

A Contrastive Rhetoric Analysis of Internship Cover Letters Written by Taiwanese and Canadian Hospitality Majors

Hsiao-I Hou (Corresponding Author)

School of Hospitality, Recreation and Tourism, Humber College
205 Humber College Blvd., Toronto M9W 5L7, Ontario, Canada
Tel: 1-416-675-6622 ext 5518 E-mail: houx0020@gmail.com

Min-Yu Li

Department of International Business, Chang Jung University, Taiwan
No.396, Sec.1, Chang Jung Rd., Kway Jen, Tainan, 711, R.O.C, Taiwan
Tel: 886-278-5123 ext 5057 E-mail: michelle@mail.cjcu.edu.tw

Received: Dec. 3, 2011 Accepted: December 12, 2011 Published: December 27, 2011

doi:10.5296/ijl.v3i1.1135 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v3i1.1135>

Abstract

This study investigates English cover letters written by twenty-six Taiwanese and twenty-six Canadian college students majoring in hospitality management in Canada for their internship applications. Based on the genre analysis framework (Bhatia, 1993; Swales, 1990; Upton and Connor, 2001), this study uses a move-based analysis to investigate the similarities and differences in the cover letters written by the Taiwanese students and their Canadian counterparts. The uses of positive and negative politeness strategies are also analyzed. The results indicate that there are significant differences in length, lexical density, and descriptions of desire for applying the job, providing arguments in benefits for the company, and politeness expression between Taiwanese and Canadian students' cover letters. There is no distinction between Taiwanese and Canadian writers in their use of positive or negative politeness strategies exclusively. Based on the study results, suggestions for ESP teaching and

research are provided.

Keywords: Contrastive analysis, Cover letter, Move analysis, ESP

1. Introduction

International student mobility is one of the cornerstones of the growing internationalization in higher education worldwide. It encompasses both international students attending local institutions and local students going abroad for academic credit while registered at an overseas institution. In the past thirty years, various out-of-country academic programs have been developed, including undergraduate or graduate exchange students, summer schools, service learning placements, students involved in international development projects or research assignments, and student internships. These programs have great impact on individual students, institutions, and ultimately, on society as a whole (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

Due to its national plans and the rising tourism and hospitality markets in Asia, the popularity of hospitality majors for college and university students was consciously increased in both comprehensive and vocational sectors in the past ten years in Taiwan. For students who major in this field, internships are an important component in the curriculum design. In order to gain meaningful work experience, a greater number of Taiwanese students choose to do overseas internships in other Asian or North America countries during the summer break or even during the regular semester. For Taiwanese students typical English training focuses mainly on receptive skills, i.e. reading and listening. The productive skills of speaking and writing in English are not sufficiently practiced. Thus, it is not surprising that a great number of Taiwanese students who wish to pursue overseas internship experiences in English-speaking countries find it challenging to go through the application process in which writing an impressive cover letter or résumé is indispensable. Another problem is that without previous significant work experience, most college students in Taiwan do not have the experience in writing cover letters and do not understand the normative purpose and function of cover letters in the Western business community. Furthermore, for hospitality majors the nature of the job is high-guest contact, thus, communication skills are an essential part of the job. Therefore, the tone and polite etiquette are significant features in their cover letters. It is necessary to examine whether Taiwanese students who major in hospitality field are fully aware of the important features of cover letter writing.

In reviewing current literature, no study has been carried out to investigate Taiwanese students' English writing based on a task for real-world purposes. The present study investigates the actual cover letters submitted to the Canadian hospitality industry by Taiwanese and Canadian students. The research goals are to identify genre moves (Bhatia, 1993; Swales, 1990), in a cover letter for internship applications to hotels or restaurants in Canada, and to compare and contrast cover letters written by native speakers of English and native Taiwanese for whom English is a foreign language. The research questions are posed as follows:

- (1) What are the similarities and differences in the English cover letters written by Taiwanese and Canadian students in terms of form, content, and style?
- (2) Based on the pragmatic concepts of politeness, what politeness strategies do the students

use? Does the preference for politeness strategies differ between the Taiwanese and Canadian students?

