

Assessing the Impact of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Instruction on the Rhetorical Features and Structure of Student Writing in an English Medium Instruction (EMI) University

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Abstract—This study looks at changes in the rhetorical structure and features of L2 university student writing after receiving English for Academic Purposes (EAP) instruction. Previous research suggests that the way ideas are presented in text can vary across different cultures. This potentially means that L2 students, who study in English Medium Instruction (EMI) universities, may have to learn how to organize and arrange their ideas in writing to align with what their content area instructors expect to see. The EAP courses that L2 students take, to prepare them for the challenges of studying in an EMI university, primarily focus on language use, but these also may draw students' attention to possible differences in written discourse in L1 and L2 and help learners to produce the type of writing that is expected by their EMI instructors. To examine this, the present study looked at changes in the rhetorical features and structure of L2 student writing produced before and after learners had completed a 17-week EAP course. After the completion of writing, semi-structured interviews were also carried out with 10 randomly selected participants to gauge their opinions about possible rhetorical differences in written discourse in their first and second languages. Findings revealed that there were significant changes in the rhetorical structure and features of L2 student text after learners had completed EAP instruction. These results suggest that EAP instruction may help students to produce writing that aligns with the expectations of their instructors.

Index Terms—second language writing, rhetorical structure, EAP, EMI, L2

I. INTRODUCTION

Degree programs are now commonly taught through English-Medium Instruction (EMI) in many different countries. Akıncıoğlu (2024) points out that EMI has grown exponentially, and in countries such as the United Arab Emirates, courses are taught in English, and learners are required to complete exams and written assignments in this language. This presents students with similar challenges to those faced by second language (L2) learners who complete degree programs in countries such as the United Kingdom. In this situation, students commonly study in a language that is not their own and have to complete written assignments in English. Xu and Zhang (2022) stress that exposure to content in a foreign language is cognitively demanding because students have to learn about L2 use and at the same time need to learn about the content area subjects required to complete their degree. Learners are often required to submit written assignments to their EMI instructors in a language that they are still learning. Writing is commonly used as a means of assessment because it allows students to demonstrate their knowledge of the content area (Huh, 2022). However, for L2 learners to write effectively in English they not only need to be proficient in grammar, but they also need to be familiar with the writing conventions that are used in the target academic context (Schneider & Fujishima, 1995; Xing et al., 2008). This requires learners to have a thorough understanding of how language should be used, and they must also understand how to present their ideas in writing, so that these align with the expectations of the instructors who will read and assess their work. To address this situation, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses have been created to support the needs of these students.

Clearly, second language use is one of the primary challenges that L2 students have to face when completing EMI (Aizawa et al., 2023), and as such, studies have looked at the impact of EAP instruction on the linguistic features of L2 student text (Crosthwaite, 2018; Storch & Tapper, 2009). However, scholars such as Petrić (2005) also suggest that learners may not understand how ideas should be arranged and presented in their written work to align with the expectations of their instructors. Hyland (2003) suggests that teachers often mistakenly assume that students share their

cultural beliefs about written discourse. However, several scholars suggest that there may be differences between the rhetorical structure and features of text in different cultures. As a result, there potentially may be a difference between how L2 students present and organize their ideas in writing and what their instructors expect to see. If such differences exist, then EAP instruction may also help L2 learners notice differences between written discourse in L1 and L2 and potentially help them learn about the rhetorical structure and features of writing that are expected. However, to date, there is limited research on how EAP instruction impacts the rhetorical features and structure of L2 student text.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *The Role of EAP in EMI Instruction*

To understand the impact of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) on L2 student writing, it is necessary to understand its relationship with English-Medium Instruction (EMI). Dearden (2014) defines EMI as the use of English to teach academic subjects in countries where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English. Thus, students who complete EMI instruction are L2 learners who will attend lectures in English and who will complete exams and written assignments in this language. Xu and Zhang (2022) suggest that exposure to cognitively demanding content in a foreign language without any language support may interfere with, rather than facilitate, learning. In light of this, EAP courses were created to address the needs of students of L2 English. Hyland and Wong (2019) suggest that EAP is a needs-based teaching philosophy which aims to prepare learners for the rigors of studying in English-medium universities. Hyland (2013) argues that universities are essentially about writing, and thus EAP instruction has become synonymous with learning about written discourse. McKinley and Rose (2022) stress that many learners struggle with writing in EMI contexts. Accordingly, in EAP programs, students commonly learn to prepare different types of writing that are used in a wide range of degree programs and subjects, such as comparative, expository or argumentative essays (Davison, 2021).

