Narrative Composition as a Tool for Second Language Socialization

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between narrative composition and language socialization in a short-term study abroad context. To study this relationship, a comparative case study was conducted between three domestic students at UWL who spoke English as their first language and three international students in their first or only semester at UWL who spoke English as their second language. Participants submitted five narrative responses to various prompts over the course of five weeks. A mixed deductive and inductive coding scheme was used to point out displays of Robert Kaplan's (1966) Contrastive Rhetoric and Lev Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory of Language Learning and language socialization. The results showed rhetorical differences between the narratives written by the domestic students and those of the international students, as well as the language socialization of one international student. Findings indicate that narrative composition can be used as a tool for language socialization amongst second language learners, but that its effectiveness in a short-term study abroad context may be culturally determined, dependent on the cultural background of the learner and their culture's closeness to the culture of the language community in which they are socializing.

INTRODUCTION

Narrative, or "the telling of... true or fictious events" (Baldick, 2008), is a prominent component of our everyday lives. According to Bruner (1987), "we seem to have no other way of describing 'lived time' save in the form of narrative" (p.12). That is, we tell narratives in almost every situation in which communication must occur, making narrative a way in which we communicate.

But if narrative is communication, we cannot discuss it without discussing language and culture. Since most communication is done through oral or written language, language is a critical component of communication. Thus, if narrative is communication, then language is a critical component of narrative as well. This is because one of the most common ways we tell narratives about ourselves, our daily encounters, our friends and families, and our own perceptions of the world is through oral and written language, and the linguistic rules and expectations that come with it. However, language doesn't exist in a vacuum. It has long been established by linguists and linguistic anthropologists that language and culture, or language, logic, and worldview, are reciprocally connected. Dufrenne (1968) describes this relationship well, stating that, "diversity affects not only the languages, but also the cultures, that is to say the whole system of institutions that are tied to the language... [Language is thus] the effect and the expression of a certain worldview that is manifested in the culture. If there is causality, it is a reciprocal causality" (Dufrenne, 1968, pp.36-37). This means that the narratives we tell through language - their content, themes, tropes, canonical characters, organization, tone, and style – are not random, nor unique to each individual as we may initially imagine them to be. Instead, they are linguistically and culturally determined. They typically "exhibit culture specific patterns...", values, and beliefs that both construct and are constructed by the language of the culture in which they exist, "reflecting the values and beliefs of the culture" in which we find ourselves (Minami, 2015, p. 78). Thus, not only is there a strong relationship between narrative and communication, communication and language, and narrative and language, but also one between narrative, culture, and language where all three serve as an influence on the creation, development, and existence of the other. Because of this complex and essential relationship, narrative and narrative composition have begun to spark interest amongst those working in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). These people are researchers, educators, and learners who seek to study the roles narrative and narrative composition may play in second language acquisition and pedagogy.

To begin, this study is founded on three similar and related theoretical approaches. The first is Russian philosopher Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of language learning. Vygotsky was one of the first philosophers to recognize the relationship between sociocultural factors (such as culture, environment, and norms) and the process of learning or acquiring a second language (L2). His *Sociocultural Theory* states that language learning is a social and intermental activity that takes place in the *Zone of Proximal Development,* or ZPD (Tuzi, 2013). The ZPD refers to the things a learner can do with the guidance of 'more capable peers' in the subject of the learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Language learning thus occurs here when the language learner appropriates the language use of

their 'more capable peers' and internalizes it, making it their own (Tuzi, 2013; Morris, 2022). However, L2 learners are learning more than just language through this process; they are also acquiring the cultural lens through which speakers of their second language perceive the world, and thus learning the cultural norms, themes, and tropes that exist within that culture. This is *Language Socialization* – an idea branching off of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory – which refers to, very broadly, the reciprocal relationship between language development and enculturation, or socialization into a given culture. In other words, it is the process of learning how to use a language within a certain culture and society while simultaneously becoming a member of that culture by using the language (Whyte, n.d.).

One way we can study language socialization is through *Contrastive Rhetoric*. Contrastive Rhetoric refers to the idea put forth by linguist Robert Kaplan that logic itself, not just grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure, is culturally determined, and that culturally determined differences in logic are reflected in the rhetoric of our writing (Kaplan, 1966). He argues that while other forms of logic may be universal (such as mathematical logic), "the logic expressed through the organization of written text is culture-specific; that is, it posits that speakers of two different languages will organize the same reality in different ways" (Kaplan, 1995, p.21). In other words, since "logic (in the popular, rather than the logician's sense of the word) which is the basis of rhetoric, is evolved out of a culture; it is not universal. Rhetoric, then, is not universal either, but varies from culture to culture" (Kaplan, 1966, p.12). Thus, when applied to SLA, Contrastive Rhetoric examines the "differences [and] similarities in writing across languages and cultures" (Connor, 2002, p.493). Differences in second language writing are especially seen when people who write in a second language apply the rhetorical structures of their native language to their writing in their second language. While there is no logic that is superior to another, writing with rhetorical structures that native speakers of a language wouldn't expect may limit a writer's ability to be understood by those native speakers. The potential consequences of this, such as a lack of voice and credibility, make Contrastive Rhetoric significant in second language writing and in the teaching and evaluation of second language writing.