(3) What implications does this study have for an ESP writing class?

2. Literature Review

To satisfy the research goals, literature related to topics of contrastive rhetoric, move analyses in cover letter writing, and politeness strategies in cover letter writing are reviewed.

2.1 Contrastive Rhetoric

Kaplan's (1966) early argument in contrastive rhetoric states that every culture develops its distinctive patterns of thinking and these patterns significantly influence the organizational structure of writing. Kaplan's original proposal has become an influential framework for early rhetoric studies that focused mainly on contrastive analysis, error analysis, and the idea of L1 influencing on L2 learning. Some later studies (Atkinson, 1999; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Mohan & Lo, 1985; Scollon, 1997; Spack, 1997; Zamel, 1997;) have criticized Kaplan's proposal as insufficient in explaining the organizational features of L2 writing, including limitations on ignoring the writers' writing process, simplifying the nature of organization of a particular language or culture, misinterpreting organizational structure of some languages or cultures, being insensitive to cultural differences, and overlooking the individual differences in cultural issues.

Recently new developments in contrastive rhetoric have expanded not only basic ESL/EFL fields but also ESP/EAP topics with more cross-cultural discussions. Connor's (2002) historical review of contrastive rhetoric in the past thirty years has concluded that contrastive rhetoric has moved toward a context-sensitive research approach that includes studying the social context, local situatedness, writing process as well as written products themselves, and history and social structures of a particular culture. In addition, this research approach has been extensively adopted in teaching business and technical writing (Bhatia, 1993; Connor, Davis & DeRycker, 1995; Upton & Connor, 2001). Researchers in this field have advocated that cultural differences need to be explicitly taught in order to acculturate EFL writers to the target discourse community (Swales, 2004). In other words, EFL/ESP teachers need to educate students about readers' expectations.

In brief, the new trends in contrastive rhetoric have brought different perspectives into research in EFL/ESP writing practices. Researchers are encouraged to integrate authentic writing samples or discipline-specific corpus with multidimensional analytical framework for cross-cultural linguistic analyses. Hence, Bhatia (1993), and Swales' (1990; 2004) rhetorical move analysis theories, and Upton and Connor's (2001) model for job application letters are taken as guidelines for this study.

2.1 Move Analyses in Cover Letter Writing

Swales' (1990) genre analysis developed with the pedagogic aim of academic discourse for non-native speakers of English has probably become best known. His concept of moves results from extensive study of textual properties of research articles, and the move models have provided a framework for analyzing research articles across cultures to determine the prototype of introduction section. Gradually, Swales' concept has expanded contrastive rhetoric studies to different types of writings including business reports, letters of application, grant proposals, and editorials.

In the analysis of job applications and sales promotion letters, Bhatia (1993) proposes that the communicative purpose of these two types of text is the same, which is to promote something. In another study of cross-cultural variation in job application letters among people from South Asian countries, Bhatia (1993) indicates that application letters from South Asia do not reflect similar promotional features as those from Western countries. Applicants from South Asian countries simply stated that relevant documents were enclosed without providing self-appraisal. This study indicates that communication purposes and strategies used in application letters are significantly different from those in the West.

Another cross-cultural job application letter research conducted by Connor, Davis, and DeRycker (1995) has shown that the Flemish group resembled Bhatia's (1993) South Asian group, which is to say that they did not use the cover letter as a sales instrument for self promotion. The researchers explained that the lack of self-promotion is related to the dimension of power distance. The Flemish believe that power is distributed unequally between the applicant and the interviewer, and hiring decisions are not related to showing off one's success. Subsequent research done by Upton and Connor (2001) identifies cross-cultural differences that may influence the effectiveness of the application letters written by American and European undergraduate students by analyzing a corpus covering a 10-year period. Their study concludes that letters written in early years showed greater differences in style between cultural groups as compared to letters written in later years. They observed that the style of application letters has become more homogenized in the global business environment. Their study results on politeness strategies will be summarized in the following section.

