WHAT IS A 'LINEAR' LANGUAGE? RHETORICAL - DISCURSIVE PREFERENCES IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH IN THE LIGHT OF KAPLAN'S MODEL

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In the present work the author tries to analyse one of the fundamental concepts that underlie Kaplan's theory: his idea of "linearity". Rather surprisingly, despite its importance, it is a construct that usually goes undefined in the literature. Different parameters of rhetorical organisation will be considered in this paper in order to clarify the essence of linearity. We shall check then Kaplan's contention that English is a "linear" language whereas Spanish, a member of the Romance family, is characterised by a broken or non-linear structure. We shall also verify if there exist differences between English and Spanish in the discursive organisation of an expository text. Finally, we shall discuss which parameters appear to be more coincidental and more divergent within the rhetorical organisation of each language.

Introduction

Over the past forty years there has been an increasing concern with the written text in all its manifestations: from being one of the least studied linguistic skills up to the end of the sixties it has become one of the most prolific areas of current research (Purves, 1988; Martin, 1992; Kachru B, 1992; Rubin, 1995; Connor, 1995, 1996; Davison, 1998; Grabe & Kaplan, 1996; Kaplan, 1987, 2000; Kaplan & Grabe, 2002, etcetera. The behaviour of Spanish learners of English as a second or foreign language has been studied by Santana-Seda, 1975; Montaño-Harmón, 1991; Lux & Grabe, 1991; Ostler, 1992; Reppen & Grabe, 1993; Kellerman, 1995; Monroy & Scheu, 1997; Moreno, 1997; Hornberger, 1999; Trujillo, 2002; Odling, 2002, etcetera.).This "discursive linguistics" in Enkvist"s words *(1987)* embraces text linguistics, stylistics, genre studies, speech analysis but also contrastive rhetoric (CR for short), a theory –or rather a *notion–* first formulated by Kaplan in 1966. The study of paragraph organisation in different languages (five basic types were established) was approached by Kaplan as the starting point to assess writing as product, one of the four fundamental

skills required to master a foreign language within the behaviourist paradigm. The notion was also a reflection on certain schemes of classical rhetoric with a view to developing those skills needed to write properly in a foreign language context, mainly English[1]. This view implied in fact giving up the rhetorical conventions of the first language that might cause interference with the ones favoured by the English language when writing in English as a target language. The focus nowadays has broadened considerably encompassing "differences and similarities in writing across languages" (Connor, 2001: 28) including academic and professional writing (Swales, 1990; Mauranen, 1993; Tirkonnen-Condit, 1996, etcetera.).

Kaplan's initial theory derived from an ontological stand very much like the one that underlines British contextualism as initiated by Malinowsky and Firth and continued by Halliday and followers of context linguistics: that logic is not a universal, but the product of a specific culture[2]; consequently, every single culture has its own rhetorical schemes[3]. This idea, very much like the Vosslerian concept of "idiomatology", would explain why the student of a foreign language violates the expectations of the native reader. Both content and form would be surface manifestations observable, according to Scribner and Cole (1981), at three levels: the functional discursive (for example, a given culture can favour a much more expressive way of writing than another), the level of cognitive exigency (the way of structuring and organising information), and the pragmatic level (a given community's writing expectations). These three levels are mutually interrelated and highly conventional in each culture. Kaplan's model is based therefore on the empirical fact that linguistic systems differ not only at the phonological or lexico-structural level, but also in their rhetorical preferences. This rather determinist view, in a sense contrary to the notion of a universal grammar, does not establish significant differences at the cognitive level; it simply emphasises the idea that each language organises reality in a specific way. From a contrastive perspective, as envisaged by Kaplan's theory, it is obvious that the rhetorical option of each linguistic system implies an ontological limitation that is necessary to overcome within a second language learning context. In the case of English as a foreign language, the Spanish learner would have to leave aside the broken structure of his/her language, typical of the Romance languages, and move towards the linear structure of a language like English.

