A CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF EFL/ESL WRITING

PROBLEMS: CASE STUDIES OF FIVE

SENEGALESE STUDENTS

IN US COLLEGES

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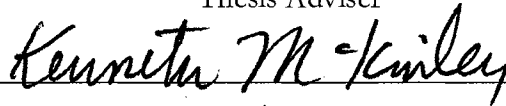the requirements for
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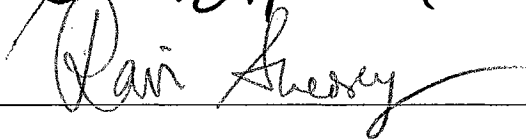
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The technological and linguistic lead America has assumed since the middle of

the 20th century attracts many foreign students dreaming to experience the intellectually

fertile and skills-driven grounds of US colleges and universities and to tap any

professional opportunities these may lead to. In the academic year 1999-2000, the

number of foreign students in the US tapped the half-million mark to stand at 514,723

(IIE, 2000). This large-scale attraction is not, though, without challenges. These students

who are largely non-native speakers of English have learnt the language in EFL or ESL

contexts, and their general proficiency typically shows some limits when they are faced

with the specific college language demands in which literacy plays an important role.

Academic writing, in particular, is known to be an area where many international

students encounter major problems in the course of their studies in US higher education

institutions. An examination of these problems among specific foreign student

populations may need to start with a brief consideration of language, literacy and writing

issues along with a general framework of the study and methodological issues.

1.1. Language, literacy, and writing

Writing is an important development in human history. By providing the means to

record events and knowledge, it laid down the basis for an easily traceable stock of

culture and civilization. It is a widespread phenomenon nowadays, although the fact that

many of the world languages are not written is often lost sight of.

Writing is believed to contribute significantly to the stabilization and preservation of languages. However, the virtues of writing and literacy are not limited to languages. For some scholars, literacy is the prerequisite to higher-order cognitive development in humans (Goody and Watt, 1968; Olson 1977; Ong, 1982). They argue, along with Goody and Watt, that, by objectifying language, writing allowed critical reflection over the ideas and thoughts supported by language, and thus paved the way to higher-order cognitive development. Other scholars -- Scribner and Cole (1981), Heath (1983), and Street (1984) -- believe that writing has no such inherent consequences. Whatever cognitive development stems from literacy, is there, not because of literacy per se, but because of the particular uses specific societies and groups put literacy to. To support this view, this latter group points to the existence throughout history of societies that have enjoyed literacy without this resulting in cognitive developments comparable to those Goody and Watt (1968), and others offer as evidence to their claim. Gee (1986) seems to suggest a bridging view when he argues that it is perhaps the use of writing to formulate original theoretical knowledge in explicit, logical and connected language which brings about, if not higher cognitive skills, status gains in society (p.733). With this argument, Gee (1986) is bringing to attention the pivotal place of writing in literacy, which the more public manifestations of the phenomenon have obscured somewhat.

For most of the history of literacy, the visibility of writing, with the notable exception of the era of the scribe in ancient Egypt and similar stages throughout the world, has been clouded by the literate function of decoding messages or texts. In the Koran for instance, one of the first injunctions about the divine message was to read, not

2

to write. In Europe, literacy, an endeavor preoccupying societies since the 15th century, has had primarily as objective to inculcate the skill of reading for bible study or other similar information-retrieval objectives. This literate bias toward reading is reflected even in some of the most benign phrases we use: we learn to "read and write", although writing is prior to reading, in the sense that before anything can be read, it must first be written. One last illustration of this bias takes place on the grounds of academia and high-end literacy, where the TOEFL test, until recently, determined literate English language proficiency without any direct testing of writing.

Writing is, however, perhaps the most important dimension of literacy. According to Ong (1988), it is the possibility of a visible record of memory offered by writing that gives literacy its distinctive properties (p. 28). It is not only the most important component of literacy, but it is also more pervasive than is generally realized. First, every act of reading pre-supposes a prior writing act while many acts of writing are for private or personal purposes and may not call for reading. In our present times marked by the pursuit of literacy for social transformation (Freire, 1987) and for professional training and communication (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996), writing has become a critical skill for the individual, institutions and society. In the US for instance, the failure of a significant number of school-leaving subjects to gain functional literacy has prompted talk of a literacy deficit (Kozol, 1985). In some Third World countries, the same deficit has prompted the emergence of a practice reminiscent of the Ancient-Egypt scribal specialist and consisting in providing letter writing services and similar needs to illiterate or limited literacy people. For Bridgeman and Carlson (1983), writing is very important for educational success, and even more important for success after education, and this

3

importance and the status which comes with it are reflected in the fact that, in organizations and government, writing is very much an executive prerogative: executives and similar high ranking officials write speeches, policy manuals, briefs, reports, memos, etc.

Writing then is a pivotal component of literacy in the modern world. Success in school, in landing a decent job, professional longevity and promotion are highly dependent on it. If there was any remaining doubt about the pervasive nature and primary importance of writing in our world today, another all pervasive technological development of the last quarter century, the PC with its set of office applications and their various templates supporting the production of the most common written discourse types should put it to rest. In a way, probably lost to the majority of those who need it most, the PC and these applications seem to be saying loudly: writing is a crucial skill for people today; even if they are inept at it, these applications are giving them the tools to get around the problems of exercising it.

1.2. Some general issues and problems areas in writing

Writing may be central to literacy and have virtues for languages and individuals, yet it raises a host of complex issues. For one thing, the question of what is writing is not an easy one to answer (Vahapassi1988, Grabe and Kaplan 1996). From transcribing letters of the alphabet to jotting down a name or drawing a list of shopping items or tasks to complete, on to taking down verbal instructions and writing letters, essays or treatises, an authoritative decision on what is truly worthy of being termed writing is not a simple one. It may seem logical to go from the physical act of putting fingers on a pen and on

paper, but the suggestions of a cognitive development potential from the exercise of writing renders such a premise unsatisfactory, for it is difficult to defend the notion of a cause-and-effect relationship between a manual act and intellectual development, after the classic antonymic categorization of intellectual and manual work society has ingrained in us.

Another issue among those riddling writing has to do with which languages or forms of a language are or should be reflected by writing. Today, some "dead" languages are written about somewhat profusely, while others, with perhaps more native speakers than a dead language has ever counted, are not at all written. There seems to be no doubt about the all importance of writing for most people, but at the same time the fact that only a small proportion of the world's languages is written does not seem to be any cause for concern. The overall attitude here seems to suggest that some languages are not fit for the written mode. This differential application of writing does not occur only across different languages. In the same language, writing may be more reflective of one variety or mode of language, as happens in situations of diglossia (Ferguson, 1959). In English, Tannen (1982), Chafe and Danielewicz (1987), Halliday, (1987) and others have argued for a written-spoken continuum and/or dichotomy along which, or at whose, poles there may be some acclimatization problems when writing is used. Despite the different nuances with which they make their qualifications, these authors all essentially argue that the linguistic characteristics of the written mode of language are different from the spoken mode. The implications of this argument for the exercise of writing are clear. It means that, to write, one must first be aware of this written/spoken difference to write adequately.

Perhaps the one most important issue that may be raised in writing is that it is not acquired like language, but must be learnt. This particular mode of transmission of the skill brings other social and individual variables which are not without bearing on the complexity of writing issues. Because the language of writing is not acquired, but learnt, learning to write in an additional language may involve further difficulties. In addition to the purely developmental factors riddling writing in L1, the L2 writer has often to produce texts whose discoursal characteristics he can only approximate. In total, writing carries multifaceted questions. It is not surprising then, that in colleges and universities, considerable resources are devoted to dealing with the writing problems students still carry with them, even at that advanced stage of education. These problems are potentially more prevalent in foreign students' writings, since these students need to approach writing in English with lexico-syntactic, rhetorical, and attitudinal disadvantages resulting from their different L1 background and the schooling traditions they have previously experienced.

1.3. The present study

The present study examines the essay writing problems foreign students from Senegal are likely to experience in composition classes in US institutions of higher education. Typically, these students join American colleges and universities after completing at least pre-university education in Senegal. In Senegal, the language of instruction is French. This language will be considered as L1 for that reason, although it needs to be noted that, in most cases French is a second or third language for children starting western type schooling. Similarly, when L2 is used here to refer to English, it is

possible that for some students it will be in reality the third or fourth language. In Senegalese schools, students are also taught English as a foreign language, but this teaching is influenced in some respects by the teaching of French, the general language of instruction. The treatment of EFL writing in Senegalese schools, for instance, seems to assume that it does not differ from writing in French. This situation fosters conditions in which learners are likely to transfer aspects of writing tips specifically bearing on the L1 of instruction, French, to L2, with a great potential for producing pieces of writing English native speakers will have problems reading and understanding.

Kaplan (1966) first pointed to this area of problems in the essay writing of non-native students of English. He argued that rhetorical patterns differ from language to language or culture to culture, and described English as having a "linear" pattern, while Semitic, Oriental, Russian and Romance languages were characterized as having respectively a parallel, circular, and, for the last two groups of languages, a digressive pattern. This paper did not go without some questions and criticism, namely that it was intuitive (Leki, 1991); it was not supported by contrastive analysis (Mohan and Lo, 1985); it indiscriminately lumped together languages (Hinds, 1990). However, different other studies lending strong credence to the gist of Kaplan's view have come out since then. Ostler (1987) has compared essay paragraphs written by Arab-speaking foreign students with passages written by English native speakers, while Eggington (1987), Hinds (1987), Clyne (1987) have examined the organizational patterns of Korean, Japanese, and German respectively in relation to English. All concur with Kaplan's original suggestions that different languages present different text organizational characteristics. Arabic was confirmed as showing a prevalence of parallel constructions

7

where conjunctive clauses predominate (Ostler, 1987), while Hinds (1987) revealed that Japanese had a discoursal orientation totally different from English; in English the onus is on the writer to express meaning accurately, while in Japanese the responsibility for clear meaning is on the reader. Clyne (1987)) pointed to the greater tolerance for digression in German academic writing, and Eggington (1987) on his side drew attention to the potential for miscommunication resulting from the presence in Korean academic writing of two different rhetorical patterns: an English pattern favored by academics with Anglo-Saxon training, and a traditional Korean pattern used by academics not exposed to English. Scollon and Scollon (1977) and Ballard and Clanchy (1991) have taken further this kind of Sapir-Whorf rhetorical hypothesis, arguing that culture may determine not only the discourse types, but also the attitudes to knowledge international students are likely to engage in or adopt. Carson (1997) on her side has evidenced the negative or positive influence the L1 context of schooling and literacy development may exert on the later acquisition of L2 literacy skills.

None of these studies considers the possible specific writing problems students with French as L1 of instruction, like Senegalese students, may experience when they join American colleges and universities, and there are no additional studies that address this issue at the discourse or rhetorical level. Swan and Smith (1987) have contrasted features of French and English that may constitute problems for language learners, but this work is more contrastive analysis in nature than contrastive rhetoric. The reasons for this absence of research interest in the writing problems of students with French as L1 or L2 of instruction is understandable. In the US, the major destination of EFL students, the proportion of students with this linguistic background is insignificant, compared to Asian

8

students for example. In addition, undertaking such research requires at least a command of both English and French, and perhaps more than superficial knowledge of both instructional contexts of writing. Among Senegalese EFL professionals who are most likely to satisfy the minimal bilingual requirement, research interest is generally concerned with curriculum, methodology, and assessment. In this Senegalese context, one more possible factor in the absence of this line of research may be the widely held assumption that writing is a transferable skill in EFL.

