

# **Academic Writing and Rhetoric: A Comparison between Nepal and the U.S.**

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# **Nepalese ESL Students and Issues with U.S. College Composition**

# Argument

Nepalese academic writing pattern is not inferior to the American writing pattern, but it is shaped in a different way socio-epistemologically, and American ESL and composition instructors have to validate World Englishes and writing patterns in U.S. composition classes to empower students' voice, language, space, and subjectivity.

# Theories and Issues of U.S. College Composition

U.S. universities conventionally consider that their first year composition students are by default native speakers of standard U.S. American English (Matsuda).

## ...Issues

“...ESL and EFL students do not benefit in the first year composition class not because of lack of ability, but the courses are primarily organized for native U.S. standard English speakers who are familiar with American ideals, aims, history, and social and political background” (Matsuda).

## ...Issues

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U.S. academic rhetorical tradition is hegemonic, political, problematic, and misleading, and cross-cultural and multicultural issues are geared only toward North American contexts (Silva, Leki, and Carson).

## ...Issues

- U.S Universities do not accurately represent ESL student population in composition classroom; composition courses prevent students from being heard (Prendergast).
- Concept of linguistic homogeneity in a multilingual and multicultural country like U.S. is a “blind spot” of Anglo-centric thinking.

# Nepalese Oral Culture Vs American Literate Culture (generalized)

## Nepalese Culture

- Collective
- Diffusive
- Hierarchical
- Indirect/metaphoric
- Inductive

## Anglo-American Culture

- individualistic
- specificity
- non-hierarchical
- direct
- deductive

# Nepalese Oral Culture (generalized)

- Memorize texts
- Redundant/copious
- Additive vs subordinative
- Aggregative vs analytical
- Imitative vs creative

# Nepali Essay Organization

- Thesis statement (inductive pattern)
- Topic sentence
- Data and evidence
- Plagiarism
- Concluding paragraph as thesis statement
- Induction is stylistic function of Nepalese writing pattern

## Problem with Traditional Pedagogy

- Creates and perpetuates binaries—self/other —between US English and other world Englishes
- Perpetuates the ideology of colonization and internal colonization (vernacular Englishes)
- Writing as the Platonic ideal writing pattern
- U.S. English: “the Standard English”

## Some Thoughts on Probable Solutions

- Resist the traditional concept of the ideal Standard English and the ideal writing pattern
- Validate ESL students' Englishes, voice, language, culture, prior academic knowledge, and other rhetorical patterns
- Deconstruct the concept of writing as the Platonic ideal writing pattern
- Disrupt the U.S. English: "the Standard English"

## ...Probable Solutions

- Give students heuristics
- Teach documentation style
- Teach grammar in context
- Do not over-mark their papers in the beginning
- Give mostly positive feedback

## ...Probable Solutions

- Encourage students to bring their own topics, views, experiences, and rhetorical patterns in their writing (rhetorical situations/constraints)
- Teach them writing through process: outlining, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing
- **FOR INSTRUCTORS:** Preparation in intercultural rhetoric, cross-cultural rhetoric, and second language pedagogy, etc.



**Questions  
and  
Comments**



**Thank You**