2.2 Politeness Strategies in Cover Letter Writing

The original concept of "face" or "politeness" was proposed by Goffman (in Brown & Levinson 1987) and eventually elaborated by Brown and Levinson (1987) to a model of positive face and negative face. This model has generated a large amount of literature in the fields of linguistics, anthropology, and sociology. Three studies (Maier, 1992; Connor, Davis & DeRycker 1995; Upton & Connor 2001) have adapted this model to cross-cultural job application letter analyses. Those studies did not show consistent and universal research results. Maier's study results are similar to Connor, Davis and DeRycker's, showing that native speakers use more positive polite strategies such as being indirect and deferring to the

reader. Upton and Connor report that American and non-American applicants operate politeness strategies differently in cover letters, but did not follow particular patterns. In Maier's study, issues related to cultural impacts on individual's writing style were not discussed. The other two studies argue that the differences might be due to cultural differences in audience expectation and interpretations of reader-writer relationships, and writer concepts of how politeness is expressed.

Guides and handbooks for students learning to write cover letters and résumés generally emphasized the importance of cover letters rather than the résumé. The purpose of the cover letter is to attract the reader/employer's attention, to create a desire to hire the applicant, and to take action in the form of an interview (Connor, Davis & DeRycker, 1995). Therefore, in Western culture, the main function of a cover letter is to provide a self-appraisal that includes strategies such as enhancing qualifications and experiences of the applicant and demonstrating their interest in a specific position. By contrast, cover letters are not an essential component for job application documents in business communities in Taiwan. Instead of cover letters, the applicant would write a statement of purpose attached to the résumé. According to an online survey, 59% of employers do not request a cover letter in the job application, and only 16% of applicants attached cover letters (51job News, 2010). In addition, nearly 60% of employers believe that cover letter is like a decorative piece without meaningful purpose and the content in cover letters is extravagant. They focus mainly on the information presented in the résumé. Since the nature of the cover letter is different in Western and Taiwanese communities, it is important to learn about and address Taiwanese writers' special needs, especially for those who are interested in gaining significant work experience in Western countries.

3. Methodology

The present study corpus examines two sets of letters. The first set includes 26 cover letters written in English by exchange students from Taiwan whose native language is Mandarin, currently attending hospitality programs at a public college in Canada. The second set consists of 26 letters written by college students whose native language is English, currently attending hospitality programs in Canada. All letters are from applicants who were successfully placed in internship positions related to their professions in Canada. Each student had to take a Career Development course for one semester to understand career choices in the Canadian hospitality industry, and to prepare them for further study and internships in this field. Students also practiced skills in résumé development, interviewing, job search technique and goals, and learnt about other professional skills and standards required for success in this course. In the following semester they started the internship placement process through the internship office and the job portal website at school.

All Taiwanese writers have had at least seven years of formal instruction in English in both secondary school and college in Taiwan. To come to Canada as exchange students, their English proficiency must reach TOEIC 520 equivalent or higher. Before they started their

academic classes, they all attended a summer ESL immersion program for five weeks and an EAP program for three weeks in Canada.

To analyze the genre moves of the sample cover letters, the coding scheme developed by Upton and Connor (2001) was adopted. Table 1 provides a description of the coding scheme.

