of a scrambled paragraph in an appropriate order. Therefore, Section A contained forty items in total to be carried out in 45 minutes. The results of analysis after applying KR-21formula also showed an acceptable reliability index of 0.73 for section A of the test.

Section B (the essay writing section) required the students to write at least 130 words in the form of a one-paragraph essay on the topic 'why I decided to major in English' in 35 minutes that was timed in a pilot study. The topic was believed to be a general one about which they had enough topical knowledge to write with respect to the fact that Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) was their field of study as well. Further, with respect to the fact that expository writing is the most frequently used type of writing by the learners who want to explain, or expose, their ideas (Meyers, 2006), this topic was specifically selected to evaluate the learners' expository writing. A minimum of 130 words in a paragraph, containing the required rhetorical features, is somehow established in academic writing and was also examined in a pilot study to determine the required length of the intended one-paragraph essay. The time needed for developing it was also estimated between 30 to 35 minutes in the same pilot study.

The criteria for scoring the items in section A was giving 1 point to each correct response and 0 to incorrect one. Accordingly, the sum of

correct answers made 40 as the highest score of the examinees in the first section of the test. To maximize the intra-rater reliability of this section after piloting it on 18 examinees, the scorer/researcher scored it twice on two different occasions and its reliability was found to be 0.98. In addition, for maximizing the inter-rater reliability of section B of the test, two raters, the researcher and a PhD in TEFL with eight years' experience of teaching English writing, participated in the process of scoring. They applied the analytic rating scale developed by Weir (1988, as cited in Weigle, 2002) for the Test in English for Educational Purposes (TEEP). The coefficient of correlation between the two sets of scores (given by the two raters) obtained for the pretest (.92) and posttest (.94) indicated the high inter-rater reliability of judgments in either set of ratings. The scores given to each section of the test (A and B) were added together to report the total given score to each participant on the writing test (pretest/posttest).

3.2.3 Measuring complexity and accuracy in the pretest/posttest

In order to measure the degree of complexity and accuracy of learners' written outputs in pretest/posttest, their performances on section B of the test which included writing a 130 word one-paragraph essay on the given topic were analyzed and coded. The criteria for data analysis were derived from Wolfe-Quintero et al.'s (1998) and Ellis and Yuan's (2004) definitions of (a) complexity as the number of clauses per total T-units, and (b) accuracy as the number of error-free clauses per total T-units. Two raters participated in the process of scoring the written outputs. They followed the guidelines provided by Polio (1997) to analyze the data. In addition, Pearson Product Moment correlation was run to determine the high degree of correlation between the scores obtained by the two raters.

3.2.4 Treatment materials

Two types of materials were used in the current study to meet the treatment requirements. The first set of materials was presented to the participants of both study groups with the aim of raising their rhetorical awareness, either implicitly (in the control group) or explicitly through clear explanation of the teacher (one of the researchers) in the experimental group. The second

type of materials was developed in the form of a set of writing tasks to help the learners in the experimental group practice their newly attained knowledge of IR/CR in the act of L2 writing. The materials were presented to experimental group in nine treatment sessions, lasting for nine weeks.

3.2.4.1 Rhetorical awareness raising materials

Table 2 displays a brief account of the Rhetorical concepts/features that L2 learners need to know to write across languages through a one-paragraph essay. Two general sources of information were referred to develop the content of the Table. The first source was the content of some academic writing books written by scholars in the field. In order to find more relevant information regarding IR/CR in writing, the researchers appealed to the second source, i.e., the findings of the researchers who compared the rhetorical features applied by Persian L2 writers with those commonly used by (American) English natives (Baleghizadeh & Pashaii, 2010; Hassani, 2004; Jalilifar, 2008; Marandi, 2002; Moradian, 2006; Rahimi, 2011). One Persian scholar and one foreign (American) one were requested to comment on the content of the Table. After some modification, they were applied as the rhetorical awareness raising materials in the treatment process of the present study.