B. *Why Is Writing Instruction Needed in EAP?*

If L2 students have to prepare a particular type of writing that they have never produced before, then it is clear why writing instruction is needed, but if they have produced a specific type of writing in their own language, such as an expository essay, then why is writing instruction required? Wei et al. (2020) suggest that learners may be able to transfer their L1 rhetorical knowledge to L2 writing; defined as L1-to-L2 rhetorical transfer. For example, if students know how to present and arrange ideas in an argumentative essay in their own language, then potentially they can use this knowledge to write an argumentative essay in L2. However, one of the possible problems with L1-to-L2 rhetorical transfer is that the rhetorical patterns used by different writing cultures may be dissimilar (Almehmadi, 2012). For example, a number of scholars have found evidence that the way ideas are organized and presented in different cultures may not be the same (Johnstone, 1991; Kaplan, 1967; Oshima & Houge, 1991; Ostler, 1987).

Over five decades ago, Kaplan (1966) illustrated how the arrangement of ideas within written paragraphs was dissimilar in different cultures using diagrams to illustrate the differences between how ideas were arranged and presented to the reader. Though perhaps oversimplified, these provided an illustration of how different cultures can present ideas in writing. Adding to this, Hinds (1987) identified writer responsible and reader responsible languages; distinguishing between writer-responsible languages, such as English, where it is the writer's responsibility to clearly convey his or her message to the reader in a manner that can be easily understood, and reader-responsible languages where the reader is expected to interpret the message that the writer indirectly wishes to convey. In line with this, Kobayashi and Rinnert (1996) identified two distinct culturally influenced rhetorical patterns. They suggest that in English, writers employ a deductive rhetorical pattern where they state their position at the beginning of their text (in the introduction) and then explain or justify this with different supporting points in the successive body paragraphs, leading to the conclusion where the writer's position is summed up and restated. These researchers suggest that in other languages, such as Japanese, writers use a less direct inductive rhetorical pattern where they do not state their position or opinion about the topic discussed until the end of their text, or they may not even clearly state what they think and let the reader form his or her own opinion about the topic after looking at all of the information presented.

C. *Using L1 Writing Strategies in L2*

Hyland (2013) stresses that the process of writing involves creating a text that writers assume the reader will recognise and expect. Thus, using a different rhetorical pattern than the one that is expected would most likely have an effect on how well the writer's ideas are understood. To illustrate, a number of researchers have highlighted the problems of using L1 writing strategies in L2. Weigle (2002) suggests that English-speaking readers may possibly consider text produced by writers from reader responsible writing cultures to be excessively vague, poorly organized, or even difficult to read. Others such as Leki (1991) and Connor (2002) also point out that the use of L1 rhetorical patterns that differ to those commonly employed in EMI universities can possibly lead to misunderstandings or be ineffective. For example, Takano (1993) found that when Japanese students used L1 rhetorical strategies when writing in English, this significantly hindered English-speaking readers understanding of their text. Also, when Kobayashi and Rinnert (1996) reviewed instructor assessment of English writing produced by L2 writers who employed L1 or L2 rhetorical patterns, they found that L1 English instructors preferred student writing that conformed to the rhetorical pattern used in English. In another study,

Taft et al. (2011) looked at the assessment of English writing produced by Chinese, Spanish and English participants. They found that assessors from these countries consistently preferred the rhetorical structure of texts produced by people from their own countries over those produced by writers of the other two, even though the writing samples reviewed were anonymized, and there was no indication of the writer's nationality. A possible difference in the rhetorical features of text that L2 students produce is important because Weigle (2002) suggests that a mismatch between reader expectations and the rhetorical pattern or strategy used by the L2 writer can lead to negative assessment.