1. Linearity

Kaplan went further however. He not only dared to present a typology of rhetorical preferences but also, relying heavily on style manuals, defined English as a "predominantly linear" language unlike the "broken" or "indirect structure" that, in his opinion, characterises Romance, Slavonic and Semitic languages (1966: 15). This self-indulgent view of the discursive reality has rightly been criticised as being ethnocentric, ill-defined and vague, lacking empirical support and portraying a stereotyped reality (Enkvist, 1997)[4]. Kaplan acknowledges this in his contribution to Sarangi and Coulthard (2000), but he adds that this does not alter the essential empirical fact that "there are differences between languages in rhetorical preference" (2000: 84). From this fundamental premise, some corollaries follow such as a) languages present gaps not just at the lexical or structural level, but also at the rhetorical level; b) every speaker perceives these differences in comparing his/her language with other linguistic systems; c) there is a tendency to transfer unconsciously to the second language the resources and rhetorical devices of the first language, and d) there are certain languages (there is no mention of English here) whose rhetorical discourse is more linear than that of other languages. Kaplan simply acknowledges that "every speaker perceives his/her language as linear and all others as non-linear" (2000: 84).

This change in the perception of the dominant rhetorical trend (linearity /non-linearity) derives from the different perception that various authors, whose mother tongue is not English, have of their own language. Kaplan (2000) observed that whenever he presented to speakers of other languages his model in which English stood out as more linear than the rest, they considered their language to be more linear than English. The concept of linearity has, on the other hand, a clear cognitive significance: despite Kaplan's unambiguous statement (2000: 85) that Aristotle linear rhetoric is in no way cognitively superior to non-linear rhetoric, it is obvious that linearity is psychologically interpreted in a more positive key than non-linearity, as clearly reflected in the desire expressed by all to have a linear language. On the other hand, it is unquestionable that English occupies a hegemonic position in certain academic as well as non-academic circles. This leads to the construction of a rhetorical model of such a kind that whoever fails to imitate it is deemed to be at a disadvantage (Connor & Kaplan, 1987 – see, however, Kachru Y, 1997) either lacking in discourse sophistication or, even worse, in rhetorical coherence (Mauranen, 1993: 1-2).

A first step prior to any contrastive endeavour is therefore to try to define the concept of "linearity". Only in this way will we be in a position to establish the linear /non-linear character of a text in a given language and draw conclusions across languages. We are fully aware that there is

not such a thing as a homogeneous norm in academic writing (not all English writers use a linear style consistently –Braddock, 1974)[5] nor is expository prose in English a well-defined text type (Grabe, 1987; Biber, 1987, 1988)). Surprisingly, linearity is usually taken to be a self-evident, straightforward label that refers to formal discoursal progression free from digressions without any further qualification. Such a generic definition needs to be operationally defined for the construct to have a certain validity. This is what we have done by considering a number of formal parameters of rhetorical organisation —both at macro and micro-structural levels— that are based on general Western rhetorical conventions. Books presenting analytical techniques do in fact include some of these parameters We have taken out the following guidelines as characteristic of what is usually understood within the Anglo-Saxon culture as a straight linear rhetorical pattern (see, for instance, Mauranen, 1993; Connor and Johns, 1990; Purves, 1988):

1. Thematic unit (TU). We consider a text to display this category (also referred to as "discourse topic", Lautamatti, 1987) whenever there is a single thesis clearly formulated binding together the whole text; the presence of more than one thesis would be interpreted as an absence of the above-mentioned feature.

2. Thematic progression (TP). We refer here to the mechanism by means of which the writer establishes a direct relationship between all the different thematic sentences that link every paragraph with the central thesis (Vande Kopple, 1990). A weak or null relationship between the thematic sentences and the central thesis, due to the lack of proper balance between given and new information or to a clear breach of the referential mechanisms, is understood to be deficient in this feature.

3. Paragraph unity (PU). This is achieved whenever a paragraph displays a monothematic structure (Smith & Leidlich (1980). It coincides with Morenberg and Sommers "direct paragraph" (1999), where sentences develop the controlling idea by expanding, qualifying and illustrating it. On the other hand, the polythematic trend is considered a feature of a non-linear structure.

4. Personal tone (PT). This feature is revealed by the tendency to make use of pronominals that refer to the subject (consistent point of view –see Hinds' (1987) "writer responsible vs. "reader responsible' languages). The use of different points of view or of no human agents in thematic position would reflect the opposite, non-linear trend.