3.2.4.2 Writing tasks used as pragmatic awareness raising materials

In each session of the treatment, a writing task based on the content of the instruction was presented to the experimental group. Therefore, nine writing tasks, ranging from sentence writing to paragraph writing, were given to each learner to accomplish in nine treatment sessions successively. The content of the tasks were mostly adapted from three common writing text books used in most branches of Islamic Azad University, namely 'Paragraph Development by Arnaudet and Barrett (1990)', 'Academic Writing Course by Jordan (1990), and 'Practical Writer with Readings by Bailey and Powell (2003). The content of the tasks was confirmed by the above-mentioned scholars (one Persian and one American one) after some modification and each was piloted with ten students to detect any possible problem in task performance. Table 3 summarizes the information about each task.

Table 2. Rhetorical features/concepts that L2 writers need to know for developing a one- paragraph Essay

Item Number	Rhetorical Feature/Concept
1. Applying various conjunctions and connectors in coordination
2. Applying subordination as well as coordination
3. Giving interest and color to writing through adjectives and adverbs
4. The role of boosters and hedges in creating certainty and uncertainty respectively
5. Avoiding errors that originate from L1 transfer to L2
6. Writing a topic sentence for a one-paragraph essay, indicating the writer's main idea
7. Applying different means of support for developing the body of a one-paragraph essay
8. Applying exemplification through exemplifying signals (discourse markers)
9. Applying enumerators/sequence markers to show paragraph organization
10. Applying additive markers to add an idea
11. Showing contrast through transitional markers which signal contrast
12. Avoiding redundancy and circumlocution in writing
13. Achieving unity in writing
14. Writing conclusion/reworded topic sentence at the end of a one- paragraph essay
15. Applying concluding signals/markers to write conclusion
16. Developing writer-responsible writing

Table 3. Summarized information about nine writing tasks used in the treatment process

Task Number	Content	Required Performance
One	2 sections	practicing writing subordination and coordination
Two	3 sections	eliminating the errors as well as redundant parts in the given text and sentences
Three	1 section	giving interest /color to writing through adjectives and adverbs as well as using boosters and hedges in writing sentences
Four	3 sections	identifying good topic sentences, recognizing the main idea in the given topic sentences, and writing 3 topic sentences for the given topics
Five	3 sections	writing one topic sentence and one concluding sentence for two incomplete paragraphs and putting the scrambled sentences of a paragraph in the correct order
Six	2 sections	practicing exemplification in writing, using various exemplifying markers

Task Number	Content	Required Performance
Seven	2 sections	applying different means of support for supporting the main idea of a given topic sentence and developing a paragraph based on the given information
Eight	2 sections	filling in the blank spaces of an incomplete paragraph and then writing a similar paragraph based on the information included in the completed one, using the required signals/markers
Nine	1 section	writing a one-paragraph essay, including 130 words based on the given information

3.3 Procedure

To accomplish the purpose of the study, the researchers went through the following stages:

After assigning the participants into two groups of control and experimental, based on their performance on a language proficiency test, and confirming the homogeneity of their mean performances through an independent samples T-test (Table 1), a researcher-made writing test was administered to each group to measure the participants' writing ability before receiving the instruction.

After taking the pretest, the participants in each group received nine 90-minute treatment sessions on writing, lasting for nine successive weeks. The type of the essay they were expected to write at the end was an expository one that is the most frequently used type of writing by the students (Meyer, 2006). The course book presented to the subjects was 'the practical writer with readings (7th ed.)' by Bailey and Powell (2003). It was assigned by English Language Department and its first 8 units were to be covered in that particular course since they were concerned with writing a one-paragraph essay, a pre-requisite for the following course. In other words, the same students were assumed to follow the remainder of the book units in their following writing course, essay writing, based on which they learned how to develop a one-paragraph essay to a five-paragraph one.