D. Can EAP Help?

Even though further investigation is needed, it is possible that EAP instruction can draw students' attention to possible differences in the rhetorical patterns used in writing in L1 and L2 and help learners to understand how EMI instructors expect ideas to be presented and arranged. To date, there is limited research on how L2 instruction can affect the rhetorical features and structure of student text, and even fewer studies have looked at its impact in the context of EMI university education. In a workplace setting, Albino (2017) conducted a study with 18 oil and gas workers in Angola, who received EFL instruction, and found that raising learners' awareness of the differences between the expected writing conventions in their L1 and L2 improved the readability of their writing. Another study conducted by Rojas-Vargas et al. (2020) with high school EFL students in Costa Rica, found that after receiving instruction, student understanding of the rhetorical structure of writing improved and that most learners started to use thesis statements in their introductory paragraph along with topic sentences and closing devices in the rest of their writing.

In a university setting, González-Rodríguez and Álvarez-Mosquera (2020) looked at changes in undergraduate student writing after learners had completed an EFL course. They found that the quality of student writing improved after receiving explicit instruction on the rhetorical features of text. Interestingly, they also discovered that instructor feedback was important and suggest that for learners to notice the differences in the use of rhetorical features and structure in writing in their L1 and L2, instructors may have to direct students' attention to these. Another study completed by Petrić (2005) looked at the writing of a small group of students in an English-medium instruction university in Central Europe (n=19) produced before and after completing a short writing course (one week). This scholar found that the number of writing samples that included a thesis statement increased in post-test writing. However, this study did not look at other features such as topic sentences and concluding sentences, or paragraphing. Given the limited number of studies that have looked at the effects of EAP instruction on the rhetorical features and structure of L2 student writing in the context of EMI university education, it is clear that more extensive research needs to be carried out; particularly to determine if EAP instruction can help L2 students produce text with the rhetorical pattern that is expected in English writing (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 1996). Canagarajah (2011) suggests that besides possessing linguistic competence, L2 students have to learn the relevant rhetorical conventions of writing. Wei and Zhang (2020) also stress that L2 learners need to be aware of the differing rhetorical expectations in L1 and L2. Xu and Zhang (2022) point out that EMI content area teachers may have limited knowledge of language differences, and as a result, may not be aware that possible differences in the rhetorical structure and features of text exist. However, it is possible that through EAP instruction, L2 students can learn about the rhetorical features and structure of text expected by their instructors if these differ in writing in L1 and L2. To determine whether EAP instruction has an impact on the rhetorical features and structure of L2 student text, and can possibly draw student attention to differences in writing, the present study will address the following research questions:

1. Do the rhetorical features and structure of L2 student writing change after students have completed EAP instruction over a period of 17 weeks?
2. After receiving EAP instruction, do L2 students believe that writing in L1 and L2 is the same?

III. METHOD

A. Design

This mixed-methods, quasi-experimental study assessed the writing of L2 students produced before (pre-test) and after (post-test) they had completed a 17-week EAP course. The participants (n=43) studied in an EMI university in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and were Arabic L1 speakers, aged between 18-19 years old. They all had an intermediate level of English (IELTS 5.5-6.0) with a similar level of spoken and written English. All of the students had studied English at school prior to starting their university program but had not received EAP or academic writing instruction. As part of their degree, all learners completed the EAP program along with four other courses that were the same for all learners. The EAP course focused on preparing expository and argumentative essays. From this group of participants, 10 learners were randomly selected to complete individual semi-structured interviews. Information from these individual interviews was used to gauge students' opinions about writing in their first and second language and their understanding of possible differences between L1 and L2 writing after they had completed EAP instruction. Following standard ethical guidelines, students were informed about the nature of the study before giving their permission to take part. The study was also reviewed by an ethics committee that confirmed that ethical guidelines were followed.