The general purpose of the present study is to examine the expository essay writing problems Senegalese students studying in American colleges are likely to present in composition classes to determine whether their L1 literacy development and EFL learning experience in the context of the home educational system interferes with this writing. The research will also seek to consider the possible implications of any problem or interference evidenced for the teaching of EFL writing in Senegal and a more effective writing instruction of Senegalese students in American composition classes. Among the writing problems that may be revealed, the study will focus on those likely to stem from the L1 culture or context of teaching and learning of writing of the Senegalese students. The study will specifically seek to determine what type of organizational structure is reflected in the subjects' writing by pursuing the following specific research questions:

1. How do students' writings in English adhere to the typical organizational structure of the English expository school essay?

2. Does the use of paragraphs in these students' writings conform to the paragraph conception of expository essay writing in English?

3. What is the degree of linearity or digressiveness revealed by students'

9

writings?

4. What are the implications of these questions and their answers for the teaching of EFL/ESL writing to Senegalese students?

Researching the possible writing problems of Senegalese students in US higher education institutions is justified by various developments inside and outside Senegal. There is in the country an expanding interest for the English language affecting almost all layers of society. In school, EFL occupies a central place among foreign languages. Almost half of foreign language teachers teach English to nearly three quarters of students enrolled in foreign language classes. With the recent trend in expanding middle schools offering a compulsory second foreign language, it will soon become impossible for a student to complete middle school without being introduced to English.

In another development, students who traditionally did their higher education at home or in other French speaking countries or entities like France, Belgium, Quebec, etc., are now increasingly looking toward US colleges. Between the academic years 1993-1994 and 1994-1995, 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 the number of Senegalese students enrolled in US colleges increased respectively from 373 to 451 (+ 21 %) and from 571 to 707 (+24 %) (IIE, 2000). These numbers may seem insignificant compared to those of Asian countries, but it must be borne in mind that Senegal is much smaller in population, and has linguistic, cultural, educational, economic and diplomatic backgrounds predisposing students to go to places other than the US. In addition, these numbers are superior to those for other African countries such as Uganda, Malawi, and Sierra Leone, which are English speaking, and present more linguistic and educational affinities with the US. Put in their context, these numbers, and especially the percentages of increases,

10

are indicative of a significant trend toward education in the US. In fact, some US colleges did not fail to notice this, since one has already opened a branch in Dakar, the capital, while others are considering similar moves in conjunction with Senegalese tertiary institutions. It is likely that this trend toward seeking education in US colleges will increase if more students are not hindered by English language literacy skills.

One more justification of this study comes from the fact that the essay is central to writing instruction in US colleges. Although there is a widespread assumption that essay writing is important only for students in the humanities, the history of the essay genre shows that it has been used in practically all the disciplines and fields of knowledge. Moreover, according to Olson (1977), the endorsement of the genre in 17th century Britain was motivated by the need to represent meaning in the unambiguous manner that required the burgeoning scientific world. Essay writing in English is consequently important for all Senegalese students attending US colleges irrespective of their major.

It is then important to find out what kind of problems Senegalese students may be faced with in writing, the most important language skill in academic literacy. Identifying these problems will make it possible to see how the delivery of EFL writing may be used as a mitigating factor of the possible negative influence from L1 writing.

1.4. Methodological considerations

Writing is complex in nature, and, in the context of US colleges, this complexity seems to be even greater for L2 English students. They have not completely mastered the linguistic system of English, and even if they had, this is not a guarantee that they would deal adequately with the discoursal requirements of the language. ESL and EFL

researchers have investigated the writing difficulties of L2 students with various methodological approaches. Earlier studies tended to be predominantly quantitative. A disadvantage of quantitative studies is that they are often reductionist because they need to focus on a manageable number of factors and thus ignore potentially important contextual information. Qualitative research is now a very common approach in L2 (Johnson, 1992). While the beginning of L2 English writing research focused on linguistic features of texts, this focus later moved toward the writing process and contrastive rhetoric.

Much of the L2 writing research to date has been in the form of case-studies using different data elicitation methods such as audio-taping students as they compose aloud (Perl, 1978; Raimes, 1985), observing writers and interviewing them after composing (Zamel, 1983), interviews only (Leki and Carson, 1997), contrasting L1 and L2 textual features (Kaplan, 1966; Ostler, 1987; Clyne, 1987), comparing the contexts and practices of university L1 and intensive English language program writing instruction (Atkinson and Ramanathan, 1995).

The present research project will be essentially qualitative in its thrust, and will use the case-study method. This method is particularly suited to the primary objective of finding out how the home-developed attitudes of Senegalese students interact with the task of writing an expository essay in the context of US colleges. Case studies are of course reputed not to be very much generalizable, but the core concern of this study is to gain insight into the type of writing problems revealed by the subjects. Generalizability is not of import here, although the notion is open to discussion (Johnson, 1992). In fact, Yin (1993) mitigates this reputation of lack of generalizabilty by pointing out that multiple

12

case studies can replicate each other and thus lend more robustness to findings. This case study will not use think-aloud elicitation methods or observations. They have the potential of interfering with text production and have been avoided for that reason. Moreover it is mainly interested in text organizational structure, not in process.

Although qualitative in its thrust, this research will not view the quantitative-qualitative relationship as a true dichotomy. It will use quantitative data gathered through survey questionnaires and follow-up interviews, together with classroom and specific writing samples. It is descriptive and multiple case.

This research about EFL students is multidisciplinary in orientation. It will draw greatly from applied linguistics, the discipline informing EFL theory, specifically from text linguistics/discourse analysis, composition studies, and contrastive rhetoric. It will also draw from the field of education. Writing is an attribute of literacy, and the one objective of schooling on which many agree is literacy development.

1.5. Overview of the study

The present study is structured into six main parts. After this introductory chapter, the next chapter will review some of the issues related to writing. It will first examine the issue of the nature of writing, consider writing at college level before delving on the different approaches to writing problems faced by L2 English students.

Chapter three will present the L1 literacy development context of the subjects, with coverage of the social context of schooling in Senegal, some of the emphases of the L1 curriculum and the practices of and pedagogical approach to writing instruction, and the treatment of EFL writing. The methodology used in this research will be covered in

chapter four, and the results and their discussion in chapter five. Finally, chapter six will

offer a conclusion to the study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study set out to identify the possible essay writing problems Senegalese students in US colleges encounter in English composition classes. In order to gain a thorough understanding of the issues surrounding this important component of literacy, it is essential to review many conceptual and theoretical aspects of writing. This chapter will consider the issue of the nature of writing, examine freshman English -- the traditional framework for the teaching of writing in college -- and discuss the concept and place of expository essay writing in US English composition classes in general, before reviewing the literature on the different approaches used in dealing with L2 writing problems.

2.1. The nature of writing

The introductory chapter has argued that writing is more pervasive in modern society than may be realized from the traditional discourse on literacy. Yet, this core characteristic of literacy is not without complex theoretical issues in the wider realm of language, education and communication.

Writing has been argued to foster higher order cognitive development (Goody and Watt, 1968), though this opinion has been vehemently contested. Specialists of writing would agree that mastery of the skill provides notable individual and sometimes social advantages. They argue that, in addition to being an aid to memory, writing offers an

15

effective way of disciplining our natural propensity for distraction. Humans typically engage in different activities at the same time, with the understandable result of distraction ruining one or both of the activities. But in writing, the fact that one has to focus motor and cognitive skills on the activity generally minimizes distraction. Writing also helps to determine what we really know. We may think we know something very well, but if we set to writing about it and can't put it on paper satisfactorily, then that is perhaps because we don't know it so well. One more virtue of writing is that it involves thinking about our thought (Irmscher, 1979). With writing we can objectify our thoughts and consider them with some objectivity. But despite these agreed upon attributes, the lack of consensus on writing related issues suggested by the challenge to Goody and Watt's argument persists.

Another problem reflecting the complex and, at times, perplexing issues with writing is that, despite the consensus of educational authorities, teachers, and parents on its importance and its poor mastery by many students, what different people may mean by the term "writing" can vary. The evolution of writing from a mere assistant of memory to the complex uses and functions it plays today makes it easy to ignore or neglect some of the activities covered by the term. Writing or the ability to write may suggest forming letters of the alphabet, writing one's name, taking notes or writing a note, drawing a list, writing a letter, following stylistic conventions, writing an essay, writing a journal or diary, writing a professional article, writing a book, etc. (Petragalia, 1995; Grabe and Kaplan, 1996). Crowley (1998) takes a metalingual approach to circumscribing what writing is by giving some objectives of literacy and writing as being to: spell correctly, avoid grammar errors, punctuate conventionally, paragraph logically, string sentences

16

intelligibly, string sentences effectively, write like an English teacher, write like a poet, write like a scientist, write like a corporate executive (p. 232). One may add to these descriptive and metalingual examples of writing activities others commonly used in school such as copying words, sentences or passages, and taking dictations.

To understand why some writing activities are ignored or neglected, it may be necessary to go beyond a description of tasks into the social and cognitive factors which, according to Vahapassi (1988), determine writing. In society, writing involves the writer and the reader in a purposeful transaction. This purpose or function may serve as another way of classifying writing. Writing may "identify," "communicate" or foster "introspection" (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996:3). It has been suggested earlier that writing has evolved from an aid to memory to more sophisticated uses in our times. Depending on how the value of these uses are perceived, they may be held as true embodiment of writing or overlooked. Since the present times have been dubbed the information age, we may assume that writing that transacts information will tend to be more recognized as writing than writing whose function is to practice spelling.

At the cognitive level, writing exerts differing demands on the writer. Vahapassi (1988) gives a classification of writing activities based on the extent of these demands. Writing may involve simple reproduction of facts or ideas (copying, dictation); organization or reorganization of events, facts, ideas (report, summary); invention or generation of ideas or alternative views (defining, reflective essay). The above categorizations of writing are encapsulated in the view that true writing is "instrumental, transactional, and rhetorical" (Petragalia, 1995:80) It is apparent in this classification of writing tasks, that the more cognitively demanding the task, the more valued it will tend

17

to be.

The problematic nature of some of the issues relating to writing is not only in relation to its nature. In contrast to spoken language, writing is not acquired but transmitted and learnt. As such, it is very much tributary to the cultural context of transmission and learning. In most of our contemporary contexts, schools and educational systems are the traditional settings for learning how to write. Saari and Purves (1992) have identified four curricular thrusts and six categories of writing activities (essay, report, letter, factual, personal and poetry) that are characteristic of school writing instruction. Because of the differences in curricular thrusts, individual schools or educational systems may have a view of writing that does not incorporate all these categories. Even if their view incorporated most writing activities, these should not be assumed to be necessarily taught, for curricula are often limited by resource constraints (Saari and Purves, 1992). There is, in fact, evidence that the potential problems suggested by Saari and Purves have actually plagued the treatment of writing in schools. Many educational systems and/or institutions do not provide adequate training in writing. Where this adequate writing is given, it hardly goes beyond literary writing for language majors (Russel, 1995). Petragalia (1995) argues that writing is so complex pedagogically that schooling sometimes has to distort its true nature to teach it (p. 84). Schooling does so by decontextualizing writing to the extreme, and limiting itself to selected writing activities. In considering the issue of the transmission and learning of writing, there will be in all likelihood, the important fact that, although schools profess to teach writing to students, the types of writing emphasized are incomplete and dissimilar, even inside the same country (Irmscher, 1979:1).