This brings us to the last theoretical approach. Due to his over-simplification of rhetorical structures across different languages and cultures, Kaplan's work on Contrastive Rhetoric has been critiqued by many for being insensitive to cultural differences, linguistically imperialistic, and promoting the superiority of Western writing (Connor, 2002, p. 493). To combat these critiques and limitations, Brown (2022) grounds Contrastive Rhetoric in Herbert H. Clark's (1996) Common Ground Theory. This theory refers to "the shared knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions that are believed to be essential for successful communicative interaction" (Brown, 2022, p.82). In other words, for two individuals to understand each other and have meaningful conversation, they must have some type of shared knowledge on which they base their assumptions. This shared knowledge is often culturally determined, based on the precedents and conventions that people "have acquired by being a part of and interacting within a discourse community over a period of time" (Brown, 2022, p.82). Thus, when people have different cultural backgrounds, these precedents, conventions, and thus assumptions may differ, creating the potential for misunderstanding and miscommunication when communication occurs. This is because L2 learners are often unable to identify and apply the conventions that meet the expectations of native speakers of their second language (Brown, 2022). When applied to second language writing then, this reality reflects itself in the use of differing or unexpected rhetorical structures and devices, which, as mentioned previously, may result in miscommunication, misunderstanding, and in turn a lack of voice and credibility amongst L2 learners and writers.

How, then, could L2 learners learn the conventions and rhetorical structures of their second language? I hypothesize through engaging in activities that contribute towards language socialization as described by Vygotsky in his Sociocultural Theory of language learning. Thus, this study seeks to discover if and how narrative composition as an act of (self) communication in a short-term study abroad context can contribute towards L2 learners' language socialization into the culture and language community of native speakers of their second language through a process of appropriation and learning in the ZPD.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As mentioned above, language and rhetoric are culturally determined, which in an SLA context means that the culture of a person heavily influences the way they write in terms of pattern, style, expectation, and context in both their native language and in their second language(s) (Kaplan, 1995; Connor, 2002). One way rhetoric differs across languages and cultures is in the composition structure, order of presentation, or shape of a text. This refers to the way in which people from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds approach the main idea or topic of a paragraph or piece of writing, and it is stated by researchers from Oregon State University in their 2005 film, *Writing Across Borders*, to be the "most visible way culture influences writing" (Robertson, 2005). For example, after analyzing paragraphs written by native speakers of English, Kaplan found that English paragraphs are often written in a linear structure (see Figure 1), beginning with a topic sentence stating the main idea followed by

subordinate sentences that illustrate the idea in the topic sentence (1966). He draws upon Common Ground theory to explain this when he states:

> "The thought patterns which speakers and readers of English appear to expect as an integral part of their communication is a sequence that is dominantly linear in its development. An English expository paragraph usually begins with a topic statement, and then, by a series of subdivisions of that topic statement, each supported by example and illustrations, proceeds to develop that central idea and relate that idea to all the other ideas in the whole essay, and to employ that idea in its proper relationship with other ideas, to prove something, or perhaps to argue something" (Kaplan, 1966, pp. 13-14).

On top of this, Kaplan found that while it is accepted by native English speakers that a paragraph may be discursive (that is, if there are differing topics, movement proceeds coherently from topic to topic within the paragraph), digression is typically not as accepted. In other words, it is expected that everything in the paragraph relates (or is established as relating) to the central idea (Kaplan, 1966), ensuring that "the flow of ideas occurs in a straight line from the opening sentence to the last sentence" (Kaplan, 1966, p. 14).