B. Pre- and Post-Test Writing Analysis

The writing of students produced before and after learners had completed a 17-week EAP course was analysed to identify possible changes in the rhetorical features and structure of text. This analysis looked at an equal number of pre-

test (n=43) and post-test (n=43) writing samples and a total sample of (n=86) scripts. Writing analysis identified rhetorical features, such as the inclusion of a thesis statement in the introduction, topic sentences in successive body paragraphs and a concluding sentence in the conclusion. These were also partially assessed in other studies completed by Petrić (2005) and Liu (2009). It also looked at the rhetorical structure of student writing by identifying the paragraphs required to complete the expository essays that the participants completed, e.g. introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion.

To make sure that differences between the pre- and post-test scripts were due to instruction, and not due to the writing activities themselves, two similar writing tasks were used as either the pre- or post-test writing activity (task A and task B). These tasks had been previously used in other studies and were chosen because they dealt with comparable topics and had the same level of difficulty (Davison, 2024; Davison & Hasaneen, 2024). To counterbalance writing, two groups completed task A as the pre-writing task and then task B as the post-test writing activity. This was reversed for the other two groups; thus, they completed task B as the pre-test writing activity and task A for post-test writing. To anonymize the pre- and post-test scripts that would be assessed (n=86), all identifying data, such as class group and name were erased and each script was assigned an identifying code according to the group, student, and whether the writing was a pre- or post-test writing sample (e.g., G1 S2 PT = Group 1, student 2, post-test). Afterwards, each of the scripts was assigned a randomly allocated number from 1 to 86. After the number and identifying code for each randomly numbered script had been recorded, the identifying codes were removed from the copies of scripts that the examiners would see. These were then ordered according to the randomly assigned number. This mixed the pre and post-test scripts and the scripts from different groups.

Analysis of pre- and post-test texts (n=84) was completed by two different examiners who had extensive experience in analysing L2 student writing. Prior to analysis, training was completed to identify the different rhetorical features and paragraphs using an identification guide. Using this guide, both assessors reviewed a small sample of scripts to identify and note down the number of different rhetorical features in each text. They also identified the introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion paragraphs in these samples. There was no disagreement between the examiners because the identification of the different rhetorical features and paragraphs was relatively straightforward and easy to complete. After confirming that both assessors were identifying the rhetorical features and paragraphs in the same way, both were given a set of 86 scripts to note down the rhetorical features of each (i.e. thesis statement, topic sentences, and concluding sentence) and the total number of these. These were identified according to the type of writing completed (an expository essay) and in relation to the deductive rhetorical pattern expected in English writing (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 1996). As students completed an expository essay, the thesis statement reflecting the writer's position or opinion was identified at the beginning of each essay. Topic sentences were identified at the start of the following paragraphs, and the concluding sentence was identified at the beginning of the final paragraph. Both examiners also noted down the different types of paragraphs used in each essay (i.e. introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion) and the number of these in each sample. To minimize the time involved, both assessors reviewed each script together. If they did not agree on the rating, a third rater would be asked to make a final decision on the assessment of this script. However, this was not required. After the rating of all scripts was completed, data relating to the number of rhetorical features and paragraphs was recorded and then analysed.

After writing samples were collected, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 randomly selected participants from the study. Following standard ethical procedures, the purpose of the interview was explained to each student before they gave their permission to take part. The interview involved open-ended questions about writing in the student's first language (Arabic) and in English, and their opinions about possible differences between these. Using a semi-structured interview guide, learners were asked the same questions, but the additional follow-up questions varied according to the answer given. The interview was conducted by one of the researchers and notes were taken on the students' answers.

IV. RESULTS

The results of this study revealed that there was a significant difference between the rhetorical features and structure of L2 student writing produced before and after learners had completed EAP instruction over a period of 17 weeks. The number of rhetorical features increased significantly in post-test samples as did the number of paragraphs required for the writing that L2 students completed. These results seem to indicate that EAP instruction had an impact on the rhetorical features and structure of the writing that students produced. This interpretation seems to be confirmed by interviews with ten randomly selected students who were able to highlight differences between how ideas were organized in texts in their first and second languages after they had received EAP instruction. These results are detailed in the following sections.