Each session started by the instruction in English writing (about 20 to 30 minutes) in both groups based on the content of the course book and Table 2. The instruction was followed by asking the learners to practice what they learned by doing some exercises. The exercises answered by the

control group were in their course book (and sometimes accompanied by additional exercises provided by the instructor) while those answered by the experimental group were in the form of a set of tasks developed by the researcher based on the content of instruction (see Table 3). Moreover, the experimental group received some information regarding the rhetorical features all L2 learners should know to write across languages, as well as rhetorical differences between English writing of native and nonnative (Persian) students before beginning their performance on the task. Therefore, compared with the control group, the learners in the experimental group received rhetorical awareness, with respect to the content of the task to be accomplished, through direct explanation of the teacher prior to their performance. This information was not provided to control group explicitly though they could attain it implicitly through the presented instruction of the teacher and the content of the provided exercises. An illustration of giving rhetorical awareness to experimental group in session 7 is as follows:

> *As you see on the board, there is a wide range of signal words or phrases that writers can apply for exemplifying in their writing. While 'like' or 'for example' are the most commonly used exemplification signals among Persian writers, Natives (Americans) apply various signal words or phrases for exemplifying in their writing. These include 'for instance', 'consider', 'entail', 'include', 'as an illustration', 'this can be illustrated by', 'as a case in point', etc. This task will provide you with a good practice in applying these signals in English writing as used by native writers.*

This awareness was not given to control group so explicitly and completely. The only piece of information they received in this regard is illustrated as below:

> *The exercise you are to answer now is about the use of exemplification in English writing. As you see on the board, there are various signals that you can apply in order to write examples in your writing. This task will provide you with a good practice in applying these signals in your writing.*

The learners in both groups were able to receive teacher's explicit corrective feedback (Lyster & Ranta, 1997) in case of having difficulty writing the appropriate answers to the provided tasks or exercises. An explicit correction which is defined by Lyster and Ranta (1997, p. 46) as "the explicit provision of the correct form" was used by the teacher to clearly indicate what the students produced was incorrect and made the correction clear to them. Correcting the learners while they were attempting writing the answers was in line with shifting the focus from products of prior learning to the processes through which abilities are formed (Brown, 2001) and was applied by the researcher to remove the major drawback to conventional writing pedagogy, namely focus on form and the final product rather than content and rhetorical strategies (Hyland, 2003).

The same researcher-made pretest was administered as the posttest after nine weeks/sessions of treatment terminated. All participants sat for the posttest in an eighty-minute-administration session whose purpose was probing the probable improvement of learners' writing ability after receiving the treatment, as well as the complexity and accuracy of their written output.

4. Results and Discussion

To investigate the research questions of the study, an independent samples T-test was applied to the data set. Like other parametric tests, the employed test has some assumptions, four of which (level/scale of measurement, independence of observations, normal distribution, and homogeneity of variances) that were assumed as the major ones were confirmed before deciding on applying T-test for the parametric analysis of the data. Moreover, the homogeneity of the two study groups in terms of their performance on the pretest as well as the complexity and accuracy of their written output in section B of the pretest were confirmed through applying an Independent Samples T-test. The results are tabulated in Table 4. As displayed by Table 4, the Levene's F value for testing the homogeneity of variances was not significant on the pretest (*F=.34, p=.56>.05*), complexity (*F=3.67, p=.06>.05*) and accuracy (*F=.29, p=.58>.05*), indicating that the two study groups were homogeneous in terms of the intended variables before receiving the treatment.

Table 4. Independent samples test for the homogeneity of study groups for the pretest, complexity, and accuracy

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Pretest	Equal variances assumed	.341	.562	-.439	48	.663	-.8400	1.9147	-4.689	3.3982
Pretest	Equal variances not assumed			-.439	47.181	.663	-.8400	1.9147	-4.690	3.0106
complexity	Equal variances assumed	3.671	.064	-1.01	48	.316	-.0754	.07405	-.224	.0739
complexity	Equal variances not assumed			-1.01	47..33	.314	-.0754	.07405	-.225	.0742
Accuracy	Equal variances assumed	.296	.589	-1.88	48	.067	-.1645	.08736	-.340	.0117
Accuracy	Equal variances not assumed			-1.88	47.56	.067	-.1645	.08736	-.340	.0118

4.1 Research question one

To answer the first research question that relates to the existence of any statistically significant difference between the writing performances of EFL learners in the two study groups after receiving the treatment, an independent samples T-test was run. The results presented by the below table shows that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of control and experimental groups ($p < .05$). However, to make sure that the difference between the sample means is not due to the sampling errors and the sample size has been large enough to confirm the strength of the generalization of the findings, the effect size of the result was also calculated. The calculated eta-squared, 0.079, shows that treatment factor, namely raising learners' pragmatic awareness of IR, accounts for 7.9 percent of the variance in dependent measure of writing performance which is a

medium effect size (Cohen, 1988, as cited in Pallant, 2010). This means that the effects of sample means is not nontrivial in size and the difference observed between the sample means could be attributed to the differences between the population means. Therefore, the null hypothesis one as "There is no statistically significant difference between the writing performance of EFL learners who do not receive pragmatic awareness of IR and those who receive it" was rejected.