Contrarily, when analyzing paragraphs written in English by non-native speakers of English, Kaplan found that this linear structure or order of presentation was not as common. For instance, he claims that paragraph development in Arabic and Semitic languages is generally "based on a complex series of parallel constructions" (Kaplan, 1966, p. 15), with ideas and thoughts presented in a more simultaneous and balanced way. While the use of these parallel constructions is possible in Arabic, it is not in English, making English writing with these constructions sound 'off' or 'awkward' to native English speakers (Kaplan, 1966). Additionally, he found that when writing in English, native speakers of Asian languages, such as Chinese, often write with a circular, or gyre-like, structure (Kaplan, 1966). In other words, in their native languages, it is often expected by speakers of these languages to approach the main topic by indirection. This means that they "turn around the subject and show it from a variety of tangential views... [developing the idea] in terms of what [it is] not, rather than what [it is]" (Kaplan, 1966, p. 17). Robertson (2005) and Chen (2006) support this claim, describing the *Ki* (introduction, or beginning), *Sho* (development, or following), *Ten* (turning), *Ketsu* (concluding) style of Japanese and Chinese narrative writing and how it differs from the linear approach of English narrative writing. Finally, native speakers of romance languages, such as French and Spanish, accept much more easily digression from the main idea to introduce extraneous material, making digression a main point of difference between the compositional structure of native English speakers' writing and that of those whose first language is a romance language (Kaplan, 1966).
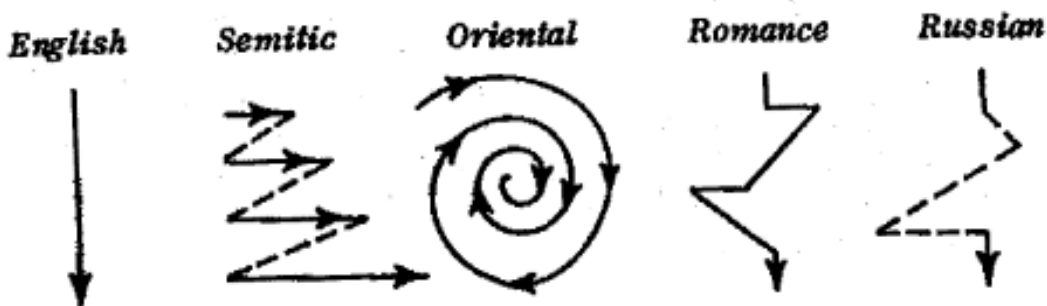

Figure 1. Composition structure across languages (Kaplan, 1966). Note: it is important to denounce Kaplan's use of the word "oriental" to describe languages from Asia.

In addition to composition structure, writing between L1 and L2 speakers of a language differs in terms of what can be discussed, what is considered evidence/argument, to whom a text can be addressed, and the role of the writer and audience (Kaplan 1995; Connor, 2002; Robertson, 2005; Chen, 2006). Both Kaplan and Robertson describe how not all topics of discussion are accepted by every culture. For example, in some cultures, topics like religion and sex are taboo to talk or write about, while in others, they are discussed and written more naturally. This thus affects how these topics are approached (if they're approached at all) in English narratives written by people of various linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Further, people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds have different expectations and notions of what is considered evidence. For example, Kaplan (1995) describes how American English writing often reflects a capitalist perception of evidence and citation, where words are considered property of the writer and must thus be credited to the original author (Kaplan, 1995). If a writer in the American English context fails to do so, they will be perceived by native speakers of (American) English as less knowledgeable and credible. This is less common in

China, where "quotation is at best ambiguous" (Connor, 2002, p. 502), and things such as uncited popular Chinese proverbs, sayings, maxims, and fixed phrases are accepted as knowledge. According to Robertson and Chen, this may be a direct result of differences in American individualist culture and Chinese collectivist culture, where benefiting the greater collective good is emphasized (Robetson, 2005; Chen, 2006).

Finally, cultural perceptions of the audience (who the audience can be and what their role is) are reflected in writing. For example, in English, the writer has the responsibility of interpreting meaning and making this meaning as clear as possible, showing the reader the way to the main idea with a clear statement of it at the beginning of the text followed by direct and straightforward sentences explaining its meaning and context (Robertson, 2005; Connor, 2002; Chen, 2006). This is different from other cultures, such as Chinese and Japanese, where the responsibility of interpreting meaning is given to the reader (Connor, 2002; Chen, 2006). In writing by members of these cultures, the main idea is not introduced until the end of the text, allowing readers to feel, interpret, and understand the main idea and deeper meanings along the way (Chen, 2006). Cultural perceptions of the audience are also reflected in the tone, style, and diction of a text. This is because some cultures and languages have different hierarchies, which in turn affect how something is written (Kaplan, 1995). For example, you may see a less face-threatening moves (direct requests, conversation on certain topics, etc.) in English writing from an L2 speaker of English who comes from a culture where face and saving face is significant (Connor, 2002). Additionally, who someone is writing to may reflect the tone, style, and rhetoric of their writing in different ways based on their culture.