A. Pre- and Post-Test Writing Rhetorical Features

The analysis of pre- and post-test scripts revealed that the number of texts with the required rhetorical features increased in post-test writing, suggesting that instruction had had an impact on the rhetorical features of the L2 learners' text. This can be seen in Table 1.

TABLE 1
THE NUMBER OF SCRIPTS INCLUDING RHETORICAL FEATURES

	Pre (n=43)	Post (n=43)
Thesis statement	25	32
Topic sentence 1	31	39
Topic sentence 2	28	38
Concluding sentence	29	38
Thesis statement + topic sentences + concluding sentences	16	30

A paired-samples T-test revealed a difference between the number of required rhetorical features in each text. In the pre-test samples there was a mean number of 2.81 features ($SD = 1.37$). However, this increased to 3.63 features in post-test writing ($SD = 0.89$). The mean number of required rhetorical features increased significantly in the post-test samples, i.e., $M = 2.81$, $SD = 1.37$ in pre-test writing to $M = 3.63$, $SD = 0.88$ in post-test writing, $t(42) = 3.93$, $p = .001$, $d = 0.60$, representing a moderate effect size (Cohen, 2013).

B. Pre- and Post-Test Writing Paragraphing

The analysis of pre- and post-test samples revealed an increase in the number of required paragraphs in post-test writing which tended to feature the introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion required for the expository essay that students completed. The most notable difference was the increase in the number of post-test samples that included a conclusion paragraph. There was also a notable increase in the number of post-test texts that included all of the paragraphs required, i.e., an introduction, body paragraphs and a conclusion. This can be seen in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2
NUMBER OF SCRIPTS INCLUDING DIFFERENT PARAGRAPHS

	Pre- (n=43)	Post- (n=43)
Introduction paragraph	40	43
Two (or more) body paragraphs	40	43
Concluding paragraph	30	40
Introduction + body paragraphs + conclusion	30	40

The mean number of paragraphs increased significantly in post-test samples, i.e., $M = 2.53$, $SD = 0.82$ in pre-test writing and $M = 2.91$, $SD = 0.29$ in post-test writing, $t(42) = 2.99$, $p = .005$, $d = 0.46$, representing a moderate effect size (Cohen, 2013).

C. Semi-Structured Interviews Relating to Differences in Writing in L1 and L2

The results of semi-structured interviews with a small group of students ($n=10$) revealed their opinions about the differences between writing in L1 and L2 after receiving EAP instruction over a period of 17 weeks. This information was collected to help interpret or explain possible differences noted between pre- and post-test writing or to possibly explain why writing did not change. These interviews indicated that after students had received EAP instruction, they were aware of several differences between written discourse in L1 and L2 and thus believed that L1 and L2 writing were not the same. They also believed that EAP instruction had an impact on their writing although this was not only restricted to its impact on the rhetorical features and structure of their text.

Regarding differences in writing in L1 and L2, when asked if they were required to clearly state their opinion or position in the introduction like in English writing, students mentioned that “we state it at the end of the essay”, “...in the conclusion”, or “... it is in the conclusion, not in the introduction”. Other responses indicated a more nuanced position. For example, one learner mentioned that “It depends on the writing, but the introduction is different. You don’t have to clearly state your opinion”. Another stated that, “There is more flexibility in Arabic. Sometimes it is not stated”. The interviewees’ answers seemed to indicate that Arabic may be more of a reader responsible language than English. For example, one student stated that, “We talk about the topic. We don’t give a clear opinion”. Also, another learner said when writing in Arabic, “We give clues without clearly stating what we think” and that “...ideas link to each other indirectly in Arabic.” Regarding paragraphing, student responses were somewhat at odds with the changes noted in their writing. Almost all students stated that the introduction, body and conclusion paragraphs were used in Arabic. Only one student stated, “There is less pressure to use paragraphs in Arabic”.