18

One more source of difficulty with writing is that it places considerable demands on the individual. First, writing is a monologue in which the writer produces the text without the feedback of the addressee or audience (Vahapassi, 1988). This exerts additional demands on the writer in the sense that he needs to anticipate the reader's reaction in terms of miscomprehension, objection, interest, etc., if he wants the content of his text to be effectively conveyed. A second constraint on the individual is represented by the need for the writer to be aware of the spoken and written language continuum (Tannen, 1982; Chafe and Danielewicz, 1987; Halliday, 1987). Awareness of this aspect is important, for its absence can affect individuals' writing practice. A third category of constraints on the individual who takes up writing has to do with the cognitive dimension of the skill. According to Vahapassi (1988), this cognitive dimension is inseparable from thought and learning. Writing is based on ideas, observations and experiences. Before writing, these need to be retrieved from memory and supported with details and examples. All these ideas, observations, experiences, details and examples must be organized into a coherently acceptable whole before we can speak of text. This point about the coherent organization of texts is one of high relevance for writers originating from other discourse cultures than the one they write in. Coherence not only varies from one medium of language to the other; it is also often defined differently from culture to culture, and enacting it in a text may be a matter of cultural orientation.

Another set of demands facing the writer has to do with strategic decisions on the genre to adopt, the style to use and the amount of details to include (Clark and Clark, 1977). Writing will then tax considerably the cognitive resources of the writer, and the more so in the context of writing in a foreign language. In addition to the different

demands suggested above, the writer needs to cater to linguistic aspects such as vocabulary, grammar, syntax, spelling, punctuation, communicative norms, organization (Raimes, 1983b), and interference from other language(s) for the bilingual or multilingual.

A gauge of the complexity of the issues riddling writing is apparent in the fact that many students, after 12 years or more of schooling, and even after some higher education experience, are reluctant to engage in the activity, or are very poor at it. Writing is so complex that there has been variance on how to measure it, with some advocating indirect testing, and others direct testing (Hamp-Lyons, 1991). It is important that the complex issues about the nature of writing, the artificial context of its transmission in schooling, and the constraints it exerts at the individual level not be ignored in an examination of writing and writers. They hold an important role in gaining insight into the problems individuals may and often do have with writing.

2.2. Freshman English and writing instruction

Compared to academic contexts in most countries, writing instruction in US colleges is a peculiarity in that it is general and compulsory. This standard practice however raises issues on the feasibility of the supposed objectives of freshman composition, the course mainly in charge of college writing instruction.

2.2.1. Background and objectives

The US is the only country with generalized standard writing requirements for higher education (Crowley, 1998; Grabe and Kaplan, 1996; Russel, 1995). These writing

requirements are implemented through freshman English courses. Freshman English was

conceived at Harvard in the 19th century as a response to perceived students' deficiencies

in academic literacy skills (Berlin, 1987). It has however been suggested that, when it

was introduced in the late 1800s, freshman English was in fact a reaction to the changing

demographics of America, where children of non-native English speaking immigrants

were entering the university, and needed streamlining into the literacy practices of the

original English speaking core of immigrants (Crowley, 1998). Quickly after its initiation

by Harvard, the course was adopted by many other colleges and universities, and became

a general requirement. Today, except for a small minority of students who exempt from

the class or who attend the few select private colleges where it is not a requirement, all

students starting the first year of college in the US must take freshman composition

(Crowley, 1998:1).

Although the course is required in colleges and universities across the US, its

objectives don't seem to have been standard. Irmscher (1979) has lamented that "the

teaching of writing [in American schools] is such a freestyle undertaking" (p. 1).

Depending on departmental policy, two instructors in different institutions may be

teaching totally different things for the same course of freshman English. Consequently,

the objectives of the course have not been static. In turn or cumulatively, freshman

English has sought to (1) "develop taste" among students, (2) "improve their grasp of

formal and mechanical correctness," (3) educate them liberally, (4) "prepare them for

jobs and professions," (5) "develop their personalities," (6) turn them into citizens of a

democracy, (7) improve their communication skills, (8) equip them with text analysis

skills, (9) promote critical thinking in them, (10) help them find their personal voice, (11)

21

train them in the composing process, (12) introduce them to academic discourse, (13) foster a critical outlook on their culture (Crowley, 1998:6). These broad objectives have led to the perception among some that freshman English is a general service course (Heilker, 1996), while others view it as an induction into academic literacy.

2.2.2. Issues and problems with freshman English

The perception of freshman English as teaching academic writing raises additional issues. Many researchers argue that the feasibility of this objective of teaching academic writing is questionable (Crowley, 1998; Petragalia, 1995: Russell, 1995; Geisler, 1995). They argue that academic writing is not an overarching skill, but a type of writing which is discipline specific. Academic writing is very much determined by its authentic context and content, and freshman English instructors, consisting largely of graduate students who may not even belong to the field of composition, are not in a position to adequately judge this context and content. For Swales (1990), the ills of freshman English come from its comparative institutional place in academia; it has to compete for instructional resources with discipline and departments that enjoy greater academic status.

Russell (1995) recognizes advantages to freshman English. He argues that its existence has the potential of making students more aware of the specific uses of written discourse in society and academia, and it also contributes to broadening access to higher education. He nonetheless considers that the course borders on myth since its professed aim of improving academic and/or public discourse cannot stand. Discourse is determined by function or purpose, but in the combination "academic discourse" or

"public discourse," the terms academic and public suggest no such function or purpose. And they can't do so because the two terms are domains (pp. 62-66). In other words, in public or academic discourse, the terms *public* and *academic* cannot be easily associated to purpose because they denote a domain, an arena for different specific acts with a purpose. Academic discourse is then a myth because it cannot suggest a purpose in the same way that communicative language, for instance, suggests a purpose. He argues that learning the written discourse of academia should mean learning to write more or less specialized genres (p. 69).

For Geisler (1995), the premises of the revival of interest in composition and writing are ill-founded. Traditionally, this premise is that writing is important because it fosters the acquisition or creation of knowledge. According to Geisler, this argument disregards two important factors: (1) that acquiring already existing knowledge and acquiring non-existing knowledge -- creating knowledge -- are fundamentally different; (2) "students in the academy do not use writing for making new knowledge" in the sense of creating it (Geisler, 1995: 102). He argues that because of this mischaracterization of students' writing needs, freshman English pitches its objectives inadequately and thus renders reaching them questionable.

Petragalia (1995) insists that schooling is an artificial creation that allows optimal transfer of some skills but, at the same time, it is not suited to the true transfer of others. Academic writing, as conceived by freshman English is among the skills schooling contexts do not transfer well, because schools need to decontextualize writing and homogenize learners despite their individual characteristics and motivation. Freshman English cannot then do a truly good job at teaching academic writing.

Academic writing as an objective of freshman English does not pose problems only as conceptual construct. Writing instruction, despite the importance it has, which has led to the standardization of the requirement of freshman English, is not given in academia the treatment corresponding to its supposed importance. For Swales (1990), academic writing, whether it takes the appellation of composition, study skills or ESP is in a difficult predicament in universities and colleges because of having to compete with more prestigious academic areas: it has fewer contact hours than it needs, is generally taught by unqualified non-faculty personnel, and takes place at the wrong time in the educational growth of students. More importantly, its overall remedial approach inflicts further harm to its standing by suggesting that there is "nothing to be taught [in writing] that should not have been learnt before" (p. 2). The importance of writing and freshman English at college is not supported by its institutional environment.

For Crowley (1998), since the feasibility of the course objectives are in doubt, freshman English owes its institutionalization in colleges to the fact that it has another function, that of disciplining and polishing student subjectivity by teaching the discursive standards and character traits of the academic community (pp. 8-9). This is reflected in the emphasis on truth, objectivity, and ethics in composition classes. She considers this goal to be informed by humanist ideals and wonders whether it can be adequately aligned with the professionalization and specialization of the American university today.

Despite these objections concerning freshman English, the course lives on and does not seem to be endangered in its foundations for the near future. Berlin (1987) has argued that the course cannot perish despite detractors because writing instruction is needed to help mediate the novel ideas and ways of thinking students come in contact

with in college (p. 3). Different other arguments can be invoked along with Berlin's to explain why, despite the objections to freshman English and its claimed objectives, it ought to continue.

First, none of the criticism of English composition denies the need for writing instruction in college. The core of this criticism contests the feasibility of teaching overarching academic writing skills or the foundations of the concept of academic discourse. Granted the problematic issues in the concept of academic discourse pointed out by Russell (1995), we may argue that writing instruction is needed at college because of the problems plaguing the transmission of the skill in the context of schooling. This context, it has already been seen, is not consensual in the forms of writing it selects to teach. Even selection does not ensure teaching since this latter is dependent on many other factors such as resources, training of instructors, and timetable constraints, which are not easily controlled.

The second point in support of writing instruction is that, despite the valid argument that writing should not be divorced from content, there is an equally valid point which holds that different textual contents have some things in common in the form of language, discourse and their fundamental rules, which, although transgressed at times by content writer practitioners, are nonetheless important, and whose respect enhances written texts. Students need to be socialized into these rules before total allegiance to content gets hold of their writing habits, and perhaps the best way there is to do it so far is the composition class, not the content class.

A third argument in favor of the writing class, which the foreign student in America can hardly miss, has to do with the prevailing practices of educational

25

assessment in the US. In francophone countries such as Senegal, students gain access to university on the basis of exams in specific disciplinary strands. The disciplinary content is tested through writing, and this allows the skill of writing to be taken into account in the admission of students. In contrast, in the US standardized tests using multiple-choice questions as the main method characterize pre-university assessment (Hamp-Lyons, 1991). It is then understandable that, given that college is markedly more input-intensive than high school, and that writing is very important in managing and learning school-input, that a class be devoted to the development of writing skills.

Freshman English then should live on, and it does. Presently, at least one semester is devoted to compulsory freshman English, with many colleges requiring two semesters of the class (Crowley, 1998). According to Larson (1988, cited in Crowley), half of the freshman English programs in the US do not specifically teach writing, but give instruction in current-traditional rhetoric to students. Current-traditional rhetoric derives from objective rhetorical theories (Berlin, 1987). It emphasizes form features and overall structure in writing while de-emphasizing invention, the focus of Aristotelian rhetoric. Exposition is the privileged mode of discourse of current-traditional rhetoric, and the essay has consequently been the mainstay of writing instruction in freshman English. What Larson is suggesting here is that true writing is not limited to the current-traditional rhetoric writing practices. Grammar and orthography also occupy an importance place in freshman English across colleges.

2.3. Essay and writing instruction

That the essay has come to be the par-excellence writing exercise in educational

contexts in English speaking countries like the US is somewhat of an oddity. The essay as a genre has a French origin, and the traditional antagonism between England, from where the essay found its way to America, and France is of public notoriety. This section will consider the origins of the genre, the evolution of its English speaking strand, and the place and treatment of the essay in writing instruction.

2.3.1. Origins of the essay

As a genre, the essay was initiated by the French writer Montaigne (1533 –1592). Through the new genre, he was making a statement against the breakup of discourse and knowledge into entities that hardly interacted, and which prevailed in his times. Montaigne's time was characterized by scholasticism and fragmentation of discourse (Spellmeyer, 1989). Scholars were primarily grammarians, logicians, theologicians or rhetoricians, and their writings were impenetrable to anyone outside the discipline (Ellul, 1964, cited in Olson, 1977). The French satirist La Fontaine offers, in *Les précieuses ridicules,* a glimpse of how inflated and different the discourse of the court and the courtesans was from that of the ordinary people. For Montaigne, this fragmentation obscured the complexity and coherence of real life. In his view a person of true erudition should elevate himself above this fragmentation to adopt a unified discourse that transcends disciplinary divisions (Spellmeyer, 1989:253). The problem with discourse was not only in relation to its fragmentation. Intellectual life in the 16th century was still under the influence of a Platonian rhetoric that tended to see experience as inferior to the intellectual reality, reflected, not in the senses, but in the language of the learned. *Ordo idearum ordo rerum* -- the order of ideas should be the order of things -- went the saying

(Spellmeyer, 1989: 254). In addition, the common form of non-fiction prose was the aration, a discourse type essentially seeking to persuade, not to present personal opinion (Hardison, 1989). In launching the essay genre, Montaigne wanted to carve a niche in non-fiction prose for the individual to test his views. The essay genre was to position the "author-as-speaker" (Spellmeyer, 1989: 254) by making it possible for him to present individual reflections on events or the opinions and beliefs of other individuals. The essay was a piece of extended composition of moderate length using mainly the author's ideas as content. The democratizing potential the new genre introduced into written discourse is magnified by Butrym (1989): "The form of the essay speaks to everyone... The essay is the lingua franca of the overly specialized" (p. xii). With the essay, one did not need to be a scholar, a poet, or an established rhetor to participate in discourse. Its inventor, Montaigne, was in fact neither a scholar nor a poet. In relation to the discourse denominations of his times, he was a layman interested only in exposing his views on contemporary developments.