That being said, it is clear that "language learning cannot be easily or unproblematically extracted from the whole of lived experience" (Kinginger, 2009, p. 3). Or, that we cannot separate language learning from processes of socialization and enculturation, and, thus, "language learning is as much a process of socialization as it is of acquisition" (Kinginger, 2009, p. 156). To study the development of language learning strategies within Sociocultural Theory and language socialization, Donato and Mccormick (1994) assigned portfolio assessments to a college level class of French L2 learners. The analysis of these portfolios showed that language learning and the development of language learning strategies, such as narrative composition, are "mainly a by-product of mediation and socialization into a community of language learning practice" (Donato & Mccormick, 1994, p. 453). This means that not only is language acquisition a sociocultural process, so is the development of the tools that help learners acquire a second language. Additionally, they argue that "sociocultural theory can provide an explanatory framework for understanding and refining our notions of how learners become competent members of a language … community" (Donato & Mccormick, 1994, p. 453), or undergo processes of language socialization, grounding the sociocultural lens which this study utilizes.

Building from this, Appel & Lantolf (1994) studied language learning and socialization through the exploration of the advantages of dialoguing with the self, which they called "private speech" (Appel & Lantolf, 1994). They studied the way speaking mediates comprehension and understanding as L1 and advanced L2 speakers/readers of English read and orally recalled narrative and expository texts (Appel & Lantolf, 1994, p. 437). Through their analysis of these oral readings, they found that human understanding is not the result of individual cognitive processes, but rather of conversational and communal interaction (Appel & Lantolf, 1994; Schrag, 2003). However, this conversational and communal interaction does not always entail a response from another person. Rather, "it is often sufficient for the individual to speak to the self via private speech for 'making sense' to happen" (Appel & Lantolf, 1994, p. 437). In this sense, language activities that involve self-dialogue or private speech, such as narrative composition, contribute towards language socialization in that they mediate between the 'speaker' and the world around them in a way that constructs meaning. This is supported by Minami (2015) and Freeman (2015) who claim that narratives are intrinsic to the process of meaning making, or making sense of our experiences, and self-presentation (Minami, 2015; Freeman, 2015). When applied in the SLA context, L2 learners who engage in narrative composition in their L2 are not just constructing any meaning through self-dialogue and private speech but meaning that is culture specific. This is because, the self-dialogue and private speech that occurs in narrative composition involves the passing down and eventually appropriation and internalization of socially constructed knowledge and narrative structures that are specific to the language community of the language being written. Thus, the act of narrative composition in an L2 results in the acquisition of the meaning making system or perceptual lens of the culture of the L2 language community, which as mentioned prior, is the process of language socialization.

RATIONALE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study, then, seeks to further understand the relationship between contrastive rhetoric, narrative composition, and language socialization. While narrative composition and language socialization have been studied separately and together, there has been less research done on the relationship between the two in a short-term study abroad context. Thus, this study will look at the influence of narrative composition on the language socialization of

short-term international students at an American Midwest University (that is, international students in their first or only semester abroad) who speak English as a second language. The questions guiding this study are:

- What rhetorical differences, if any, can be found in narratives written by L1 English speakers from an American midwestern university and those of L2 English speakers studying short term at the same university?
- How do the narratives of the L2 English speakers display or not display processes of language socialization?

With these questions, I seek to understand if and how learners of a second language in a short-term study abroad context socialize into their second language and the language community of their second language by using narrative composition as a tool to acquire the culturally determined rhetorical patterns of native speakers of their second language.

METHODS

To answer these questions, I conducted a comparative case study between three international students of various nationalities and backgrounds who spoke English as a second language in their first or only semester at an American Midwest University and three domestic students who study TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) at the same university during the Spring semester of 2024. Over five weeks, participants submitted five 80-300 word typed narrative responses to prompts (See Appendix) distributed via Microsoft Form surveys. Each week saw one response, with the survey being distributed on Monday morning and the response being completed by the end of the week on Sunday at 11:59pm. Responses were then coded using a mixed deductive and inductive coding scheme (See Table 1), drawing from Kaplan's research on composition structure/organization/shape and patterns recognized during the initial reading stage.

Table 1. Coding scheme

Element of Contrastive Rhetoric	Measurement
Shape	Linear/non-linear
Topic Sentence	Yes/No
Chronological	Yes/No
Sentence-to-sentence cohesion	Number of sentences with sentence-to-sentence cohesion
Coherent	Yes/No
Digressions and Discursions	Number of digressions or discursions
Idiom usage	Number of idioms
Cultural References	Number of cultural references
Tone	Casual, conversational, informative, formal, reflective

In addition to prompt responses, participants completed a survey inquiring on relevant background and demographic information during Week 1 of the study (See Appendix for full instrument). The following participant profiles have been crafted form the results of this demographic survey:

International A

International A is a 21-year-old graduate international student from France in their first and only semester at the American Midwest University. They speak French as their first language and Chi ti - a northern French dialect. English is their second language. Their background with the language includes living in the U.S. for three years during their childhood, taking English classes in school multiple times a week, completing their final year of their bachelor's degree and first year of their master's entirely in English at their French university, and using the language while watching English shows, on social media, and talking with international friends. They were not taking any English language classes during the time of the study.