5. Inter-paragraph cohesion (CO). Cohesion between paragraphs is achieved by the presence in the text of elements linking paragraphs with one another in a co-referential, co-classification or

co-extensive way (Halliday, & Hasan, 1976; Hoey,1991). Both internal cohesion and the coherence of textual units would yield textuality. Non-linearity would be manifest in the tendency to avoid paragraph linkage.

6. Concreteness (CON). This feature refers to the tendency to use concrete words as they supposedly contribute to the global effect of linearity in the text. Greater reliance on abstract words would reflect the opposite, non-linear tendency. It must be pointed out that this parameter is somehow language-bound in the sense that, typologically speaking, there are languages which favour concreteness –English being a case in point (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995) – as opposed to other more abstract languages such as French or Spanish.

7. Sentence simplicity (SS). Following MacDonald's advice (1990: 34) of what constitutes a good sentence structure we have taken clause length as the main criterion, agreeing with Coleman (1965) than longer than average sentences are more difficult to decode and therefore to understand. Thus we have linked linearity to the presence in the text of simple or coordinated sentences; the overuse of complex or subordinated sentences would reveal a non-linear characteristic[6].

3. Aims

Taking as our starting point Kaplan's initial but also current premise that there exists a logical principle underpinning the discursive organisation of every language and that such a principle is rooted in Aristotle's logic and Galileo's systematisation, which the idea of linearity underlies (1980: 402), we try to analyse the following null hypotheses: 1. There are no significant differences between English and Spanish university students in the discursive organisation of an expository text. 2. The rhetorical behaviour of the Spanish informants does not substantiate the idea of a non-linear logic (i.e. broken structure). 3. Finally, there is no parametric correspondence between English and Spanish with regard to the profile of rhetorical organisation for each of the two languages involved.

4. Methodology

4.1 Participants

Thirty-four subjects were used as informants, seventeen fourth-year Spanish students of English and seventeen English students, from the universities of Essex, John Moores and Surrey, who were spending the year at Murcia University. The Spanish group –all from the region of Murcia (we are referring therefore to the Castilian variety) – was randomly selected from the sixty-eight who regularly attended classes to match the seventeen Erasmus students who comprised the British group. None of them knew the purpose of the writing assignments nor had they taken part in any prior activity directly related to the aim of the experiment.

4.2 Instruments

Thirty-four papers were written, seventeen for each group, bearing in mind the following principles put forward by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement: Study of Written Composition (IEA). We chose, firstly, the expository mode as Kaplan did initially (1966: 4); it seems the mode most commonly used to study intercultural differences. Secondly, an almost identical subject matter was used in both cases in order to ensure the register variable and the same type of text. Obviously, within the category of expository writing several sub-genres can be identified (Grabe, 1987). In our case, we resorted to a humanities text type assuming that its frequency of occurrence can be similar in both languages. Finally, all papers had a maximum length of eight hundred words.

4.3 Procedure

The Spanish group was asked to write in Spanish on positive aspects of the English character while the English group wrote in English about positive aspects of the Spanish character. Following Krashen's suggestion made in his Monitor Model (1982) as to the possible relationship between time variable and product quality, it was decided not to confine the task to strict chronological limits so that each student was free to write at will although he/she was to hand in his/her assignment a week later. The task, on the other hand, was carried out at the beginning of the academic year on the basis that this was deemed the best period for gathering unbiased information from the students as to the purpose of the exercise. Although both groups obviously had some writing practice

experience, they were not fully conscious of the rhetorical traditions existing in their respective cultures. This is particularly the case with the Spanish group. Despite sharing identical roots than the British, the Hispanic tradition in written composition –by Hispanic we refer here to the European language variety– favours a more generic and literary-biased approach to writing conventions than the Anglo-American tradition, more concerned with the orderly arrangement of the parts of a written text. Literary authors are models to imitate, but more in vocabulary and critical reading skills than in the rhetorical organisation of the information. Although writing is explicitly taught at Spanish schools, it is only recently that linguistic analyses of non-literary written texts has been systematically undertaken (Onieva Morales, 1995). This penchant for literature is in no way exclusive to Spaniards: Kaplan himself complaints that "Writing through composing….is the rarest of the writing types practised by literate individuals. It includes the creation of novels and short stories, of poems and plays, of theoretical and philosophical treatises by scholars, and –curiously– of the kinds of essays school children are most commonly asked to write" (1988: 283).