2.3.2. From Montaigne to the school essay

From Montaigne, the essay was widely adopted and surely adapted in the context of the different uses to which it was put. One such early adoption and adaptation is by the English writer Bacon. Like Montaigne, Bacon saw the new genre of the essay as a method of presenting opinions for the examination of others, not for their automatic acquiescence. Bacon's essays, which brought the genre to attention in England and subsequently America, presented a more structured form than Montaigne's brand of essays (Morris Croll, cited in Hardison, 1989). In Bacon's own words, "Read not to

contradict, not to believe, but to weigh and consider" (cited in Hardison 89: 21). To play fully this function, there were to be no wasted words in the essay, and each word played a clear role. Written discourse was to result in minimal misinterpretation of propositions. In the word of Olson (1977), "A sentence was written to have only one meaning" (p. 268). In other words, a text had to be autonomous in activating meaning in the reader, independently of the context, monitoring, and immediate feedback characteristic of spoken discourse. The language of the essay had to be explicit, true, logical, connected. The essay-as-a-genre, but with Bacon's molding, was adopted by the Royal Society of London in order to promote the sciences through an English purged of magnification, digressions, and bombastic style (Sprat cited in Olson, 1977: 269).

A general definition of the essay has been that it is an extended composition using the author's ideas. Yet, the term is generally applied to any piece of writing not clearly belonging to the traditional genres. The essay has been used in practically all fields, from the scientific, to the theoretical, the literary or journalistic. For Butrym (1989), this broad adoption and adaptation devalued the essay by making it definable only in a loose manner. Whether one agrees with this value judgment or not, what surely has resulted from these multi-field uses of the essay is a further adaptation of the genre to specific needs. Its adoption into the curriculum in the English-speaking world as a means of teaching writing is one of these adaptations. This adoption complicated further any difficulty there already was in defining the term satisfactorily by trimming it of all features not falling in line with the school curriculum's embodiment of good, straightforward, effective expository writing.

The form of the essay adopted for the teaching of writing, the school essay, is

typically characterized by an opening paragraph that introduces a thesis, a number of other body paragraphs supporting the thesis, and a concluding paragraph in which the writer sums up the points developed. Kaplan (1966) has provided a detailed account of what makes the ideal acceptable expository piece of writing in the expectation of the native English speaker. These expected features essentially apply to the body paragraphs since they are the main locus of exposition. For the school essay, a paragraph is not merely a mechanical or typographic division of text offset by indentation or double spacing. It is a thought unit discussing one idea or aspect of an idea. This discussion is expected to be inductive, i.e. going from general to specific or from specific to general. Because the expository paragraph discusses one single idea, it needs to be focused and unified by systematically avoiding consideration of any aspect that may be considered superfluous or digressive. The paragraph is also a piece of connected writing; it consequently requires organization of the different propositional meanings conveyed by sentences and phrases; the aforementioned expectation for logic, coupled with the preference of English for a linear deductive logic has created a standard paragraph structure that traditionally goes from claim to explication of claim, and closure. In the classroom language of the essay-writing teacher, these are referred to as topic sentence, supporting details and wrap-up or conclusion. One last expectation about the paragraph is that it needs to be coherent, i.e. it must have a sequence of propositions that can be comprehended by the reader without conjectures on their possible relationship.

As previously suggested, the school essay has been traditionally taught in the framework of what has been known as current-traditional rhetoric (Berlin, 1987). This objective theory of rhetoric views truth and reality as located out there in the physical

30

world. It is accessed by the individual through the senses and the exercise of logic. Once the observer of the external world detects reality, he needs to make sure to convey this truth without language distorting it. This language thus needs to be as accurate and precise as possible and avoid introducing any distortion in the expression of the observed. Consequently, the writer needs to be out of the discourse to let the referent occupy the whole domain. Concern for the audience is not paramount since it is believed that a reader endowed with logic will be able to follow discourse and be conveyed the real observations.

This view of reality may be said to be specific and limited. For reality, as would argue the phenomenologists, is not the monopoly of the outside world. The emotional states experienced by a person are not less real than any geological phenomenon happening out there. Even this phenomenon, some would argue, may be perceived differently by various observers. This emphasis of current-traditional rhetoric on an objective reality needs then to be relativized.

For Kaplan (1966), the characteristics expected by English native speakers from essay writing are not expected because they constitute an absolute universal criterion for writing, but rather because they reflect the preferred thought sequence English has inherited cumulatively from the philosophers, thinkers and intellectuals of Ancient Greece, Rome, Renaissance Europe, and the Western world. They constitute a social construct whose value is primarily understandable within the confines of the social entity that has constructed them.

To recapitulate, although Montaigne created the essay, the genre went through different adaptations before resulting in the English language school essay used in writing

instruction today. It seems important to be aware of this evolution of the genre, for some

of the issues raised in relation to essay writing find their genesis in this evolution.

2.3.3. Issues and problems with the school essay

From Montaigne to Bacon, and many other applications of the essay, we have

come to a specific form of the essay used for writing instruction in schools. This form of

the essay is supposedly used in almost all educational systems throughout the world (Van

Peer, 1989). Such a widespread adoption in writing instruction would suggest that the

school essay lends itself admirably to developing literacy skills and writing. This is in

fact confirmed by some practices like those noticeable in freshman English classes,

where writing instruction generally goes together with intensive or critical reading. There

are however some critical issues to be raised with the form of the school essay.

First, through adaptation to the imperatives of schooling and teaching, the essay

has deprived itself of any real possibility for treating content in a realistic manner. The

original essay was conceived as a means of testing the truth or validity of views and

opinions. Among the factors that seem to have contributed to the rapid spread of the new

genre launched by Montaigne, and its recognition are vested interest in an opinion or

view, and a realistic audience equally interested in the views and opinions at stake. These

factors were supported by the increased spread of literacy in 16th century Europe, and the

emergence of a stratum of the bourgeois class that was eager to make its imprint on the

intellectual life which, up to then, was the domain of scholars more or less in collusion

with the aristocracy. When these 16th century essayists engaged in essaying then, the

weight of the essay was derived from its content and the commitment of the essayist to

convey heartfelt views to the audience, here in the collective sense of the word. In contrast to these characteristics, the school essay lacks content, commitment and audience grounding. The school essay lacks content in which the writer has vested interest. If there is any vested interest, it is one indirectly and artificially created through a grade to be assigned, and the testing requirements of the school. True and/or collective audience is also absent from the framework of the school essay since the teacher-audience, here in the individual sense of the word, probably knows the topic under discussion better than the school-essayist, because he/she has probably taught the unit and assigned the writing following his/her vision of what it should be. The absence or deficit in content and audience for the school essay undermines any commitment that could have been expected from the writer. The mutation of the original essay into school essay then leaves to writing instruction little more than a mere concern for form. In the absence of a true content and a realistic audience that ensures a true sense of commitment in the writer, writing instruction has no other alternative than emphasizing form, either as linguistic accuracy or macro-structure.

A second problem with the school essay has to do with the functional value of essay writing. Literacy has been valued so much because it provides an effective support for and extension of the traditional functions of spoken language in social life. This has resulted in a series of pragmatic writing types such as letters, summaries, reports, and even dictations, which people engage in extensively daily. While the original essay found extensive pragmatic use in the form of pamphlets and written debate forms of its time, the school essay does not seem to have any similar noticeable real life application. If in teaching essay writing, composition teachers always insist that writing means

communication, we must admit that although communication is achievable using an essay, the kind of communication in which the student and the teacher engage is not true communication because it does not result in a communicative outcome. Once the communicative aura of the school essay is shown to be unreal, it ceases to have any true functional use. One may argue that essays are still put to practical use in newspapers and magazines, but this argument hardly holds, for that form of the essay is not the school essay. The essay, as conceived for the teaching of writing in educational institutions, seems to have no noticeable functional application when the goal of schooling is to turn out people who are functionally literate in order to use their writing skills in response to the demands of modern life.

A third and last issue to be raised with the school essay bears on its form and in the ambition schools have in teaching it. Most of the skills learnt in school are reflected in and reinforced by daily life. What is learnt in arithmetic in class is often seen unfurling at the market, in the cafeteria or on board a public transportation bus. There, the customer has the opportunity to use arithmetic operations to figure out what he owes or check to see whether the change given him is correct. What is learnt in geology can be read while taking a stroll at the seashore or on any mountainous terrain. This reflection of school subjects in daily life is important because it reinforces classroom input and, thus, contributes considerably to learning. In the case of the school essay, what students write in school is not reflected anywhere in life. This absence has prompted talk of an "invisible" genre (Van Peer, 1989) in relation to the school essay.

Recchio (1989) and Hesse (1989) have also raised problems with the form of the school essay. Recchio (1989) argues that the adoption of the formal essay for the teaching

34

of writing in school does not really foster full students' participation in the school written discourse. It hinders them from having a "dialogic" approach to writing that would have allowed them to imprint their "subjective consciousness" on the apparent objectivity of the real world and, thus, engage writing fully (pp. 271-277). Hesse (1989) raises a parallel criticism of the formal essay. Narratives for instance, he points out, do not naturally accommodate thesis statements, a requirement of the school essay. They are constructed following a "compositional unfolding" scheme that may seek, for understandable reasons, to delay the unfolding of the story. This scheme is obviously contrary to the straightforwardness requirement of the formal essay, and yet narratives are purportedly taught in school with the model of the school essay (pp. 289-306).

One more question on the status of the essay in writing instruction has resulted from the questioning of the current-traditional rhetoric method used in teaching writing. This method emphasizes the form, linearity and the final textual product of the essay. Within the framework of this writing approach, the essay unreasonably acted as the only form of school writing. The process approach (Emig, 1971) was dissatisfied with this treatment of writing, and looked at writing from the angle of what writers actually did in writing. It highlighted the stages of brainstorming, outlining, drafting, revising, editing as important constitutive steps of writing which writing instruction has to emphasize. This emphasis was to correct the previous over-reliance of writing instruction on usage and linearity by switching it to or balancing it with content and purpose (Zamel, 1983). In addition to questioning the teaching of the essay, the advent of process writing ushered in other types of writing, such as creative writing, to school writing practices almost exclusively dominated by the essay. For that reason the process approach may be said to

take issue with the school essay.

2.3.4. School essay and expository writing

The essay is not only problematic because of its ubiquitous nature, its non-functionality, or its potential for limiting students' involvement in writing. Four or five modes of discourse -- description, narration, persuasion, argumentation, exposition -- are generally presented as constituting the realm of essay writing. However, the last one, exposition, seems to be apprehended differently by writing specialists. Some, like Silva (93:659), seem to view it as different from argumentation or narration, while others seem to suggest that all essays are expository in nature. This issue requires clearing up, since the good expository writing demanded from students depends in part on a clear understanding of what it entails.