International B

International B is a 20-year-old undergraduate international student from Belgium in their first and only semester at the American Midwest University. French is their native language, but they can also understand Dutch due to speakers in the family. English is their second language. They began learning English at age 10 through an

intensive English class, then continued to use English daily after attending a British international secondary school and university in Jakarta, Indonesia. They feel very comfortable in English, considering it close to a first language as they've used it during most of their secondary life. They were not taking any English language classes during the time of the study.

International C

International C is an 18-year-old undergraduate international student from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in their first semester at the American Midwest University. They did not provide information on their native language, but they have been studying English in school since middle school and typically use it in their everyday conversation and life. They were not taking any English language classes during the time of the study.

Domestic A

Domestic A is a 21-year-old undergraduate student from Wisconsin. They study Elementary/Middle Education and TESOL and have completed some years of college. English is their native language, and they speak some Spanish having taken Spanish courses at both the high school and college level. However, they don't use Spanish very regularly.

Domestic B

Domestic B is a 21-year-old undergraduate student from Wisconsin. They study Elementary/Middle Education and TESOL with a minor in Leadership development and have completed some years of college. Their native language is English, and they speak Spanish at an intermediate level after taking Spanish courses.

Domestic C

Domestic C is a 22-year-old undergraduate student from Minnesota. They study Elementary/Middle Education with a minor in TESOL and have completed some years of college. Their native language is English, and their second language is Spanish after taking some courses in high school.

RESULTS

After analyzing prompt responses from the domestic students and the international students over time, I found that there were rhetorical differences between the two groups in terms of shape, topic sentence usage, chronology, sentence-to-sentence cohesion, coherence, number of digressions and discursions, idiom usage, and tone.

Rhetorical Differences

Composition Structure/Organization/Shape. When determining the shape of a writing sample, I looked for a sequential order of ideas and events presented chronologically, a clear organization structure utilizing sentence-to-sentence cohesion (meaning that each sentence references an idea or topic in the prior sentence, causing each sentence, idea, and event to build off the previous one), minimal digressions (all ideas relating to the central topic), and direct presentation where main ideas and messages were stated directly rather than expected of the reader to infer. After analyzing participants' prompt responses, I found that Domestic A, B, and C along with International A and B were likely to write using a linear shape, while international C was less likely to do so. This indicates some difference between the domestic and international participants. While there were no significant differences between the domestic participants and International A and B, there were between the domestic participants and International C. Domestic A and C wrote 100% of their narratives using a linear shape. Domestic B wrote 80% of their narratives using a linear shape. International A also wrote 80% of their narratives using a linear shape, and International B 100%. However, International C wrote 60% of their narratives using a *non*-linear shape. During Week 1 and Week 2, International C wrote their narrative responses using a parallel shape, meaning that the main ideas in the narrative were discussed simultaneously, in a parallel manner, with a balance of significance seen between each idea. During Week 3, International C wrote their narrative using a shape that was neither entirely parallel nor entirely linear, but rather a mix between the two, containing characteristics of both.

Topic Sentence Usage. There were also some differences between domestic and international students in topic sentence usage, though again only between the domestic participants and International C. Domestic A, B, and C and International A and B all used clear topic sentences at the beginning of their narratives, doing so 100% of the time. These topic sentences outlined the theme and main idea of the rest of the narrative, with everything that followed them intended to relate to the theme and idea represented. International C, however, did *not* use a clear topic

sentence in 60% of their narratives, with the narrative responses from Week 1, Week 2, and Week 3 all not consisting of a clear topic sentence.

Chronology. The results for chronology showed a similar pattern, with differences between the domestic participants and International C but not between the domestic participants and International A and B. Domestic A and C and International B wrote 100% of their narratives using chronological sequencing and coherence, meaning that the ideas and events in the narratives were presented in the order in which they occurred or in a logical and sequential fashion based on the order in which they were intended to be understood. Domestic B and International A wrote 80% of their narratives in this way. International C, however, wrote 60% of their narratives *without* using chronological sequencing, these narratives being the narrative responses for Week 1, Week 2, and Week 3.

Sentence-to-Sentence Cohesion. Sentence-to-sentence cohesion refers to the way each sentence in a paragraph or narrative builds off the sentence prior, creating a cohesive narrative. This was measured by counting the number of sentences in each participant's narratives that referenced an idea or theme presented in the sentence prior, and then comparing this number to the overall number of sentences in each narrative. There were thus also some differences between the domestic students and the international students in terms of sentence-to-sentence cohesion (See Table 2). Apart from one outlier (Domestic A, Week 1), Domestic A, B, and C wrote 100% of their narratives with 50% or more sentences with sentence-to-sentence cohesion. International A wrote 80% of their narratives with 50% or more sentences with sentence-to-sentence cohesion. However, International B wrote 20% of their narratives with 50% or more sentences with sentence-to-sentence cohesion, and International C 40%.