Table 5. Independent samples test for the posttest

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Posttest	Equal variances assumed	.000	.988	-2.036	48	.047	-3.9800	1.9545	-7.9097	.05022
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.036	48.00	.047	-3.9800	1.9545	-7.9097	05022

4.2 Research question two

To answer the second research question " Does raising EFL learners' pragmatic awareness of IR in writing have any statistically significant effect on the complexity of their written output?" an independent samples T-test was run to compare the mean scores of the study groups in terms of the complexity of their written output on section B of the posttest (writing a 130-word essay). The results of the T-test provided by Table 6 demonstrates that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups (*p=.089>.05*). That is, the experimental group who received pragmatic awareness of IR did not outperform the control group who implicitly learned the rhetorical organization of an English one-paragraph essay. Thus, the null hypothesis two as "Raising EFL

learners' pragmatic awareness of IR in writing does not have any statistically significant effect on the complexity of their written output" was not rejected.

Table 6. Independent samples test for written complexity

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
complexity	Equal variances assumed	5.655	.021	-1.738	48	.089	-.1372	.07894	-.2959	-.0215
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.278	42.544	.089	-.1372	.07894	-.2946	-.0220

4.3 Research question three

Another independent samples t-test was run to provide an appropriate answer for RQ3 "Does raising EFL learners' pragmatic awareness of IR in writing have any statistically significant effect on the accuracy of their written output?" The results of the T-test represented by below Table demonstrates that there is statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups (*p=.047<.05)*. The nontrivial effect size, 0.079, also indicates medium effects of sample size. In other words, the effect size is not so small that makes the researcher dubious about its overall importance in determining the results. Therefore, the null hypothesis three as "Raising EFL learners' pragmatic awareness of IR in writing does not have any statistically significant effect on the accuracy of their written output" was rejected.

Table 7. Independent samples test for written accuracy

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
accuracy	Equal variances assumed	.001	.971	-2.039	48	.047	-.2012	.09866	-.3995	-.0028
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.039	47.919	.047	-.2012	.09866	-.3995	-.0028

4.4 Calculating the interrater reliability of scores

To determine the raters' coordination in the act of scoring, all the participants' written outputs in section B of the pretest and posttest were scored in terms of writing ability, complexity, and accuracy. The criteria for measurement have already been discussed in sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3. Two raters (one of the researchers and a PhD graduate in TEFL with 9 years of writing instruction experience) collaborated in the process of scoring. For measuring writing ability, Weir's scale was used by the two raters. Next, in order to see if there was a high degree of correlation between the scores obtained by the two raters, the Pearson Product-Moment correlation coefficient was run. The results are displayed in Tables 8 below.

Table 8. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient between the raters' scores on the pretest and posttest

		Rater1	Rater2
Pretest (Rater1)	Pearson Correlation	1	.923[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	50	50
Pretest (Rater2)	Pearson Correlation	.923[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	50	50
Posttest (Rater1)	Pearson Correlation	1	.943[**]

		Rater1	Rater2
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	50	50
Posttest (Rater2)	Pearson Correlation	.943**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	50	50
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

As Table 8 shows, the correlation coefficient between the fifty scores obtained for the pretest and posttest were .92 and .94 respectively which indicated a highly positive correlation between them.

Similarly, the correlation coefficient between the two raters' scores given to the learners' performances on the pretest in terms of writing complexity and accuracy were calculated as '0.981' and '0.988' respectively. The calculated results for the posttest were also '0.987' regarding writing complexity and '0.989' with respect to learners' writing accuracy, which indicate an ideal inter-rater reliability. The criteria for measuring learners' writing complexity and accuracy have already been explained in section 3.2.3.