Green (1967), for instance holds that "Good expository writing should have the following qualities: relevance, coherence and order, concreteness, brevity, smoothness of transition; and appropriate formality of tone" (p. 147). This stance does not help very much in gauging the exact meaning attached here to expository writing; irrespective of exposition or not, these qualities enhance any type of writing. The stance seems to make the case that good writing is expository. This is not satisfactory, for we can envision a set of instructions revealing these characteristics without falling into what we generally consider expository.

For Irmscher (1979), expository writing is an umbrella term denoting writing that explains. Conceived from this angle, the term covers types of writing such as narration, description or argumentation that may appear antonymic. In reality, they are not,

according to Irmscher, for it is possible to explain something through either narration, description, definition, argumentation, persuasion, etc. Expository writing then covers a range of non-fiction prose that reports facts or presents personal experience. This definition by Irmscher is convenient, but it poses some problems.

First, explaining two different phenomena may call for totally different cognitive resources. Explaining how a toy works may be very different from explaining why one thinks one given stock share is the one to buy. Explaining how a toy works will generally require the use of language and discourse organization predetermined by the makers of the toy or its design. This type of explanation will not exert so much demand on the writer because it is reproductive in essence. Explaining why a stock share is the one to buy, on the contrary, will exert more demand; among all the variables out there that may contribute to the strength of the share, the writer must establish criteria of his own to select those variables he thinks make his proposition an acceptable one. It is difficult to accept that, given the difference in demands required by these two acts of explaining, the two rank under the same classification of expository writing.

Irmscher's argument that one can explain through narration, description, argumentation, or persuasion does not seem to make the difference between general and local purpose in a text. A text may have as general purpose to explain, narrate, describe, argue, or persuade. If for instance the writer of a given text wanted to persuade readers that share x is the one to buy, he may devote a part of the text to describing, for example, how x has behaved on the stock market over a period of time. To the informed investor, this description is not in itself grounds for being persuaded, although it is a building block to the general persuasive objective of the text. The fact that different discourse modes are

interwoven in a text in the pursuit of a given discourse goal does not mean that these modes are functionally interchangeable. It is consequently difficult to defend the notion that a specifically narrative passage can have the function of explaining.

An additional point in favor of the distinction between two given discourse modes stems from the fact that, if explaining is understood as making relationships apparent, an explanation may reveal relationships without really explaining, but simply because the relationships in question are self apparent and not covert. Explanations that reproduce familiar, ordinary, or overt content will in our judgment qualify hardly as expository writing, while explanations that strive to establish non-apparent relationships for the reader are more acceptable as exposition. In summary, the view that expository writing is writing that explains, and that one can explain through description, narration, and argumentation is not very much in accordance with our view.

Berlin and Inkster (1980) offer an interesting perspective on the notion of expository writing. For them, exposition is to be understood in relation to any task that challenges the mental faculty of understanding. It involves observation or introspection, reasoning, and transforming (p. 2). All the traditional modes of discourse defined in relation to the school essay may be expository at times, but this does not mean that any narration or description is expository. This perspective seems to be supported by Grabe and Kaplan (1996), Vahapassi (1988), and Bates (1998). For Grabe and Kaplan, expository writing involves composing and transforming (p. 5), while Vahapassi considers that it needs to be referential and generate ideas, mental states or alternative worlds. Bates defines expository writing through the structure of expository passages that posits a claim and then proceeds on to support it or elaborate on it, which involves

38

transformation of the picture resulting from direct observation.

Expository writing then is writing that involves creation or re-creation of a reality or alternative world. It is different from writing that presents objective reality. This distinction is important because it suggests that expository writing involves tension between subjectivity and objectivity, between the surface features and the underlying features. Expository writing generally needs the support of literacy to mediate the opposing extremes of the tension mentioned. Non-expository writing does not require this, and can be an extension of spoken language into writing.

Despite the different perspectives on expository writing, we have reasons to conceive it to be a sort of higher order discourse mode concerned with conveying understanding. But because understanding involves, by definition, non-overt phenemena, the expository essay will present some additional challenge to the writer; it requires him to process in a unique way what is to be conveyed, so that it results in guaranteed understanding on the part of the reader or audience. This inherent challenge in expository writing is in fact sometimes purposefully incorporated into prompts of descriptive and narrative essays by specifically asking for certain kinds of details not inherent in the description and narration per se. These details are embedded into what otherwise could have been a mere record of events or objects a dose of exposition. It is possible that this prompt-devised incrustation of exposition into narrative and descriptive essays is what blurs the distinction between exposition and the other discourse modes.

2.3.5. What future for the school essay in writing instruction?

The original essay was born in a specific context, and served as a response to

needs emerging from the socio-intellectual context of the time. It has had widespread success and adaptation which have altered its original form. One such adaptation engendered the school essay. There are so many critical issues and problems raised in relation to the essay use for the teaching of writing in schooling contexts that one is justified in wondering whether the school essay is not doomed.

The original essay came into being as a response to demands engendered by socio-cultural and literacy developments in the 16th century. Four hundred years later, it may be important to ask whether the same demands are at work in post-industrial societies to warrant the continued use of the genre as the main tool for writing instruction. Literacy today is emphasized as a means for social transformation and embetterment because it equips one with the skills needed to function optimally in the print-driven information age. The essay, however, does not seem to be present or visible in the societal functional literacy arena, and this prompts the question of the justifiability of emphasis of essay in writing instruction.

This, coupled with the other issues traditionally raised in relation to how the school essay is actually conceived and used in the teaching of writing may raise the question of whether it is not time for the essay to be phased out of writing instruction. Arguments for this suggestion don't seem to be scarce. First, the school essay in its present form and treatment hardly allows for a consequential treatment of content in writing instruction; its overemphasis on form creates the conditions for sacrificing all the other aspects of writing in favor of this form. Second, the functional use of the essay in broader society is not widespread, compared to other types of writing such as letter writing, summary making, and even dictation taking. Moreover, there are pedagogically

pertinent questions raised about the form of the essay used in teaching writing in school. This essay, because it rejects informality and presence of the writer in the writing, bars many students from having a meaningful experience in learning writing.

Yet, despite these pertinent questions, the essay may not be out of schooling anytime soon. There are several reasons for this prognostic. First, the essay is a very practical instructional tool, more adequate than anything the school may have for testing validly non-discrete items of knowledge. This suitability of the essay for testing knowledge and helping learning is apparent in the fact that, even in instructional situations not primarily geared to the teaching of writing in the sense of composition, the essay is still widely used. This is the case of many EFL contexts where, beyond beginner levels, essay questions are used to test reading comprehension and content.

A second reason why the school essay may not be doomed soon is that, despite the fact the genre is not widespread in broader-society functional use, it is nonetheless a vehicle for an important function of language and literacy, i.e. the transaction of information. The essay is no letter or summary, but it may be used to communicate or convey information. It is surely this possible use of the essay that has earned it the role in testing knowledge referred to earlier.

Perhaps the most important reason why the essay is in no danger of disappearing in schooling is that, somehow, it vindicates Goody and Watt (1968) by reinforcing some widely held assumptions about the nature of literacy. Goody and Watt have argued the autonomous view of literacy according to which the mastery of writing results in the development of higher order cognitive skills such as abstraction and logical deduction. This view was evidently challenged by those who, like Street (1984), believe that any

41

cognitive gain from literacy is a result of how the skill is actually used. By mandating a standard rhetorical structure, emphasizing linear logic and the objectifying of language and thought, schooling and the essay are laying the foundations for higher order cognitive skills. Street (1984) and others might argue very insightfully that these skills were in fact socially learnt, and not an inherent result of literacy, but the fine distinction between the outcomes of literacy development on one side and internalizing what it takes to write a good school essay on the other will not be easily perceived by many. Because the essay helps rid students of a part of the subjectivity society in general does not condone in them, it is in no danger of disappearing soon.

2.4. Approaches to L2 essay writing problems

This research examines the writing problems of Senegalese students in US colleges. The many foreign students attracted by American educational opportunities are faced in US higher education with writing demands totally different from those they experienced while studying EFL in the L1 context. In this context, writing does not generally constitute a problem since it is often conceived as a matter of mere L1 to L2 skills transfer. In the cases where EFL writing has been dealt with specifically, it is often through the largely ESL inspired methods of controlled writing, free writing, or the communicative approach to writing (Raimes, 1983b). Controlled writing was generally used to reinforce grammar and vocabulary, while free writing stressed the quantity or fluency of the product (Brière, 1966), and the communicative approach emphasized the general communication purpose of writing. In US colleges and universities however, the need to produce well- structured written discourse conforming to the expectations of the

English native-speaking, educated or academic community, along with the importance of writing for educational success, generally unveils the inadequacy of their L2 writing. ESL and EFL professionals have been concerned with English L2 composition problems for sometime now, and varying approaches have been adopted in reaction to these problems.

2.4.1. The controlled writing approach

Before the advent of the contemporary, extensive and multiform uses of literacy, writing was mainly a literary phenomenon where creativity held an important place. Pre-modern era foreign language teaching, and consequently the precursors of ESL and EFL, approached composition in a similar perspective by emphasizing a free writing approach concerned before anything about content, fluency, and inventiveness of writing. This view of writing was generally implemented through reading and discussion of the writings of others.

Considering language as a set of structures and placing high premium on the correctness of these structures, controlled writing repudiated free writing because it did not care too much for errors. Like many other uses of writing in language teaching, the approach was mostly a means of supporting the learning of linguistic items taught. It was informed by the audio-lingual view of language (Fries, 1945). This approach to language teaching viewed language as speech primarily, and devised a systematic way of teaching the components of speech. Audio-lingualism transferred to the teaching of composition the systematic control of input to eliminate error, and relied exclusively on activities such as transformation, expansion, completion, and substitution. Writing problems in this view of writing were seen as consisting mainly of linguistic errors, the un-spontaneous feel of

43

sentences, the clumsiness of passages, usage, the different discourse modes used for arguing or describing (Pincas, 1962: 186-187). To eliminate these problems, students were often provided with passages and then asked to rewrite the passages according to instructions structured in terms of the composition demands they would exert on writers. The passage could be rewritten (1) in a different tense, (2) by substituting selected words, (3) while the writer assumed the role of the character the passage is about (Dykstra and Paulston, 1967:138). Some in audio-lingualism advocated a less controlled approach to writing which gave more place to free writing (Erazmus, 1960; Brière, 1966), but as a whole, the earlier stages of ESL composition were marked by controlled writing.

A notable problem with this approach to writing has to do with its underlying premise that composition can be learnt by imitation (Pincas, 1962). As we have come to know, imitation is very much context dependent, and it is not certain that the type of texts ESL learners produce in these contexts can be replicated in different and independent needs-motivated contexts. Moreover, this approach to writing is too contrived and fails to bring in organizational matters, which are the major obstacle to conveying ideas in advanced ESL learners' compositions. The last weakness of the approach is perhaps a consequence of the contrived nature of the scheme; to limit textual variables and render the controlled writing tasks achievable, passages used as bases of writing were generally short, averaging 150 words in length (Dykstra and Paulston, 1967). This relatively short length of passages used to teach foreign students is problematic because the writing demands college exerts on them require production of much longer passages. By the length of the model texts used, controlled writing failed to provide a realistic vision of college writing to students. Despite its foibles, the controlled approach to writing had

the merit of laying the grounds for later development in ESL composition by putting to the test of writing practice its view of language and writing.

2.4.2. L1 writing research applications to L2 writing

As the new field of ESL in the US developed its base through increasing number of foreign students in colleges and universities, it became apparent that their composition problems were complex and that controlled writing was not the most appropriate approach for dealing with them. Specifically, it was discovered that some of the composition problems encountered by nonnative students were similar to those experienced by native speakers of English (Green, 1967). This realization led to application of insight from L1 composition approaches, mainly the current-traditional rhetoric and process approaches, to L2 writing.