The pooling of the samples was carried out by three members of the Department of English Philology at Murcia University –two Spaniards and one British, all of them senior lecturers– who gave a scoring to the writing assignments (the inter-rater agreement was .89). Linearity was measured using the seven parameters of rhetorical organization previously mentioned. These categories were applied on a binary basis despite the fact that most of them, particularly the last one, are not easily amenable to a yes / no answer. We took the presence of each of them as a sign of linearity, and their absence as a characteristic of non-linear or broken structure.

5. Data analysis and results

In order to see the amount of presence or absence of the above-mentioned parameters for each of the informants, we codified each subject's answers assigning 1 to an affirmative response and 2 to a negative answer in all the variables. Once all the texts were collated, t Student was applied to see if there were significant differences between these parameters in English as compared with Spanish. As Table I shows, there are no significant differences in any of the indexes analysed. However it is worth commenting on the tendencies which emerge in each of the seven parameters.

In the case of Thematic Unit (TU), the means both of the English as well as the Spanish group show a positive tendency towards the presence of this feature. The two mean values (1.23 and 1.17) are closer to 1 (linearity) than to 2 (non-linearity), the Spanish value being slightly higher than the English one. This tendency is further confirmed in Table II where 82% of the Spaniards and 76% of the British favour a linear tendency. t value, however, is non-significant (0.68) between groups at $p<.05$.

Unlike the Spanish group who scored higher (Table I), the English students displayed a score in Thematic Progression (TP) identical with the one they achieved in the Thematic Unit parameter. The percentage of essays showing Thematic Progression (Table II) is high in both groups, with the Spaniards scoring slightly lower than the British (59% vs. 76% respectively). Despite the averages being overall more non-linear, they clearly show a non-significant preference for linearity (t value of 0.28).

Paragraph Unity (PU) is characterised by a marked tendency towards linearity in both

groups (Table I). Interestingly, the percentage of students favouring linearity is identical (82%) in

the two (Table II). Although beyond a significant t value level, the data reveal a careful paragraph

structure in both groups.

As far as Personal Tone (PT) is concerned, there are clear differences between the two groups of informants. The mean value of the British seems to favour linearity (1.29) whereas the Spanish group mean leans towards non linearity (1.58). This is further reflected in Table II where a total of 71% of the British students adhered to linearity as opposed to 41% of the Spaniards. The difference is non-significant at $p<.05$, but a t value of 0.09 reveals that some significance is present. This supports Reid's study (1992) in which she found that native English speakers used more pronouns than Spanish speakers, and seems to contradict Monroy & Scheu's (1997) where the Spanish group scored higher in personal tone than the British group. This apparent discrepancy is due to a difference in the methodology used: in this experiment two different groups are involved, whereas in the 1997 study the informants were all Spaniards writing first in Spanish and then in English.

In Inter-paragraph Cohesion (CO) the British informants show a trend similar to the one observed in PT. Again, without being significant (t 0.18), they lean more towards linearity than the Spanish group (mean values 1.35 vs. 1.58 respectively). The percentage shown by the two groups (65% vs. 41 %) -Table II) further confirms this tendency.

In Concreteness (CON), on the other hand, the British group shows no preference for either linearity or non-linearity, the mean value being almost equidistant between 1 and 2 (1.52). The Spaniards scored a mean (1.58) identical to the one found in the two previous parameters (CO and PT), therefore reflecting a non-linear tendency. Data from Table II provide some evidence to the effect that, even by a small percentage, the English are more inclined towards linearity, which is not surprising if we accept Vinay & Dalbernet's claim (1995) that English, unlike French or Spanish, is a concrete, reality language. t-values, however, proved to be highly non-significant (0.73).