4.5 Discussion of the results

As the results indicate, pragmatic awareness of IR is significantly effective in improving the Iranian EFL learners' writing ability, and the calculated eta-squared, 0.079, ensures that the effect is nontrivial in size. In other words, it could be implied from the findings that as EFL learners become more aware of the rhetorical arrangement of English writing and are provided with more opportunities to apply their awareness into practice, they seem to become more careful about their L2 writing. This can be a confirmation of the claims that examining the rhetorical style of the target language and uncovering its similarities and differences with that applied by L2 learners can contribute to learners' better understanding of L2 writing (Kaplan, 2001; Leki, 1991; Walker, 2011), and that creating rhetorical awareness is a much-needed first step toward our students' improvement in writing (Davies, 2003; Marandi, 2002; Yoshimura, 2002). The reason behind the effectiveness of rhetorical awareness raising might be the

learners' cognitive processing system and the crucial role of noticing (Qi & Lapkin, 2001). The assumption is that participants noticed the rhetorical conventions required for L2 writing as well as the problems they were having in actual writing while performing on the intended tasks. Such a pragmatic awareness of IR is believed to enhance their writing performance.

Likewise, Walker (2004, 2006) argues that as L2 learners can discover the similarities and differences of rhetorical styles on their own (after being conscious of them), they will be able to internalize cross-cultural, or better to say intercultural, conventions of academic writing. In fact, the enhanced writing performance of the subjects of this study after being aware of IR and its application in L2 writing, can verify Walkers's (2011) claim that written communication is influenced by IR-oriented writing instruction.

Interestingly, although the experimental group showed enhanced writing ability, the results did not show any increased written complexity in experimental group's output. This is in contrast with Larsen-Freeman's (2006) and Wolfe-Quintero et al.'s (1998) research findings that report the increased written complexity in the written accounts of the learners who were proved to be more proficient in writing skill. However, with respect to written accuracy, the findings of this study are in line with previous findings (Ishikawa, 2006; Larsen-Freeman, 2006; Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998), indicating that the more proficient the learners become in writing, the more accurate their written production will be.

One possible explanation for this is that the feedback offered to both study groups were mostly centered on error correction rather than grammatical complexity of learners' written answers. That is to say, accurate writing received more attention than complex writing in treatment program. In other words, observing rhetorical organization in L2 writing does not necessarily lead to greater complexity of the written output. Therefore, enhanced writing resulting from rhetorical awareness raising does not guarantee greater written complexity, so these two variables do not seem interrelated. Nevertheless, improved writing manifested enhanced accuracy which indicated a probable relationship between these two variables, namely writing proficiency' and 'grammatical accuracy'.

On the other hand, as Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998) suggest, the ratio of clauses to T-units is a measure of subordination, and a text with a higher ratio contains more embedded text structures such as subordinate and relative clauses. Conversely, texts with a lower ratio of clauses per T-units will have more simple and compound sentences, joined by coordinating conjunctions. Bearing this in mind, it could be deduced from the results of this study that participants did showed little willingness to use subordination in their writing. Such a result is backed up by Baleghizadeh and Pashaii's (2010) findings, indicating that Persian L2 writers prefer to use more coordination than subordination. Therefore, the pragmatic awareness raising applied in this study does not seem effective enough in motivating Persian learners to apply more subordination rather than coordination in their written output, leading to produce writing with minimized complexity. Perhaps the awareness raising process should have been focused more on practicing writing subordination.

Another explanation for the lack of linguistic complexity in the participants' written output in experimental group might be the fact that due to the nature of the treatment, the learners' attention was mainly devoted to writing grammatically correct structures and producing a coherent text in which the intercultural rhetorical features were displayed appropriately. Similarly, as Hartshorn (2008) notes, it is possible that as some L2 writers focus more on the accuracy of their writing, they may be slightly less attentive or able to produce writing that entails more linguistic complexity. Accordingly, it seems important for L2 teachers to consider the possible trade off between increased accuracy on the one hand and somewhat stifled complexity on the other hand (Hartshorn, 2008).