When asked about the impact that EAP instruction had on their writing, some students highlighted its impact on the structure of their work. For example, one learner stated that “My essays are more structured. I use thesis statements and support”, another learner mentioned that “... I could not write a structured essay before.” and another pointed out that “I learned how to structure my argument and not be wishy-washy”. Others also referred to improvement in language use.

For example, one student mentioned that “...*more vocabulary improved*”, and another participant stated that “...*It improved my vocabulary and grammar.*” Students also referred to overall improvement in writing, e.g. one student pointed out that “...*my writing developed a lot*”, and another mentioned that “...*my writing improved vastly*”. When specifically asked if learning to write in English had had an effect on their writing in Arabic, student answers were mixed. Several students indicated that it had an impact on their writing, “... *It made my Arabic writing better*”, “...*I can structure my essays better after learning how to write in English.*” and “...*I saw two different ways. I can use techniques from both.*” Others did not believe that EAP instruction had had an impact, “No, *not at all*”, “No, *no impact*” and “No. *There is no connection*”.

V. DISCUSSION

This study assessed the impact that EAP instruction had on the rhetorical features and structure of L2 student text by comparing writing produced before and after learners had completed an EAP course over a period of 17 weeks. The results revealed that there were significant changes in the rhetorical features and structure of student writing after EAP instruction. Overall, the number of required rhetorical features increased significantly. These included a thesis statement at the beginning of student writing, topic sentences in the successive body paragraphs and a concluding sentence in the conclusion. There was also a change in the rhetorical structure of learners’ post-test scripts reflected by a significant increase in the number of paragraphs required for the writing that students completed. These changes highlight a move towards a deductive rhetorical pattern (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 1996) and seem to indicate that EAP instruction may help students to produce text that includes the rhetorical structure and features required in English writing and those that their EMI instructors expect to see. After EAP instruction, students were also aware of differences between writing in L1 and L2. These findings are discussed in the following sections.

Analysis of pre- and post-test writing data revealed that the rhetorical features and structure of L2 student text changed significantly after students had received EAP instruction over a period of 17 weeks. For example, the mean number of rhetorical features increased significantly in post-test writing. This was reflected by a notable increase in the number of samples that included the rhetorical features expected in English writing (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 1996). To illustrate, only 16 out of the 43 pre-test samples featured the thesis statement, topic sentences and a concluding sentence required for the expository writing that learners completed. On the other hand, 30 of the 43 post-test samples included these features. Similarly, the mean number of paragraphs required for the writing that students produced also increased significantly. This was illustrated by an increase in the number of samples that included an introduction paragraph, body paragraphs and a conclusion, which increased from 30 out of 43 samples in pre-test writing to 40 out of 43 in post-test texts. Together, only 30 out of the 43 pre-test samples had the paragraphs needed for the expository essay that learners produced and only 16 of these 43 samples included the rhetorical features expected in this type of writing in English (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 1996). However, almost all of the post-test samples included the paragraphs required for the expository essay that students completed (40 out of 43 samples), and more of these samples included the rhetorical features that were expected (30 of the 43 samples). This notable change in writing highlights the impact of EAP instruction on the rhetorical features and structure of L2 student text and suggests a move towards the rhetorical pattern that is used in English writing. The results of the present study seem to reflect those of previous research conducted by Petrić (2005), Albino (2017), Rojas-Vargas et al. (2020), and González-Rodríguez and Álvarez-Mosquera (2020). Collectively, they seem to suggest that through second language writing instruction, L2 students may be able to learn how to use the rhetorical patterns that are expected in English writing.

It is possible that EAP instruction may help students to produce text with the rhetorical pattern that is expected in English writing by drawing learners’ attention to differences between written discourse in L1 and L2 (Connor, 2002; Hinds, 1987; Kaplan, 1966; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 1996; Leki, 1991). Petrić (2005) suggests that L2 students initially may not be aware of possible differences in the rhetorical strategies used in L1 and L2 writing, and therefore, they may assume that all writing is the same. In the present study, in the interviews carried out with a small group of students, after receiving EAP instruction, learners indicated that they were aware of differences between writing in L1 and L2 and recognised that the rhetorical pattern used in English writing differed to the one used in their first language. To illustrate, they noted the difference between where the writer’s opinion or position was expressed in writing; one student noting that in Arabic the writer’s position was stated “... *in the conclusion, not in the introduction*” and another that in Arabic “...*the introduction is different. You don’t have to clearly state your opinion*”. If EAP instruction can draw L2 learners’ attention to differences between writing in their L1 and L2, then this may help them to understand that they may not be able to transfer their L1 rhetorical knowledge to L2 writing (Wei et al., 2020). This in turn may help them to understand that a different rhetorical pattern is required. However, further, more extensive investigation is still needed to verify this possibility.