Sentence Simplicity (SS), is the parameter in which both groups deviate most sharply from the linearity features (1.82 and 1.94 mean scores). In the Spanish sample, there was only one instance in which simple and coordinated sentences surpassed subordinated structures. In spite of being non-significant (t 0.30), sentence simplicity was a feature neither of the British nor of the Spanish group: only 18% and 6% achieved it respectively. These results do not corroborate findings by Reid (1988), Montaño-Harmón (1991) or Reppen and Grabe (1993) who found that Spanish students tend to use an elaborate, ornate style with few simple sentences. The academic background of the informants (university level in our case vs. elementary (Reppen and Grabe) or secondary level (Montaño-Harmón) could provide an explanation for such a behaviour. Also, the type of writing task (expository vs non-expository; and within the former a further subdivision between C/C (Comparison /contrast) and G topic (description of a graph or chart) (Reid, 1990) can have a bearing, among other reasons, on the outcome.

6. Discussion

Several remarks are fitting in connection with our aims. As stated at the beginning, we wanted to know, firstly, whether Kaplan's claim concerning the different rhetorical organisations of a discursive text was confirmed for English and Spanish. Our sample, although not very large, provides evidence to the effect that there is no such difference. None of the values turned out to be significant to a level p < .05, consequently one cannot talk of a relation between 1, which corresponds to the positive pole (i.e. linearity) of each parameter, and 2, reflecting the absence (or non-linearity) of the parameters in question. Only in the case of personal tone (PT) was a level of significance of $p<.09$. This, on the other hand, is understandable given the higher deictic usage of English as compared to Spanish.

Our second aim, which consisted of checking whether the rhetorical behaviour of the English informants justified the idea of linearity as against the non-linear or broken structure of the Spanish informants as postulated by Kaplan, was not borne out by our data. In the first parameter (TU), both groups show a clear preference for feature 1 linked to linearity. In fact, the percentage of the Spanish group is narrowly higher than that of the British group (82 % vs.76 % respectively). As to thematic progression (TP), the English group does better than the Spanish. Nonetheless, the Spaniards incline slightly more towards feature 1 than towards feature 2. Mention has been made above of the fact that both groups yield an identical percentage in the third parameter (PU) linked to linearity. Admittedly, there are no significant differences between the English and the Spaniards regarding these three parameters. All one can state is that both groups show a slight trend towards linearity, but by no means is the British group more conspicuous for linearity than the Spanish one.

In the three following parameters (PT, CO and CON), the English group yields higher percentages in feature 1 than in 2. The Spaniards, on the other hand, obtained an identical result in the three (41 %). Thus, by a narrow margin, the Spanish group favours non-linearity in indexes four (PT), five (CO) and six (CON), though, again, the trend is statistically non-significant. Only personal tone proved significant at a $p< .09$. And the two groups favoured non-linearity in SS.

Our final aim consisted of seeing which parameters were more coincidental and more divergent in the rhetorical organization of the two languages under analysis. As Table II shows, it is Paragraph Unity (PU) followed by Thematic Unity (TU) and Thematic Progression (TP) where there is greatest coincidence between the two groups, As most divergent parameter we find Personal Tone (PT), Inter-paragraph Cohesion (CO) and, not far behind, Sentence Simplicity (SS) and Concreteness (CO). A ranking of the parameters in terms of decreasing linearity shows that the only clear correspondences in both groups take place in the PU and the SS indexes. The former stands out as the most linear whereas the latter is the least linear feature displayed by all the informants. However, although the preference for linearity is identical in PU in both groups, this does not apply in the case of SS. Correspondences between the remaining parameters are not clear. Arguably, TP and CON can rank equally second and fifth in the two groups, but the percentage shed in either group reveals a different preference towards linearity. This is particularly the case with PT which ranks third in both groups and yet the British, unlike the Spaniards, lean more towards linearity. All the remaining parameters (TU, CO and TP) rank either differently or show opposite trends in linearity.