Table 2. Sentence-to-Sentence Cohesion for all participants

Participant	Week	Percentages of Sentences with Sentence-to-Sentence Cohesion
Domestic A	Week 1	30%
	Week 2	70%
	Week 3	57%
	Week 4	67%
	Week 5	50%
Domestic B	Week 1	50%
	Week 2	50%
	Week 3	86%
	Week 4	80%
	Week 5	60%
Domestic C	Week 1	80%
	Week 2	86%
	Week 3	60%
	Week 4	80%
	Week 5	83%
International A	Week 1	71%
	Week 2	57%
	Week 3	71%
	Week 4	63%
	Week 5	38%
International B	Week 1	50%
	Week 2	38%
	Week 3	36%
	Week 4	22%

	Week 5	33%
International C	Week 1	29%
	Week 2	25%
	Week 3	33%
	Week 4	50%
	Week 5	60%

Coherence. Coherence refers to the way in which all sentences in the narratives support the main idea, theme, or topic of the narrative. As before, there were some differences in coherence between the domestic participants and International C. Domestic A and B and International A wrote 80% of their narratives in a coherent manner. Domestic C and International B wrote 100% this way. International C wrote 60% of their narratives with coherence and 40% of their narratives *without* it.

Digressions. Related to coherence, digressions refer to sentences or phrases that do not appear to be directly related to the main idea, theme, or topic of a narrative. Like the other categories, there were some differences between the domestic participants and the International C in terms of the number of digressions within each narrative response, yet not between the domestic participants and International A and B. In their Week 1 narrative response, Domestic A included 1 digression; in the rest of their narrative responses, there were 0 digressions. Similarly, Domestic B included 3 digressions in their Week 1 narrative response, with the rest of their responses including 0 digressions. Domestic C had no digressions in any narrative responses. International A included 2 digressions in their Week 2 narrative response, and 0 in the others. International B had no digressions in any narrative responses. However, International C included 3 digressions in Week 1, 2 digressions in Week 2, 1 digression in Week 3, and 0 digressions in Week 4 and Week 5. International C did include one discursion in Week 5, meaning that while the idea wasn't directly related to the topic of the narrative, it was presented coherently.

Idiom Usage. One notable characteristic of writing from native speakers of a language is the use of idioms, or words that when grouped together have a different meaning than that of the individual words in the phrase. There were significant differences between domestic and international participants in idiom usage. While not in every narrative response, the domestic students were more likely to include idioms in their narratives. Domestic A used 5 idioms in their Week 1 narrative response, 1 in Week 2, 1 in Week 3, and 0 in Weeks 4 and 5. Domestic B used 2 in Week 1, 0 in Week 2, 1 in Week 3, 0 in Week 4, and 2 in Week 5. Domestic C used 0 in Weeks 1, 2, and 3, and 1 in Weeks 4 and 5. The international students, on the other hand, were less likely to use idioms. International A and B used 0 idioms in all narrative responses. International C used 0 in weeks 1 through 4, and 1 in Week 5.

Tone. Finally, there were some minor differences in tone between the domestic participants and International B, but not between the domestic participants and International A and C. While all participants wrote in a casual tone that was either informative, conversational, or reflective, International A often wrote in a tone more likely to be perceived by native speakers of English as more casual than the rest. They often used expressions, such as 'haha', to express further emotion and construct meaning.

Language Socialization

After analyzing these differences, it was found that the narratives written by these L2 speakers of English both displayed and did not display processes of language socialization through narrative composition. For instance, the narratives written by International A and B did not display processes of language socialization. These participants already wrote, for the most part, in a linear shape, using clear topic sentences, chronology, sentence-to-sentence cohesion, coherence, and limited digressions. Thus, significant change in these categories was not seen, in turn not displaying language socialization. Additionally, significant change in idiom use and tone was not seen in these participants' narratives either. If these participants were to have undergone processes of language socialization through the appropriation of native speakers' language use, we would have seen the number of idioms increase over time, as well as an increasing use of a tone that matches the contextual expectations of native speakers. This was not seen in these participants' narratives, as their idiom use remained at zero the entire study and International B used the same tone each week.

However, the narratives written by International C did show processes of language socialization. First, during Week 1 and Week 2 of the study, International C wrote narratives that were non-linear (but rather parallel) in terms

of shape. Then, during Week 3, they wrote a narrative that was neither parallel nor linear, but rather consisting of some characteristics of both. This indicates a shift towards, or a gradual appropriation of, a linear shape. Then, in Weeks 4 and 5, International C wrote narratives using a linear structure. Thus, we can see International C undergo a process of language socialization in terms of shape, where they appropriated the shape most used by native speakers of English over time.