Table 1. Upton and Connor's (2001, p.318) Coding Scheme for Learner Application Letter

1.	Identify the source of information (Explain how and where you learned of the position)
2.	Apply for the position (State desire for consideration)
3.	Provide argument, including supporting information, for the job application.
	a. Implicit argument based on neutral evidence or information about background and experience.
	b. Argument based on what would be good for the hiring company
	c. Argument based on what would be good for the applicant
4.	Indicate desire for an interview or a desire for further contact, or specify means of further communication/how to be contacted
5.	Express politeness (pleasantries) or appreciation at the end of the letter
6.	Offer to provide more information
7.	Reference attached résumé

All of the sample letters were scanned and converted to computer files. Based on the above coding scheme, the T-units of each letter were coded by three trained raters. The raters were told to focus on the existence of the move, not on the order. To ensure the inter-rater reliability, the three raters had an agreement rate of 93% on identifying and categorizing the moves on 16 (30%) randomly selected letters. Quantitative analyses of linguistic features, including sentence length, lexical density, and move analyses were conducted. Politeness strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987) used in Move 4 and Move 5 in the cover letters were compared by country and discussed.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 The Surface Feature of Cover Letters

An introductory observation is that each cover letter presented a formal and accurate business letter writing format. All letters contain the following elements: return address of the letter writer, date, complete name, title and address of the recipients, salutation, closing, and enclosure. Some Taiwanese students, however, failed to provide correct information of recipients and salutation. Since most of the jobs posted in the school job portal system were posted by the director of the internship office, some Taiwanese students confused the director with the manager of the HR office of the hotel or restaurant they were applying to.

The second observation is the variance in words, sentences, and paragraph structures between these two groups. The corpus in this study consisted of a total of 4,847 and 5,419 words of

cover letters written by Taiwanese and Canadian students respectively. Table 2 summarizes the length of all 52 letters combined in each group. The average length for the entire group of 52 letters was 197 words. The average letter by the Taiwanese had a length of 186 words, the longest had 242 words and the shortest 141 words. Corresponding figures for the Canadians letters were 208, 253, and 157 respectively. The *t*-test value showed that the mean differences in the overall length of cover letters in both groups were statistically significant.

Table 2. Length of Cover Letters Written by Taiwanese and Canadian College Students

Students	Total words	M	SD	Lexical Density
Taiwanese	4847	186.42	29.20	45.70%
Canadian	5419	208.42	25.36	49.79%
Total	10266	197.42	29.27	
<i>t</i>		.006**		.000***

p* <.05; *p* <.01; ****p* <.001

The average lexical density of Taiwanese and Canadian cover letters were 45.70% and 49.79% respectively and the differences were statistically significant (*p*<.000). In addition, some Taiwanese cover letters were lack of sound topic sentences and all had concluding sentences. The findings are similar as Lan's (2008) study results showing that Taiwanese students' English writing were influenced by their native language rhetoric which does not require straight-forward introductory sentence.

As the above data demonstrates, Canadian students wrote longer cover letters than their Taiwanese counterparts. The Canadian students also utilized better word choice, word accuracy, and more variables in lexical density and structural complexity. The results resemble Bhatia's (1993) and Connor, Davis, and DeRycker's (1995) study results in cross-cultural analyses of cover letters for native and non-native speakers.

4.2 Move Analysis

Table 3 shows the means and standard deviations of words for each move in students' cover letters for both groups. It is obvious that cultural differences play an important role in influencing the comparison results. Overall, Taiwanese students write shorter components sections than the Canadian counterparts, with the exception of Move 4 – desire for interview or further future contact. For Move 2, Move 3-b and Move 5, Canadian students use significantly larger number of words to express the respective meaning components. The lengths differences in those moves are statistically significant.

For both groups of students, none used the moves of providing more information (Move 6) and reference attached (Move 7) in their cover letters. One possible explanation is that writing a cover letter for an internship is less formal than a cover letter for a full-time or permanent job, and is the intention is for temporary employment. Therefore, references and necessary personal information are not key elements. In addition, internship placement processes generally run though

the school system. The school has developed connections or relationships with the industry. As a result, the employers do not require references and more personal information.