No doubt, helping L2 learners to improve the complexity of their writing should be as important as requiring them to observe the accuracy of non-grammatical aspects of their written output. Perhaps, the participants in this study required to have more practice in developing complex writing as well as writing accurately. Anyhow, the findings did not show any confirmation for developing more complex writing as an indicator of more proficient writing. By and large, what seems to emerge from the findings of the present study is that raising EFL learners' pragmatic awareness of IR in

writing enables them to produce a text which is both improved and more correct, but not necessarily grammatically complex. While these findings seem promising, they should not be generalized to similar contexts without additional studies that examine larger number (more than 25) of participants. Nevertheless, it seems safe to assume that linguistic complexity should also be welcomed by most EFL writing teachers and learners who value linguistic accuracy.

5. Conclusions and Implications

Teaching the rules of rhetoric in English writing and suggesting the students apply them in the act of writing is not innovative in the field of L2 writing pedagogy. Undoubtedly, a successful experience of teaching English writing would lead to enabling L2 learners to develop an academic piece of writing with an acceptable rhetorical organization. However, raising learners' awareness of intercultural rhetoric and elaborating on the English rhetoric (L2) and the way it is commonly applied by (Persian) L2 writers, and then requiring the learners to apply their awareness in completing the writing tasks, developed based on the content of instruction, is a new experience that is worth undertaking.

The results of the current study propose that as learners' awareness of IR increases, they seem to attend more fully to the rhetorical features of their writing and to write more proficiently. In fact, the applicability of rhetorical awareness raising to L2 pedagogy and its efficacy on the EFL learners' writing performance, as well as accuracy of their written output, was the major findings of the study.

In other words, the findings of the present study hold obvious implications for the teaching of L2 writing. First and foremost, the study shed light on the renewed notion of contrastive rhetoric, recently known as intercultural rhetoric, and how it could be associated with the development of L2 writing ability. In fact, the implementation of IR in teaching L2 writing could be an appropriate response to the problems of the current English writing classes in Iran which might originate from the dearth of learners' awareness of the accepted rhetorical conventions of English

(Marandi, 2002) and how they must be applied by L2 writers to write across languages (Connor, 2002) to address their audience.

The study also brought to light how IR/CR would be pragmatic and pedagogical and could provide teacher and students with knowledge of how discourse structures and rhetorical features are reflected in L2 writing. No doubt, in applying the knowledge of IR to the L2 writing classroom, the major issue to respect is the role of language awareness and explicitness in instruction (Davies, 2003). However, the mere awareness-raising may not bring about enhanced writing unless it is given adequate practice. The result was hoped to be applicable to language teachers, syllabus designers, or even the educators who seek for a practical way of instructing IR in writing and assessing the extent to which it can be applied by learners in the act of L2 writing.

6. Suggestions for Further Research

In line with Kaplan's revisited notion of CR (IR), this study revealed the fundamental role of rhetorical awareness raising in the act of L2 writing. To clarify the meaning of IR in its true sense and how it could be beneficial to all writers, regardless of their culture, further research could be conducted to examine whether or not the knowledge of IR would influence the rhetorical organization of L1 writing as well. That is to say, if the knowledge of English rhetoric proves effective in enhancing the rhetorical organization of, for instance, Iranian EFL learners' Persian (L1) writing, as well as their English (L2) writing, the intercultural nature of rhetoric in writing and the fact that it belongs to all nations who want to effectively address their audience across cultures (Connor et al., 2008) will be evidenced.

Another suggestion is associated with the dependent variables of the study. In addition to 'learners' writing performance', two other general domains of writing, namely 'complexity' and 'accuracy' were the major dependent variables in this study. The researchers offer replicating the study choosing other writing dimensions, such as syntactic variety, fluency, and lexical complexity. In addition, the present study focused on the expository mode of writing while the research can be replicated with respect to other types of writing, such as narrative and argumentative writing. Finally, essay

writing in this study was limited to writing a one-paragraph essay, including topic sentence, two or more supporting sentences, and a reworded topic sentence (Bailey & Powell, 2003). Another research is suggested in which the effect of pragmatic awareness of IR can be investigated on composing a five-paragraph essay, or any other piece of academic writing.

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