This same gradual appropriation over time was also seen in the other aspects of contrastive rhetoric studied. During Weeks 1 to 2 of the study, International C did not use a clear topic sentence to indicate and establish directly the theme, idea, or general meaning of the rest of the narrative. However, during Weeks 3 to 5, they did. The same goes for coherence, where International C did not write coherently during Weeks 1 to 2 but did for Weeks 3 to 5. Further, in terms of chronology, International C did not write chronologically during Weeks 1 to 3 but did for Weeks 3 to 5. With sentence-to-sentence cohesion, the percentage of sentences in International C's narratives showing sentence-to-sentence cohesion generally increased gradually over time, going from 29% to 60%. Finally, in terms of the number of digressions, we saw a decrease in International C's narratives over time, indicating language socialization.

Thus, while the narratives written did not display processes of language socialization for International A and B, they did for International C.

DISCUSSION

These results support and confirm the foundational idea present in the theory of Contrastive Rhetoric that rhetorical differences in the way L2 speakers of a language write exist, and that these differences are based on culturally determined differences in logic (Kaplan, 1966, 1995). They also support Mauranen's claim that "... [writers] differ in some of their culturally determined rhetorical practices, and these differences manifest themselves in typical textual features" (Mauranen, 1993, pp. 1-2). We can see this in the differences in textual features between the domestic participants and International C, who comes from a Middle Eastern culture that differs in many ways from the American Midwestern culture of the domestic participants. Since the logic within Middle Eastern cultures differs from that of American Midwestern culture, the rhetorical choices made in International C's writing differed from those made by the domestic participants.

Further, these results support the connection between Contrastive Rhetoric and Clark's Common Ground Theory. These culturally determined differences in logic and thus textual features found within the narratives from International C often come across as 'awkward', 'off', or 'unclear' to native speakers, causing potential misunderstandings in the thread of communication. While a misunderstanding here or there may not be a large concern, it is important to consider how these differences and the misunderstandings that may ensue put L2 writers "at a rhetorical disadvantage in the eyes of [L1] readers..." (Mauranen, 1993, p. 1). Thus, these differences and misunderstandings become a significant problem for L2 writers when we consider that "this disadvantage is more than a difference in cultural tastes, since it may not only strike readers as a lack of rhetorical elegance, but as a lack of coherent writing or even thinking, which can seriously affect the credibility of non-native writers" (Mauranen, 1993, pp. 1-2). For this reason, it is important for second language educators, educators with international and multicultural students in their courses, and second language learners alike to be aware of and consider the culturally determined rhetoric found in the writing of non-native speakers of a language and native speakers. Additionally, it may be worth teaching these differences – either what they are, how to notice them, or how to counter-act them and the negative consequences that may result because of them – to both those learning a second language and to those who plan on teaching a second language or teaching multicultural students.

One tool that may be used to teach these rhetorical differences to second language learners, allowing them to learn, appropriate, and thus socialize into the language community of their second language, increasing the level at which they are understood by native speakers and in turn their credibility, is thus narrative composition. In addition to supporting Kaplan's Contrastive Rhetoric and Clark's Common Ground Theory, these results also support Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Language Learning and the ideas of language socialization. Due to the display of language socialization in the narratives written by International C, we can say that language socialization amongst L2 learners in a short-term study abroad context *can* happen through the act of narrative composition. We can see how International C, by living and studying in an American Midwestern culture, appropriated the culturally determined logic and thus rhetorical style and language use of their native 'more capable peers' through the act of self-dialoguing and participating in private speech in the form of narrative composition (F. Tuzi, 2013; Morris, 2022; Appel & Lantolf, 1994). In other words, they took the logic and rhetoric of the native speakers of their second language community and made it their own through processes in the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978). This supports Minami (2015) and Freeman's (2015) claims that narrative, and thus the act of narrative composition, is intrinsic to meaning

making (Minami, 2015; Freeman, 2015), yet adds that it may not only be intrinsic for any meaning making, but also the cultural meaning making that sees a learner of a second language undergo processes of language socialization.

However, it is important to recognize that these differences did not exist between all international participants and that processes of language socialization did not always occur. For instance, the rhetorical differences found between the domestic participants and International C did not exist as strongly between the domestic participants and International A and B. In addition to this, the language socialization processes underwent by International C did not occur for International A and B. To understand this phenomenon, I propose that it is critical to consider the cultural backgrounds of each international participant. International A is from France and International B is from Belgium. French, Belgian, and American culture are all considered Western cultures, meaning that they share many similarities in logic and values. International C, on the other hand, is from the Middle East, and Middle Eastern culture differs more significantly in terms of logic and values from American culture than French or Belgian culture does from American culture.