For Move 2, applying for the position, the Canadian and Taiwanese students used different strategies. The Canadian students use more words to describe what particular position they applied for and to state their desire and qualifications for consideration, whereas most of the Taiwanese students solely stated what particular position they applied for. This indicates that Taiwanese students use more direct strategies to state their desire while their counterparts use indirect strategy to describe their desire. The following excerpts from both groups illustrate this point.

I would like to be considered for the server position which your company advertized on the Job Portal website. My qualifications and experience complement the responsibilities outlined in your advertisement and include over 3 years of experience in increasingly challenging roles. (Canadian letter #7).

Please consider my application for the position of dining room service which was posted on the Student Job Portal of XXX College. (Taiwanese letter #3)

Table 3. Mean Number and Standard Deviations of Words in Each Move

Move Components	Taiwanese		Canadian		Sign.
	M	SD	M	SD	
1. Identify source of information	7.04	5.05	7.73	2.51	
2. Apply for the position	22.15	10.06	32.73	15.96	**
3-a: Provide arguments - background and experience information	101.38	20.16	102.04	17.99	
3-b. Provide argument – good for the hiring company	6.46	10.24	20.62	22.13	**
3-c. Provide argument – good for the applicant	3.08	9.19	3.69	7.63	
4. Desire for interview or further contact	23.42	11.77	21.31	8.16	
5. Express politeness	10.92	7.01	14.15	3.97	*
6. Provide more information	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
7. Reference attached	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

For Move 5, expressing politeness, Canadian students use more words to show their politeness, whereas some Taiwanese students did not show appreciation in the end of their letters. Usually, in the closing paragraph, Moves 4, 5, 6, 7 should be organized in this paragraph. Most Taiwanese students paid much more attention to indicating desire for an interview or desire for further contact, or information for how to be contacted, and a few (3 Taiwanese samples) did not express politeness in the closing paragraph.

The largest difference in the mean lengths of meaning between the two groups of students' letters was in Move 3-b, argument based on what would be good for the hiring company. Over half (15 samples) of the Canadian students placed effort on making explicit arguments on what benefits they will bring to the company if they are hired. Unlike the Canadian group, only some Taiwanese students (8 samples) used this strategy with short statements (less than 15 words) in their letters.

4.3 Use of Politeness Strategies

In producing a promotional discourse such as a cover letter, one important challenge is the need for the applicants to maintain balance between advertising themselves and presenting themselves as modest and teachable. The use of politeness strategies helps the applicants achieve this balance and is a very important feature for hospitality professions. As mentioned in the Methodology section, in this present study the politeness strategies were examined within Move 4 and Move 5. While Move 4 is considered by most professional writers as an important component of a letter of application (Connor, Davis & DeRycker, 1995), one Taiwanese student (3.86%) did not include this move, whereas all Canadian students included this move in their letters. Negative politeness strategies including use of modals and formulaic expressions were examined, and positive politeness strategies including directness and being optimistic were examined and discussed.

4.3.1 Negative Politeness Strategies

Negative politeness strategies are intended to reinforce the speakers' respect for the addressees, showing that speaker acknowledges the addressee's independence and freedom of action (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The negative politeness strategies are identified through use of modals and formulaic expressions.

Modals that qualify statements have the effect of softening the idea being communicated. These types of modals are in a category of modals called "socialinteractional" by Celce-Murcia and Larson-Freeman (1999) because modal choice depends on the speaker's perception of the social situation in which he or she is interacting. Modals that frequently serve to qualify statements include: would, could, may, might, shall, and should.

In this study, the Canadian writers (42.3%) use qualifying modals, including would, may, and might, more than 1.5 times as often as the Taiwanese (28%) students, whereas the Taiwanese solely use would in their Move 4. The reason for this may be the lack of such forms as modals in their mother tone language and the unfamiliarity of Taiwanese writers in applying them in the English.