7. **Pedagogical implications**

It is obvious that linearity as an abstract concept is an attractive option to anyone writing in a native or a foreign language. It is quite a different matter that linearity should be the prerogative of a given system. The number of intervening variables is so great that any pronouncement in this sense runs the risk of being a useless concept pedagogically speaking. For a start, not all native speakers of a language be Spanish or English are in command of a normative rhetorical style. One finds socially stigmatized varieties in a given language or even a variety of a language as Lippi-Green (1997) rightly points out talking about language subordination within the States; secondly, style is bound to text conventions as mentioned in footnote 5; thirdly, competing rhetorics do occur within the same linguistic system (Bjarkman and Hammond, 1990); and finally, as individuals we all have an idiosyncratic way of mapping our thoughts in writing. As a result, we find in a given language a whole gamut of rhetorical cum compositional practices that range from a long-winded style to a much more clipped, straightforward one, and, socially speaking, from accepted rhetorical schemes to other forms that are frowned upon from certain headquarters.

The attention given within an educational system to writing conventions also varies enormously. Mention has been made to the Spanish system which has been in the recent past much more concerned with the literary values of a text whereas the Anglo-American tradition seems to be more inclined to approaching text product in a much more explicit way. The lack of compositional practice in Spain is evident when compared with the attention given to it in England and the States. Interestingly, this idea of linearity as it emerges from our study does not seem to apply to English writing in an unambiguous way. Nor do we deem it necessary to foster the "construction …of rhetorical schemata which hopefully correspond to those of English-speaking readers" as Leki (1991:105) suggested. Rather a number of factors have to be taken into account before implementing a given textual orientation. Internal factors such as literacy, proper rhetorical training in the student's mother tongue, knowledge of specific academic conventions, purpose of the message, the type of audience (a "determining factor", according to Corbett (2001: 115) or the type of genre, these two amenable to further subdivisions since we are not talking of a single, unique community nor of a genre as a monolithic construct.

Indeed it is an unquestionable fact that English is an international language. Students writing academic English should be made aware of the fact that mainstream research is published in English; that academic English favours a specific rhetorical structure; and that most researchers —usually the most influential— being native speakers of English expect foreigners to follow English rhetorical practices. Only in this respect and for this type of discourse should certain compositional practices be implemented. But it is not a question of teaching English style because it is intrinsically better or more lineal than other systems, as Connor (1996: 173) seems to take from granted when she asks herself whether Japanese women "learn English rhetorical linearity" as easily as Japanese men do . Rather it is simply a convention —and in this sense a restriction— that needs to be adhered to if you want to publish in this language (in a way similar to the faithful theoretical allegiance demanded by certain academic circles) but which should not be equated with the idea of linearity as an intrinsic quality of English writing conventions.

Globalization introduces a new dimension to this problem. As an international language –or to be more precise, as the main language for the dissemination of scientific knowledge– English is being used by an international community with an increasing number of non-native speakers of English or for whom English is not their mother tongue. They bring with them rhetorical traditions (Kachru, Y, 1997) that do not necessarily coincide with the rhetorical ordering found in this language. Some have argued for a "mestizo discourse" (J. Corbett, 2001) which might serve at written level just as cubonics does (or might do) at pronunciation level. Consensus on matters of language, however, is difficult to reach, but one thing seems certain: as the internationalizing role of English is expanding, greater flexibility will become apparent in the compositional practices of academic discourse which will not be necessarily coincidental with the rhetorical conventions that are enforced in England and the States.

7. Conclusion

To sum up, results from this study show that one cannot talk of linearity as a characteristic of academic English versus an indirect structure in the case of Spanish. In various parameters the tendencies of each group converge non-significantly towards either linearity (indexes 1, 2, 3) or non-linearity (index 7 and possibly 6). In the remaining parameters, the English group showed a non-significant tendency towards linearity for a *t* Student analysis with a $p < .05$. It is worth noting

that with the exception of PT , all the parameters display an important degree of non-significance. Only in index 4 did the British group show significance at 9%, while the Spanish group remained equidistant between both poles, favouring neither linearity nor non-linearity. As a general conclusion, all we can say is that linearity was adhered to by neither of the groups. It remains to be seen to what extent a larger sample, a more complex task and a more refined linearity scale would confirm or disprove these results.