Based on this idea, I infer that the existence of rhetorical differences and whether one can undergo processes of language socialization through narrative composition in a short-term study abroad context is also culturally determined, supporting theories of Contrastive Rhetoric even further. For example, it can be inferred that both rhetorical differences across narrative writing from second language learners as well as language socialization are largely dependent on the culture in which one originates and the closeness of that culture to the culture of the second language community. In other words, some L2 learners' writing consists of more differences than others and some L2 learners socialize into a second language more than others due to the culture in which they come from and the similarities/closeness of this culture to the culture they are socializing into. This is why, I propose, we did not see many differences nor much socialization from International A and B, because of their own cultures' closeness to the American Midwestern culture they were living in, studying in, and socializing into, while we did see these differences and processes of language socialization from International C, because they started from a culture more distant from the American Midwestern culture they were living in, studying in, and socializing into. Further study with more participants from differing cultures is necessary to understand this idea and prove this proposal and phenomenon.

LIMITATIONS

Before moving forward, it is also important to note the limitations of this study. The first limitation can be seen in the time constraint, as this study was undertaken over five weeks in a short-term study abroad context. For some second language learners, socialization may perhaps take longer than five weeks. A long-term study on narrative composition and language socialization would be needed to determine this. Additionally, with the rather advanced English-language level and extensive English language backgrounds of International A and B, it may be difficult to claim that the lack of differences and processes of socialization were a result of cultural factors and not language skill factors. However, there were still some differences in varying aspects of contrastive rhetoric between these participants that indicate a relation to cultural factors. For example, International A consistently used a tone not consistent with that of the domestic students, supporting Robertson (2005) and Chen's (2006) notions of cultural differences between tone and audience expectations.

CONCLUSION

But even with these limitations, the results of the study showed that there are culturally determined rhetorical differences between the narratives written by L1 English speakers at an American Midwestern University and those of L2 English speakers studying short-term at the same university, and that the narratives of some of the L2 English speakers displayed processes of language socialization. Additionally, the results found that whether these differences and processes of language socialization occur through narrative composition from L2 English speakers in a short-term study abroad context may be culturally determined, dependent on the closeness of the L2 English speaker's native culture to the language community and culture in which they are residing and socializing into. Thus, we can say that narrative composition can be used in the field of Second Language Acquisition as a language socialization tool. Doing so may prove to be largely beneficial for second language learners trying to study, live, and work in multilingual and multicultural contexts, for the resulting socialization into the language community of their second language may allow them to be better understood and perceived as more credible. However, exactly how beneficial this tool may be in both short-term and long-term contexts and how to implement it into second-language pedagogy and experience may need to be studied further.

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APPENDIX

Demographic Survey

This information will only be collected during the first week of data collection. It will be used to create de-identified participant profiles. The information you provide may be used confidentially in a research publication or conference presentation. You have the ability to choose how much or little information you would like to provide.

1. First Name
2. Last Name/Family Name
3. What is your age?
4. What race or ethnicity best describes you?
   a. Native American or Alaskan Native
   b. Asian / Pacific Islander
   c. Black or African American
   d. Hispanic
   e. White / Caucasian
   f. Prefer not to say
   g. Other _____
5. What is your nationality?
6. What is your hometown and where is it located? (Provide country, region/state/province, city/village, etc.
7. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
   a. Less than high school / secondary school equivalent
   b. High school / secondary school equivalent
   c. Attended college / university
   d. Associate degree
   e. Bachelor's degree
   f. Master's degree
   g. Professional degree
   h. Doctorate degree
   i. Prefer not to answer
8. What is/are your major(s)? What is/are your minor(s)? What are you studying in university?
9. Please describe your linguistic background. You may provide as much or as little information as you feel comfortable. What languages (including dialects) do you speak and when/how did you learn them? If English is your second language, please describe your English language background.

Narrative Prompts

Week 1. Tell me about an activity you participated in recently. Examples: hanging out with friends, doing homework, going to class, visiting a coffee shop, going to the grocery store, traveling, visiting family/host family, going out to eat, watching or playing in a sports event, going to a meeting or club event, etc.

Week 2. Tell me about something you've watched or read recently. It could be a movie, TV show, book, documentary series, webtoon, etc. Who are the characters? What happens in the story?

Week 3. What did you do over spring break? Tell the story of your favorite moment, memory, or activity.

Week 4. Tell me about your favorite childhood memory. What were you doing? Where were you? Who were you with? Etc.

Week 5. Describe your favorite moment from this semester. What happened? Where were you? Who were you with? Etc.