In Western business letter wiring, several formulaic expressions appeared repeatedly. The purpose of these expressions is to show that the speaker is following the rules of the community, so it can be a negative politeness strategy (Upton & Conner, 2001). Within Moves 4 and 5, four formulaic expressions are recognized: "I would/will appreciate..."; "I

am available for...”; “at your convenience”; and “thank you for your (time and) consideration” (Upton & Conner, 2001:322).

As Table 4 shows, each Canadian used formulaic expressions in their cover letter writings and the dominant expressions was “thank you for your (time and) consideration.” Taiwanese students (90.91%) also use the expression quite frequently. It is clear that all Canadians showed their gratitude while not all Taiwanese students are aware of the importance of thankfulness in the business letter genre. In this observation, Taiwanese writers use formulaic expressions extensively in their cover letters. It indicates that they attempt to follow the prototypes of cover letter writing applied by native English speaking writers.

Table 4. Use of Formulaic Expressions in Moves 4 and 5

	Taiwanese	Canadian
I would/will appreciate...	0	2
I am available for...	0	0
at your convenience	3	0
thank you for your (time and) consideration	17	24
No. of formulaic expressions	20	26
No. of letters with Moves 4 and 5	22	26
Rate of formulaic expressions in Moves 4 and 5	90.91%	100%

4.3.2 Positive Politeness Strategies

A speaker uses positive politeness strategies to emphasize the shared goals and common ground between the speaker and addressee. The strategies are most effective when both speaker and the addressee see themselves as equals. According to Upton and Conner (2011), the directness of the speaker and use of optimism are identified as positive politeness.

Two common sentence structures which include the phrase “You can...” or the phrase “Please + action verb” are recognized as direct statements (Upton & Conner, 2011:324). The analysis results show that Taiwanese students (68.18%) use direct phrases more than twice as often as the Canadians (34.62%). These analysis results resemble Maier’s (1992) study and indicate that non-native speakers tend to use positive politeness strategies more frequently than their native counterparts.

Two phrases that are categorized as positive politeness strategies to show optimism in cover letters are: “look forward to” and “hope” (Upton & Conner, 2011:324). The function of these two phrases is to minimize the distance between speaker and addressee and to reach common goals. In the present study, both groups use this strategy to show optimism extensively, though Canadians (92.30%) use them more often than the Taiwanese writers (80%). Taiwanese writers solely used “look forward to” to show optimism, whereas their Canadian counterparts used the same phrase and only a couple use “hope.”

This study shows similar findings to those of Upton and Conner's (2011) study. There is no distinction between Taiwanese and Canadian writers in their use of positive or negative politeness strategies exclusively. The results do not reflect the same as Maier's study (1992) which showed that native speakers use negative politeness more, while non-native speakers tended toward positive politeness. For both groups, however, there are differences in the type of politeness strategies they used in their cover letter writing.

5. Conclusion

The major analysis in this study is adopted Bhatia (1993), and Swales' (1990; 2004) rhetorical move analysis theories, and Upton and Connor's (2001) model to analyze English cover letters for internship applications by Taiwanese and Canadian hospitality majors in Canadian context. Based on the study results, Upton and Connor's (2001) model for move analysis can be revised as a prototypical form for internship cover letters. Instead of consisting seven moves, the last two moves – Move 6 and Move 7 can be removed because willingness to provide more information and reference letters are not important components in internship cover letters. In addition, the study shows that some surface linguistic features are significantly different in both groups' writings. However, the differences in these features may not be considered as a significant factor in creating barriers for communication. In analyses of the pragmatic features, Taiwanese students intended simply to convey their message without thinking of how to employ forms that are acceptable to their counterparts.

Although the Taiwanese students had trained one semester in Canada to understand professional standards and career planning skills, they are not familiar with the concept of politeness strategies in cover letter writing. In an attempt to write an unfamiliar genre, Taiwanese students tended to want to see a finished product. i.e. writing samples in textbooks, and try to emulate it. This shortcut approach could hinder their potential to write a successful piece, which can better reflect their qualifications. As Yu (2011) suggested, ESP teachers should be aware that pragmatic aspects of writing is sometimes more important than the grammatical aspect because pragmatic problems strongly influence readers' impression of applicants' personalities and consequently their overall evaluation of the application. Thus, in giving feedbacks to students' essays, teachers should pay close attention to the pragmatic component as well.