2.4.2.1. The current-traditional rhetoric approach

Rhetoric is essentially concerned with communication, and current-traditional rhetoric is the theoretical support of a body of writing instruction practices. These practices have marked the teaching of composition over more than a century, and they still endure (Crowley, 1998; Silva, 1991). These practices are informed by positivism (Berlin, 1987), and have resulted in a standard format of writing, the classic five-paragraph essay. The current-traditional rhetoric approach to writing emphasizes the final written product and its formal characteristics of overall textual structure, paragraph organization, modes of discourse used in writing, linear sequencing of information, accuracy, and style. These characteristics of writing in the current-traditional rhetoric

approach are a consequence of the emphasis it lays on reality or referent, one of the components of communication (Berlin and Inkster, 1980).

Current-traditional rhetoric views reality as existing in the physical world independently of the mind. Knowledge of truth and reality are achieved through observation and the senses. Once reality is perceived, observed and understood, it may be communicated. Since reality stands objectively out there in the physical world, its communication will not be as problematic, provided that precautions are taken not to distort it in the process of communicating. This concern for non-distortion is what has imprinted the formal characteristics of writing under current-traditional rhetoric. First, since the conveyed reality can only be successfully communicated through the mental faculty of understanding, written texts must be logically structured and organized to facilitate this understanding. Second, to faithfully render observed reality, modes of discourse -- narration, description, exposition, persuasion, argumentation -- have been identified and recommended for use in writing. Third, it is fitting that the rendering of reality should not be distracted through intrusion of the writer on the referent, non-clarity deriving from style, or doubts about the linguistic mastery of the writer. In addition the final product of writing should reflect coherence, i.e. ensure smooth movement of meaning from sentence to sentence, and paragraph to paragraph. Current-traditional rhetoric emphasized product and was essentially concerned with writing in academic contexts. The reader or audience are given almost no attention, since it is assumed that if they are rational readers, they will comprehend any text following these recommendations.

Current-traditional rhetoric has been criticized both for its theoretical assumptions

46

and practices. Its view that reality stands objectively out in the physical world is contested by phenomenologist precepts holding that reality is in the interaction between object and individual subjectivity. The approach also insists too much on referential writing and ignores the purpose and the reason for writing (Kinneavy, 1971). In terms of pedagogical practices, current-traditional rhetoric, although it seems to give an important place to the writer, does constrain considerably the latter in how he can manage the discourse of writing (Berlin and Inkster, 1980). He is in fact given a preexisting structure in which to just fill in ideas, with no real latitude for molding discourse. This constraining nature of current-traditional rhetoric reaches beyond the writer to certain modes of discourse. The structure of the traditional school essay accommodates writing that conveys aspects of the external world or argues a point. It however does not accommodate easily other discourse modes such as the story or other text types driven by their own structuring plot (Hesse, 1989). But perhaps the most commonly mentioned shortcoming of current-traditional rhetoric is overemphasis on the product of writing. Dissatisfaction with this emphasis led to the emergence of the process approach, the most serious challenge to traditional rhetoric. The principles of current-traditional rhetoric remain nonetheless prevalent in essay writing instruction at the college level, and hence in ESL.

2.4.2.2. The process approach

The controlled composition approach to ESL writing insisted on linguistic accuracy while the current-traditional rhetoric approach emphasized a final written product reflecting the characteristics of textual organization and linearity expected by

native speakers of English. None of these approaches paid much attention to what writers actually did before producing the final product. Attention to this aspect of second language writing was brought to bear by developments in L1 composition research (Emig, 1971).

A composition professional, Emig was not at all satisfied with the current-traditional rhetoric approach which prevailed. She considered that this approach, was actually inappropriately suggesting that the final product of writing was the method of writing (Emig, 1964). She then turned to her composing habits and those elicited from other writers as material for examining writing practice. She extrapolated that the writing problems encountered by professional writers must be the same as those encountered by students when they wrote, and suggested the use of various strategies to go round these. The process approach was thus born. By putting the focus on the writer, the process approach could suggest more appropriately the idea of method of writing, since now this latter was envisioned from the act of writing, not the final product of writing.

Just as Emig assumed that the writing problems of professional writers were similar to those of student writers, it was assumed in ESL that L2 advanced students' composition problems were in many respects similar to those of native speakers (Green, 1967; Zamel, 1982). These problems were perceived as stemming from the failure to recognize that writing was an act with a specific purpose involving different processes (Raimes, 1983b). The process approach held that learning to write meant internalizing the behaviors of effective writers, and consequently advocated guiding writers through the different stages of the writing process, i.e. brainstorming for ideas, outlining, drafting, revising, and editing before producing the final product. In contrast to current-traditional

48

rhetoric, the process approach laid emphasis in writing on the writer. This emphasis is reflected in allowing more time to the student writer to explore and improve writing, in establishing collaboration between writers in class, and in reinforcing the role of the teacher as facilitator. The form of the final product was de-emphasized in this approach because form was not seen as predetermined. It is determined by the writer, based on the content and purpose of writing. The context of writing in this approach was not necessarily that of school, but tended toward wider society. The approach also widened the range of writing activities beyond the traditional essay to include creative writing, personal writing, etc.

The process approach has been received favorably in L2 writing. There is however a need to point to the fact that, despite its vigorous challenge of the pre-existing essay-based composition paradigm, the process approach does not question the form of the essay. Despite the rhetoric and the polarization of many in composition into product or process camps, the final form of the essay product remains one which favors thesis statement, topic sentences with the other characteristics of linearity, transitions, logic, etc., whether it is produced under current-traditional rhetoric or the process approach. The process approach was about write to write an essay, not what makes an essay. If it did endanger the essay genre somehow, it was only because it incidentally brought to the writing class genres which were previously not accepted.

Moreover, the writing problems of many ESL writers coming to US universities after completing high school or, in some cases, tertiary education, are not predominantly in relation to generating ideas or being aware of the need to revise and edit a draft. These students are generally well versed in these practices in their L1, and such practices are

transferable adequately to writing in English. Their problems have to do with how to convey adequately the ideas they have. The process approach does not address this issue, or if it does, it is through the old pedagogy of repeated practice. Criticism has also been directed at some of the recommendations of the process approach. Its advocacy of school writing happening in conditions of almost pastoral care and with less strict time limits has raised question of whether this corresponds to the real conditions of writing in academia. These questions raised about the process approach, led to another approach to L2 writing. This new approach however, was not derived from L1 writing research. It is indigenous to EFL/ESL.

2.4.3. The ESP approach

English for specific purposes, ESP, is a sub-field of EFL/ESL (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). It has emerged in the last thirty years as a result of the convergence of different factors such as the need to train some third world professionals and technicians in specialized uses of English at short notice, developments in linguistics which showed that language in fact varied according to context and purpose of use (Widdowson, 1972), and the advent of educational theories emphasizing the learner.

Generally, the dissatisfaction with the process approach to writing originated from proponents of ESP. Although the voicing of this dissatisfaction was seen more as a reaction than the articulation of the principles of a new EFL/ESL writing approach (Silva, 1990), there are many reasons to feature this perspective on EFL/ESL writing beside the major approaches to L2 writing. First, there exists a substantial body of research exploring the specific characteristics of writing in ESP areas (Weissberg and Buker,

1990; Swales, 1990; Swales and Feak, 1994; Mahler, 1999). Second, many graduate composition classes in US colleges already incorporate insight from the ESP writing approach into the teaching of writing. Third, the beginnings of ESP, as a sub-field of EFL/ESL were also marked by impromptuness, but this did prevent it from having the following it has had in English language teaching outside the US. The extension of ESP into writing, despite its beginnings as a mere reaction to the process approach, should not be presumed of little consequence for writing instruction.

Proponents of the ESP approach view the problems of L2 writing in academic contexts as deriving from differences in individual writers, writing tasks, and the context of writing (Reid, 1984). L2 writers come to college writing classes with varying degrees of English language proficiency. In addition, the writing tasks they are assigned, and most importantly, the discourse expectations instructors have of them are likely to constitute disorienting novelties for L2 students. More than the brainstorming or other stages of the process approach, these differences will potentially be the source of problems for mature students versed in generating ideas when writing in L1. The ESP approach also objects to other aspects of process writing. This approach advocates a practice of writing that is different from what is recommended by the process approach. Proponents of the ESP approach contend that, by emphasizing collaboration and dropping time constraints, the process approach misleads learners as to what they may encounter in writing in actual academic contexts (Horrowitz, 1986a). Another major objection of these proponents is that the approach insists on the individual and psychological aspects of writing at the expense of the socio-cultural ones, which are however important for academic and professional communities.

51

The ESP approach to L2 writing considers that what is needed to help EFL and EFL student-writers is an approach that socializes them into the practices of the context for which they need to write. Pedagogically, this calls for a focus on genres (Giltrow, 1995) in the teaching of writing, and awareness of the reader, not as an individual, but a member of a community that has certain expectations of discourse conventions. A pre-requisite to this pedagogy is an analysis of the different text-types present in academia so that their characteristic discourse features are understood and approximation of these by students is made easier.

There does not seem to be any wide ranging and systematic opposition to the ESP proposition, yet the almost exclusive concern of the existing literature on research articles, theses, dissertations, and similar serious professional and/or academic writing genres casts a doubt on a quick application of the principles advocated to essay writing. Moreover, to some, ESP carries a markedly specialized connotation which makes it an unsuitable bedfellow to the general education principles informing freshman composition and writing instruction in college.

2.4.4. The contrastive rhetoric approach

After a short-lived attempt at making on its own the logically necessary step of extending oral English language proficiency to full functional literacy, through controlled writing, the young ESL field looked to mainstream L1 composition for inspiration. This inspiration resulted in the adaptation of the current-traditional rhetoric and process approaches to L2 writing. Now, ESL, as a major field, seems to be looking inward to find its own solutions to the writing problems besetting foreign students of English.

Contrastive rhetoric is the major homegrown paradigm which responds to these problems. When the paradigm was enunciated, it went through a period in limbo, before other studies helped establish the approach for good. These developments will be reviewed in three main stages: the original contribution by Kaplan, the early studies in support of contrastive rhetoric, and the later studies, which use Kaplan's insight, but take it further than its original application field of discourse.

2.4.4.1. Kaplan and contrastive rhetoric

Contrastive rhetoric is a line of second language acquisition research that seeks to explain and solve L2 writing problems in relation to students' internalized L1 writing conventions and traditions (Connor, 1996:5). This research area originates in Kaplan's (1966) seminal paper on the comparative organizational patterns of L2 essays and traditional native speaker expectations of the discourse structure of English language essays. Although it was received somewhat controversially, its basic argumentation -- that L2 writing problems are largely accountable to the different rhetorical conventions culture and language have infused into writing in the L1 -- has held and even gained grounds in applied linguistics and L2 writing pedagogy (Connor, 1996).

The substance of Kaplan (1966) is that different languages and cultures orient discourse differently from English (p. 14), and that, because many ESL student writers come to English after mastering writing in L1, the specific discourse patterns of this L1 will interfere with what is expected in expository discourse in English. Kaplan described the organizational pattern of expository English as based on the paragraph conceived as a unit of thought. This paragraph presents information in a logical manner favoring

deductive structure, although induction is not totally excluded. This paragraph is also characterized by coherence, and is never digressive. In contrast to these discourse characteristics of English, the background languages of the more than 700 L2 English essays he analyzed revealed different patterns of discourse organization. Based on the patterns found in the L2 English essay, Kaplan extrapolated possible underlying writing patterns. Semitic languages he characterized as having a parallel discourse pattern, while oriental languages were said to be circular, and Russian and romance languages digressive. Kaplan (1966) illustrated his vision of the discourse patterns of the languages examined with diagrams that seem to have polarized somewhat reactions to the new paradigm.