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Author Note

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Footnotes

[1] The following titles are but a few of the many books devoted to academic writing in English: *The Literary Thesis: A Guide to Research* by G. Watson (1977); *How to write reports* by J. Mitchell (Fontana, 1974); *How to write essays* by R. Lewis (Heinemann, 1976); *Scientists must write* by R. Barras (Chapman & Hall, 1978); *Writing the research paper. A handbook,* by A.C. Winkler & J. R. McCuen (Harcourt Brace J., 1979); *Students must write* by R. Barras (Methuen, 1982); *Approaches to Academic Reading and Writing* by M.A. Arnaudet & M. E. Barret (Prentice-Hall, 1984); *Writing a Thesis. A Guide to Long Essays and Dissertations* by G. Watson (Longman, 1987); *The student's writing guide for the arts and social sciences* by Gordon Taylor (C.U.P., 1989); *Teaching creative writing* ed. by M. Monteith & R. Miles (Open University, 1992); *Academic Writing for Graduate Students. A Course for Nonnative Speakers of English* by J. Swales & Ch. B. Feak (The University of Michigan Press, 1994), etcetera.

[2] 'Logic… is evolved out of a culture; it is not a universal. Rhetoric…is not universal either, but varies from culture to culture and even from time to time within a given culture' (Kaplan, 1966: 2). And in 1972 'My original conception was that…rhetoric constituted a linguistic area influenced by the Whorf-Sapir hypothesis…I would still maintain… that rhetoric is a phenomenon tied to the linguistic system of a particular language' (1972: Preface).

[3] Kaplan has modified his initial position. He no longer holds the view that rhetorical patterns reflect a particular way of thinking, they are rather the result of different writing conventions that are learned.

[4] Connor (1996: 16) summarises further criticisms.

[5] As Braddock (1974) pointed out, this is a simplified picture of English writing conventions: many professional native-speaker writers do not always write following the linearity principle. See also Connor (2001: 39) where she expresses an identical view with regards to article introductions. Kachru, Y. (1997) on her part considers it 'problematic' to set up specific writing norms for English.

[6] This division is no doubt very rough. It finds its justification only on the binary principle we have established to elucidate the concept of linearity. A sounder analysis would have to take into account the two basic discoursal controlling mechanisms: topic and focus. Of

special relevance is Kaplan's idea that focus is 'specifically language-bound' and that 'some languages have formulaic devices for topic establishment and syntactic manipulations for focus establishment' (1983: 150) .

Table 1

PARAMETERS	LANG.	N	MEAN	SD	t
1. Thematic unit (TU)	Engl	17	1.23	0.43	
	Span.	17	1.17	0.39	0.68
2. Thematic progression (TP)	Engl.	17	1.23	0.43	
	Span.	17	1.41	0.50	0.28
3. Paragraph unity (PU)	Engl.	17	1.17	0.39	
	Span.	17	1.17	0.39	1.00
4. Personal tone (PT)	Engl.	17	1.29	0.47	
	Span.	17	1.58	0.50	0.09
5. Inter-paragraph cohesion (CO)	Engl.	17	1.35	0.49	
	Span.	17	1.58	0.50	0.18
6. Concreteness (CON)	Engl.	17	1.52	0.51	
	Span.	17	1.58	0.50	0.73
7. Sentence simplicity (SS)	Engl.	17	1.82	0.39	
	Span.	17	1.94	0.24	0.30

Table I. Parameters of rhetorical organization. Means and SDs

PARAMETERS	LANG.	1 (LINEARITY) % / N	2 (NON-LINEAR) % / N
1. Thematic unit (TU)	Engl.	76 (13)	24 (4)
	Span.	82 (14)	18 (3)
2. Thematic progression (TP)	Engl.	76 (13)	24 (4)
	Span.	59 (10)	41 (7)
3. Paragraph unity(PU)	Engl.	82 (14)	18 (3)
	Span.	82 (14)	18 (3)
4. Personal tone (PT)	Engl.	71 (12)	29 (5)
	Span.	41 (7)	59 (10)
5. Inter-paragraph cohesion (CO)	Engl.	65 (11)	35 (6)
	Span.	41 (7)	59 (10)
6. Concreteness (CON)	Engl.	47 (8)	53 (9)
	Span.	41 (7)	59 (10)
7. Sentence simplicidad (SS)	Engl.	18 (3)	82 14)

Span.	6 (1)	94 (16)

Table II. Percentages and frequencies

Figure Captions

<u>Figure 1.</u> Insert figure caption here.