This study is based on a relatively small set of data; therefore, a larger corpus is needed to be able to make generalizations regarding students' rhetorical tendencies. This study is product-oriented and does not include the investigation of students' writing process. Qualitative interviews with students to discover how their final product came about might help to understand their writing strategies and difficulties better. In addition, interviews with teachers or professions from industry to investigate their perceptions and evaluation criterion for cover letters might be helpful for ESP curriculum design and can offer practical advice to ESP writing practitioners.

References

- 51Job News. (2010). Cover letter writing. Retrieved September 2nd, 2011 from <http://big5.51job.com/gate/big5/arts.51job.com/arts/76/352470.html>
- Altbach, P. G., & Knight, J. (2007). The internationalization of higher education: Motivations and realities. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 11, 290-305. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1028315307303542>
- Atkinson, D. (1999). TESOL and culture. *TESOL Quarterly*, 33, 625-654. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3587880>
- Bhatia, V. (1993). *Analyzing genre: Language use in professional settings*. NY: Longman.
- Bloch, J., & Chi, L. (1995). A comparison of the use of citations in Chinese and English academic discourse. In D. Belcher and G. Braine (Eds.). *Academic writing in a second language: Essays on research and pedagogy*, 213-274. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. UK: CUP.
- Celce-Murcia, M., & Larsen-Freeman, D. (1999). *The grammar book: an ESL/EFL teacher's course*. MA: Boston. Heinle & Heinle.
- Connor, U. (2002). New directions in contrastive rhetoric. *TESOL Quarterly*, 36, 493-510. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3588238>
- Connor, U., Davis, K., & DeRycker, T. (1995). Correctness and clarity in applying for overseas jobs: A cross-cultural analysis of U.S. and Flemish applications. *Text*, 15, 457-475. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/text.1.1995.15.4.457>
- Flower, L., & Hayes, J. (1981). A cognitive process theory of writing. *College Composition and Communication*, 32, 365-387. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/356600>
- Kaplan, R. (1966). Cultural thought patterns in inter-cultural education. *Language Learning: A Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 16, 1-20.
- Lan, M. (2008). Influence of Chinese rhetoric on technical college students' English writings in a portfolio project. *Journal of Tzuhui Institute of Technology*, 4, 165-179.
- Maier, P. (1992). Politeness strategies in business letters by native and non-native English speakers. *English for Specific Purposes*, 11, 189-205. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0889-4906\(05\)80009-2](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0889-4906(05)80009-2)
- Mohan, B., & Lo, A. (1985). Academic writing and Chinese students: Transfer and developmental factors. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19, 515-534. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3586276>
- Scollon, R. (1997). Contrastive rhetoric, contrastive poetics, or perhaps something else? *TESOL Quarterly* 31, 352-363. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3588051>

Spack, R. (1997). The rhetorical construction of multilingual students. *TESOL Quarterly*, 31, 765-774. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3587759>

Swales, J. (1990). *Genre analysis: English in academic and researching settings*. UK: CUP.

Swales, J. (2004). *Research genre: Explorations and applications*. UK: CUP.

Upton, T., & Connor, U. (2001). Using computerized corpus analysis to investigate the textlinguistic discourse moves of a genre. *English for Specific Purposes*, 20, 313-329. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0889-4906\(00\)00022-3](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0889-4906(00)00022-3)

Yu, M. (2011). Learning how to read situations and know what is the right thing to say or do in an L2: A study of socio-cultural competence and language transfer. *Journal of Discourse*, 43, 1127-1147.

Zamel, V. (1997). Toward a model of transculturation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 31, 341-343. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3588050>