Kaplan (1987) provided some clarifications and precisions, following the reactions to his original study. Kaplan admits in this paper that he may have overstated the rhetorical differences between languages, but maintains that these differences exist. He also insists that the focus of argument on rhetorical problems encountered by L2 writers did not mean these students did not have syntactic problems. Kaplan recognizes that the different thought patterns identified in the 1966 article may in fact all exist in one language, but that every language has a preferred discourse pattern. He added that, in the case of many L2 students, the rhetorical problems they encounter in English often stem from the absence of awareness that writing, in some socio-linguistic contexts, is privileged for conveying information in an extended and elaborated manner, while speech is routinely used to ask for information. L2 students who are not aware of these functions tend to confuse the two modes, and this adds to the discourse problems of their writing.

2.4.4.2. Early contrastive rhetoric studies

Kaplan's views have been supported and extended by subsequent further research. Ostler (1987) followed up on the contrastive rhetoric theme that different languages organize the development of ideas differently by trying to find out why Arab students' L2 writings were generally not evaluated as satisfactory by native English speaker instructors, even when grammar and vocabulary were correct. She compared expository essays written by Arab ESL students to paragraphs derived from different native English authentic written materials. The comparison focused on T-units (Hunt, 1965) and the Discourse Bloc (Pitkin, 1969). The T-unit (terminal unit) is a grammatical index representing the shortest possible sentence that is still grammatical. The Discourse Bloc is an extended unit of discourse larger than the sentence; it may or may not correspond to a paragraph. It incorporates several ideas related syntactically (through super-ordination, coordination, and/or subordination) or semantically (through anaphoric, cataphoric, and endophoric reference). The results confirm a difference in discourse organization between the Arab students' essays and the native English paragraphs. The Arab students' essays presented longer T-units, and these showed a much bigger prevalence of coordinate clauses than in the native speaker paragraphs. Ostler argued that these coordinate clauses are the main vector of the parallel structure of classical Arabic discourse. In terms of Discourse Bloc, the L2 essays showed a prevalence of more subdivisions, which was not conducive to full development of ideas.

Ostler (1987) compared L2 school essays to paragraphs derived from authentic native speaker paragraphs whose specific genre is not indicated. The Arab students'

essays clearly belong the school essay genre, but the author of the study does not indicate whether the authentic paragraphs she compared them with belong to the essay genre or not. There is great likelihood that these pieces of authentic writing are not school essays, given the invisibility of the school essay outside writing instruction contexts; it is not common to see school essays in books that are not writing manuals. If it were the case that these authentic paragraphs are not school essays, then this would be cause for methodological concern. The traditional rhetorical organization of the essay is not necessarily the same as that of other genres in English. By comparing L2 essays to authentic paragraphs not taken from essays, it is possible that any departure from the pattern of these paragraphs is not ipso facto a departure from the pattern of the school essay proper. Despite this flaw, Ostler has arrived at findings that confirm Kaplan (1966).

Eggington (1987) examined the nature of Korean academic written discourse. After arguing for the existence of a specific traditional Korean rhetorical structure along with the linear rhetorical organization of English and English-educated Korean academics, he suggested that this situation does not favor effective communication between the latter group and the public at large, or the other Korean academics. He conducted two experiments to test this hypothesis. The first experiment was based on gauging the perceived ease of processing Korean texts written according to the two different rhetorical structures mentioned above. The second experiment used immediate and delayed recall of information presented in these texts to gauge ease of comprehension. The results of both experiments point to more subjects processing more easily, and recalling more of the traditional Korean-structured texts. In other words, Korean texts adopting an English language rhetorical pattern cause processing difficulties

to Korean speakers not familiar with English language discourse features. This is the case because the traditional rhetorical pattern of Korean is so different from the English pattern adapted by some Korean academics to the Korean language that Koreans with no awareness of this English pattern have difficulty processing information adopting that structure. From the results, Eggington re-asserted the limits this situation imposes on written academic communication in Korea. He suggested that this problem needs to be addressed by introducing instruction in writing which presents both rhetorical structures to the educational system.

Hinds (1987) is another study that looks contrastively at rhetoric and communication in languages. Hinds (1987) did so in relation to English and Japanese, and focused on the issue of who is primarily accountable for effective communication. He started from the premise that, in English, the speaker or writer is accountable for clarity of meaning. This premise is historically supported by different sources (Havelock, 1963; Chafe, 1982; Hildyard and Olson, 1982). Hinds argued that, in languages such as Japanese, the person responsible for clear meaning is the reader/listener, not the writer/speaker (p. 143). Hinds (1987) further argues that the implications of reader/listener responsible language are not limited to accommodation of ambiguity in discourse, but impinge on writing attitude, with native speakers of writer-responsible languages producing multiple drafts before the final one, while reader-responsible language native speakers tend to write in order to directly produce the final text product. Moreover, in the case of Japanese, since the writer is not responsible for clear meaning, there is tendency to neglect transitions. These attitudes created by the typology of Japanese will have consequences on the L2 writing of students having this language as

57

L1. This study then is one more supporting Kaplan's view. It even seems to go further than Kaplan (1966) by suggesting that L2 writing problems beyond syntax and lexis are not exclusively based on different rhetorical patterns, but also on this new language written typology.

Clyne (1987) examined differences in academic discourse patterns between German and English. The discourse patterns he focused on are linearity, symmetry, and hierarchy. He used academic articles published in German and English in the fields of linguistics and sociology. The results show that, although texts in both languages contain instances of linearity and non-linearity, more articles in German are characterized by non-linearity and digression. Similarly, the German texts tended to present more textual asymmetry, i.e. different sections of the texts were much longer than others. On hierarchy however, the English texts evidenced less subordination than the German.

Clyne (1987) explained these differences in terms of the respective intellectual styles of German and English. In academic issues, German seems to traditionally value paradigm analysis and theory, while English seems to emphasize data analysis. This characteristic style of German, he argues, has incrusted digression in German academic discourse where it plays different functions such as providing theory, giving additional information, or challenging a different theoretical view (p. 227). Another likely explanation of the non-linearity of German is that the characteristic of writer-responsibility (Hinds, 1987), which applies to English, does not seem to apply to German. In this language, the writer's first responsibility seems to be to provide knowledge, theory, and incentive for thought; beyond this, it is the readers' responsibility to make the necessary effort to penetrate the writer's writing (Clyne, 1987). Clyne

concluded that it is important to be aware of these cross-linguistic discourse differences in international communication between scholars to avoid potential mis-evaluation of academic work.

This study has again supported Kaplan's premise of discourse level differences between languages. However, it does it in a way that is more important than other studies that have supported Kaplan's insight. In contrast to Arabic, Korean, or Japanese, German is very close to English. Both languages share the same ancestor, proto-German. If two languages this close can have discoursal differences that may affect effective communication, then the differences between English and the other languages not related to it ought to be paid attention to, in order to minimize problems in making the transition between one written language discourse to the other.

2.4.4.3. Later contrastive rhetoric studies

Kaplan (1966) laid the ground for contrastive rhetoric. Different subsequent studies (Kaplan, 1987; Ostler, 1987; Eggington, 1987; Hinds, 1987, Clyne, 1987) have helped establish the paradigm in ESL and EFL writing pedagogy. This research line seems to be somewhat fertile. New foci of Kaplan's insight are shedding more light on the non-linguistic sources of L2 writing difficulty. Kaplan had argued that the thought patterns of a language will affect writing in L2; more recent studies are showing that, even beyond these linguistic thought patterns, interference may result from the interactional patterns of a group, the linguistic context of experience of the topic of writing, attitudes to knowledge and learning, and the context of L1 schooling.

Scollon and Scollon (1981) examined the discourse practices of the Athabaskan

people in contrast with Anglo-saxon school practices. They argued that, for Athabaskan schoolchildren attending Anglo-saxon schools, some aspects of Western literacy may be experienced as a form of interethnic communication fraught with misunderstandings. The discourse practices of Athabaskans are rooted in their traditional system of values. For instance, to preserve face, they avoid engaging fully in a discourse event unless the point of view of all participants is known. These values, and the attitudes they instill in Athabaskan children, may explain the stereotype of academic incompetence -- specifically in writing -- they are often dubbed with.

Scollon and Scollon explained that Athabaskans may be reluctant to engage in the often decontextualized essay discourse of school writing, because it does not use the relational references of their traditional ethnic values. For these school children, writing problems do not necessarily stem from inability to emulate the discourse patterns of English, but from a justifiable reluctance to engage in discourse practices that are probably felt to be inconsiderate and disrespectful. Misunderstanding and/or non-adherence to the system of values supporting the English language school essay may explain what are sometimes construed as writing problems.

Friedlander (1990) started from research findings that L1 strategies affect positively or negatively writing in L2. One way these strategies are used in L2 writing is through translation of events experienced in the L1 context. Friedlander believes that this specific strategy is bound to be limiting, because of the overload constraint exerted by translation on memory. He consequently undertook to find out when resorting to the first language can be of help to the ESL writer by setting two different writing tasks to Chinese ESL students. One task involved writing on a topic students experienced in their

country, hence in L1, and the other required writing on an aspect of their life related to US college, and thus experienced in English. Students were divided in test and control groups which respectively wrote in the language of experience of the topic, and in L1 or L2. The results showed that when students wrote in the language of experience of the topic, they produced more detailed, longer, and better essays.

Writing problems then, are not only dependent on linguistic features or rhetorical patterns, but also on cognitive coding of the experiences to be written about. This is surely a fine-grain distinction which needs to be borne in mind by writing instructors. Nevertheless, the study does not give details on the organizational features of these more detailed, better, and longer essays. The author's outlook on writing implicitly, emphasizes content, for the three qualifications above -- more detailed, longer, and better essays -- all clearly have a connotation of content except for "better". It would have been interesting to see how this improved content relates to the discourse features native English speakers expect from writing of that sort. Do the essays on the topic experienced in L1 conserve discourse characteristics of that language or not? What are the implications for this in terms of topics given to ESL students? Despite these questions, Friedlander (1990) has shown that L2 writing is not only affected by linguistic or organizational features, but also by the context of experience and cognitive coding of the events written about.

Ballard and Clanchy (1991) suggested that there is possibly a more serious source of L2 writing problems than surface and rhetorical features. This source comes from the contrast in attitudes to knowledge between ESL/EFL students and instructors in the native English language context of their colleges. Ballard and Clanchy argue that ESL

students may use structures of language and attitudes to knowledge that are very different from what their instructors expect. These structures and attitudes are taken so much for granted, and so often assumed to be universal that they are not recognized as the potential source of writing problems they are.

Ballard and Clanchy (1991) posit three main learning attitudes -- reproductive, analytical, and speculative -- entailing different learning approaches which can be described as consisting in memorization and imitation, critical thinking, and deliberate search for new possibilities, respectively. When these attitudes and approaches are considered in relation to some Western academic tasks such as essay writing, they present a great potential for problems. In essay writing in English, for instance, the prevailing attitudes and approaches to knowledge expect that the essay will be focused, critical, reasoned, and competent. For foreign students coming from cultures where different attitudes to knowledge and learning approaches prevail, there will be an understandable propensity not to incorporate all or part of these expectations. The expectation about being critical, for instance, will not be easily accommodated by students from a culture favoring a reproductive attitude to knowledge, since they have been trained to generally replicate what was taught. Moreover, being critical about the content of teaching may be utterly inappropriate for these students, for it may be synonymous with criticizing the instructor, the provider of the content, which is considered inappropriate.

Ballard and Clanchy (1991) bring an important new and refreshing perspective to contrastive rhetoric. In the original view of contrastive rhetoric, the different L1 discourse characteristics are the major obstacle to acceptable essay writing. In this new perspective, even if the prompt contained rhetorical instructions to help students around this first

source of problems, the overall attitude to learning and knowledge of the foreign student may still act as an obstacle to an acceptable piece of writing. Added to the premise of the original contrastive rhetoric hypothesis, this perspective has a potential for helping address more thoroughly some of the essay writing problems L2 students experience.