Student interview answers also highlighted another possible explanation for changes in post-test writing; namely that EAP instruction may allow learners to notice the rhetorical features and structure of writing in English and allow them to incorporate these into their own subsequent written work. For example, as students review different types of writing, such as expository or argumentative essays in their EAP courses, they may notice how a thesis statement is used in the introduction paragraphs of these texts, or how the paragraphs are organised and arranged. In the present study, there is evidence of students incorporating the rhetorical features and structure associated with the deductive rhetorical pattern

(Kobayashi & Rinnert, 1996) into their own written work after receiving EAP instruction. To illustrate, one student noted that “My essays are more structured. I use thesis statements and support” and another highlighted the impact of instruction by stating that “I learned how to structure my argument and not be wishy-washy”. Davison (2021) points out that in EAP courses students commonly review and prepare different types of writing that are used in EMI instruction. As a result, they are continuously exposed to the rhetorical features and structure of these texts, providing learners with opportunities to notice these. Writing practice also provides students with frequent opportunities to incorporate the rhetorical features used in English writing into their own texts; potentially allowing L2 students to internalize their use. However, further investigation is also needed to confirm this possibility.

The results of the present study highlight the role that EAP can possibly play in supporting EMI instruction. Through EAP instruction, L2 students can potentially learn about the relevant rhetorical conventions of writing, in addition to learning about how language should be used. Although further investigation is still needed, it is possible that EAP instruction can draw student attention to the rhetorical features and structure required in English writing. Understanding that a different rhetorical pattern may be used in EMI universities is important for L2 students because researchers such as Leki (1991), Takano (1993), Kobayashi and Rinnert (1996), Connor (2002) and Weigle (2002) have pointed out that if L2 students use their L1 rhetorical pattern when writing in English, this may negatively affect how their written work is understood or assessed. As writing is often the primary assessment tool used in EMI universities, L2 students need to be familiar with the rhetorical organization of writing that is expected by their content area instructors to be able to demonstrate their understanding of each subject through text (Al Harrasi, 2023; Huh, 2022). Canagarajah (2011) suggests that besides possessing linguistic competence, L2 students have to learn the relevant rhetorical conventions of writing. It is possible that EAP instruction may help L2 learners develop both of these competencies.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study found that there were significant changes in the rhetorical features of L2 student writing after they had completed EAP instruction in an EMI university. The use of thesis statements, topic sentences and concluding sentences all increased significantly. There was also a significant change in the rhetorical structure of text. After instruction, almost all of the post-test scripts contained the paragraphs that would be expected in the expository writing that students produced. These changes reflect a move towards the deductive rhetorical pattern that is used in English and seem to indicate that EAP instruction may help students to produce text that includes the rhetorical structure and features expected in English writing and those that their EMI instructors expect to see. Student interviews indicated that they were aware of differences between written discourse in their L1 and L2 which may possibly explain changes in their writing. However, these interviews also highlighted other possible explanations, that need to be verified through future research. It is also recognised that this investigation looked at the impact of EAP instruction on the rhetorical features and structure of student writing in an EMI university where all students were Arabic first language speakers and possibly shared the same writing culture. Thus, further investigation is needed to determine if the same effects are noted for the writing of L2 students from a variety of different backgrounds and cultures. From a pedagogical perspective, the present study underlines the important role that EAP plays in supporting EMI instruction, potentially allowing L2 students to learn about the relevant rhetorical conventions of writing used in EMI educational settings as well as allowing them to learn about language use.

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