Carson (1992) goes from the assumption that L1 literacy development will have a complicating or facilitating influence on later development of L2 literacy skills. She explored these issues by looking at the cases of Japan and China. For each context, she examined the social context of schooling, the cognitive aspects of the literate code, and the pedagogical practices presiding over the development of literacy skills. Carson argues that since the L2 learning generally starts in the context of L1 education, this latter will most likely have an influence on the former. In writing, this influence can take the form of transfer of L1 writing instruction practices to L2, or a predilection for writing as an aid to language learning. If the teaching of writing in L1 did not make use of multiple draft development, as is the case in Senegal, this might also affect students' writing experience in L2. Similarly, if L1 is a reader responsible language (Hinds, 1987), this will also affect writing in ESL. Through the initial literacy conditioning it creates, the context of L1 literacy development will have the potential to affect later L2 literacy development.

2.4.4.4. Some issues with the contrastive rhetoric approach

Contrastive rhetoric states that the writing difficulties encountered by nonnative speakers of English are not limited to non-mastery of linguistic elements of the code. The differences in organizational discourse patterns between the L1 of the students, and English, the L2, contribute considerably to these problems, because students tend to

63

transfer these to English when writing (Kaplan, 1966). The contrastive rhetoric approach to L2 writing, despite the totally unique perspective it brings to L2 writing problems, is not without criticism. It has been labeled as reinforcing the outlook of the current-traditional rhetoric approach on writing (Leki, 1991; Raimes, 1991; Connor, 1996) by emphasizing the final form of the school essay in its linearity. Other criticisms of contrastive rhetoric have characterized it as ethnocentric in suggesting that the direct thought pattern of English is superior (James, 1980), simplistic because it is not based on contrastive analysis of L1 and L2 (Mohan and Lo, 1985), reductive in lumping together languages which present noticeable differences (Hinds, 1990), intuitive (Leki, 1991), and concerned only with essay writing, at the exclusion of other genres of academic or professional writing (Connor, 1996).

The first type of criticism of contrastive rhetoric, exemplified in James (1980), seems to be motivated by applications or interpretations of Kaplan's insight, not by the substance of his arguments. Kaplan (1966) discards any value judgment on the discourse patterns of different languages: "This discussion is not intended to offer any criticism of other existing paragraph developments; rather it is intended only to demonstrate that paragraph development other than those normally regarded as desirable in English do exist" (p. 14). Another criticism, e.g. Connor's (1996) that contrastive rhetoric ignores types of writing other than the essay, seem to have been remedied somehow in the last decades. Weissberg and Buker (1990), Swales (1990), Swales and Feak (1994), Mahler (1999) have since then studied other academic genres such as research articles, abstracts, dissertations, etc., and some international graduate composition courses are offering guidance on these types of writing based on insight from this research. In addition, Clyne

(1987), Eggington (1987), Hinds (1987) have offered contrastive studies of academic and newspaper writing in German, Korean, and Japanese respectively. It however needs to be said, without any attempt at belittling this specific criticism, that the writing problems contrastive rhetoric sought to examine in its origins were problems that happened in school essay writing. It is then understandable that this approach seemed to ignore any discourse type that was not essay, at least in its beginnings.

That Kaplan's newly launched line of research has had to meet with controversy before gaining grounds is somewhat understandable. The basic premise on which contrastive rhetoric rests, namely that the first language conditions the learning or use of another language, had been raised in linguistics at different periods before, and has always resulted in some sort of backfire. The first instance of this is perceivable in Sapir-Whorf's theory of linguistic relativity. This theory holds that language predetermines perception of reality and way of thinking. As we know, this view has been rejected in its strong version. But the only fact that it was deemed controversial to the point of rejection may have predisposed minds to suspicion of anything reminiscent of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. The more so that another contrastive theory had emerged after the Sapir-Whorf theory -- the contrastive analysis hypothesis (Fries, 1945; Lado, 1957). The contrastive analysis hypothesis led to the emergence of the audio-lingual method. Before contrastive rhetoric then, there were precedents which did not make it easy for any approach to English language teaching informed with a contrastive approach not to raise suspicion.

The initial suspicion over contrastive rhetoric has subsided, owing to further exposition of the tenets of the paradigm, and substantial research work supporting the

initial premises, or expanding it to new cross-cultural sources of writing problems. The approach has been adapted into classroom practices involving raising the awareness of students over these sources of problems, and training them in recognizing thesis statements, topic sentences, and other characteristics of the traditional English language school essay, and emulating them.

Perhaps the most important problem with the contrastive rhetoric approach to writing is the limited number of studies contrasting discourse types in English and other languages. The few that exist are about a very limited number of languages supplying considerable numbers of ESL students to US colleges. Given the fact that languages sometimes present varieties, even in written form, this small number of languages studied in contrast to English becomes even less significant. As the increasing number of students educated in L1 English (and native speakers too), especially those who fail to test out of composition classes, shows, contrastive studies of written varieties of the same language may sometimes be warranted. Generally, the few studies mentioned above have rarely been replicated or followed up further, and any insight there is, is that of those studies of fifteen to twenty years ago. Even among this already small number of studies, some are unpublished research work carried out for degrees in academic institutions. These limiting factors are by far the biggest stumbling block to wider awareness of contrastive rhetoric, and more systematic application of the promising perspective it offers to the teaching of L2 writing.

Research efforts then seem to be needed in the direction of the many other languages whose L1 speakers may want to experience the American educational field, so that to pinpoint any contrasts in L1 and L2 writing, and remedy any problems that they

may have in their transition to writing for an English language audience. French, the language of L1 instruction of Senegalese students in US colleges, is among these languages. To our knowledge, no study covers these issues of contrasts in school writing in French and English. Swan and Smith (1987), as earlier indicated, compared some features of French and English, but these are more informed by contrastive analysis, and focus on contrasts generally relating to phonology or syntax.

Le (1999) studied the comparative use of paragraphs in academic law articles in French and English. She defines the paragraph as a set of related sentences with the first one at the highest level of generality or abstraction and the last sentence at the same level. She argues that this conception is more appropriate than the many definitions prevailing among researchers (the paragraph as a linguistic unit -- orthographic or structural; the paragraph as processing unit -- reader/writer centered. Le (1999) offers a further categorization of paragraphs distinguishing between (1) the single unit paragraph made up of only one sentence; (2) the expository paragraph which is a macrostructrual basis presenting a position in a linear fashion; (3) the explanatory paragraph which is a macrostructural basis ending with a sentence at a lower level of abstraction or generality (because it explains). Le (1999) found out that the articles in French tended to have more single-unit and explanatory paragraphs than those in English, while the latter showed a higher rate of expository paragraphs than the former. This work is an important one in regard to text structure in English and French, yet it is concerned specifically with academic articles appearing in journals, and does not emphasize school essay writing.

Mahler (1999) examined the writing quality of medical articles in French relative to similar writing in English, but again this genre is basically different from the school

essay. In addition to not being concerned with school writing, the contrastive studies

mentioned above are not specifically related to the Senegalese context. There is then a

need to research some of the contrastive features of school writing in French and English

among Senegalese students. The purpose of the present research is to respond to this

research need.

2.4.5. Conclusion

Since the emergence of the US as a world leader, and the attainment by English of

a de facto status of global language for commerce, business, technology, and science, the

needs for English language proficiency among nonnative speakers of the language have

gone beyond oral language and its traditional interactional uses. More and more,

nonnative speakers of English need to add to oral proficiency sound literate skills that are

to allow them to take part consequently in the information and knowledge transactions

using English as a medium. Writing is an important, but complex component of these

skills. Over time, ESL and EFL professionals have adopted different approaches in the

job of equipping students with optimum mastery of these complex writing skills in

English. Because of the complexity of writing, and also because of the continually

expanding circle (Kachru, 1995) of those who need literate skills in English, and the

added complexity they bring through their necessarily different individual backgrounds,

these approaches have shown their limits. Controlled writing was unable to conceptually

move from original emphasis on linguistic accuracy to satisfactory treatment of

discoursal aspects of writing. Current-traditional rhetoric was able to emphasize

rhetorical aspects of essay writing, but did so at the expense of the writer's freedom in

managing content and even discourse; it also very much ignored the specific nature of writing, and the importance of individual and task characteristics for appropriate engagement into writing. Process writing and the ESP approach both seem to have lost sight of the general education characteristic of many writing practices by advocating strategies and a degree of specialization not easily accommodated by the traditional context of schooling. Moreover, none of these approaches to writing recognizes the fact that L2 students may encounter problems in writing, not solely because of the linguistic and discoursal code of English, but also because of how their culture, L1, and context of schooling have molded and shaped them.

This study examines the expository essay writing problems Senegalese students may encounter in college composition classes. In US colleges, these classes are a general requirement, and essay writing is the most frequent form of students' writing (Ginter and Grant, 1996:8). This literature review has shown that substantial work has been done in this research line since it was launched. However, this work has not concerned many foreign languages or students like those from Senegal, who come to American composition classes after full literacy development in French as L1 of instruction. The study will specifically focus on the writing problems likely to be accounted for by the Senegalese students' L1 discoursal, organizational, and attitudinal characteristics.

America now exerts an attraction on the rest of the world because of the combined effects of its world-leadership role and the status of English. More and more Senegalese students are turning to the US for higher education in lieu of the traditional francophone destinations. This increasing tendency is likely to be maintained, and even become more marked in the future, because of globalization and the marketing efforts of some

American colleges toward Senegalese students. Moreover, the coming generations need to have some command of professional skills in English if they are to avoid linguistic handicap in the world (Jernudd and Baldauf, 1987). There is then justification in wanting to find out what the potential essay writing problems of these students may be so that to derive any implications for minimizing them.

Contrastive rhetoric is especially important for this study. It is a paradigm specifically developed for the specific needs of ESL/EFL, and it allows a larger perspective on L2 writing problems than any of the other approaches to second language composition. The essay writing problems of Senegalese students can be studied through this model with a potential for shedding light on previously neglected sources of difficulty. These students have acquired L1 literacy in the context of a different language and culture whose pedagogical practices, attitudes to knowledge learning, and value system, all may predispose them to experiencing problems in college essay writing in English (Kaplan, 1966; Carson, 1992; Ballard and Clanchy, 1991; Scollon and Scollon, 1981). Understandable reasons had led to emphasizing morpho-syntactic problems in L2; today, we have come to realize that discourse, instructional practice, and attitude and value induced problems can be as important as morpho-syntax in writing.

The contrastive rhetoric model is the more so attractive for this study in that its premises make sense. In discussing languages, we take it for granted that organization is important and language specific. We use the tool of traditional grammar to show how even related languages are differently organized in sentence structure by grammar. For instance, in one language, grammar will allow for SVO structural organization of the sentence, while rejecting this SVO structure in another language. However, for a long

70

time, it seems not to have occurred to us that the same organizational principles grammar

exerts at the sentence level, and which set one language apart from another, do operate

beyond the sentence level, and that discoursal and rhetorical language characteristics may

very much matter in differentiating languages. In the end it may well be that, in writing,

grammar and rhetoric are not functionally different; they are all about form and

organization. Grammar determines the form of words in a sentence, and organizes the

relationship between them, while rhetoric caters to macro-form by organizing units

beyond the sentence level. In this respect, the traditional characterizations of writing

methods, as focusing on form or organization, are inappropriate (Scribner and Cole,

1981; Raimes, 1991).

In the case of Senegal, the potential writing differences between French, the L1

language of instruction, and English are made even greater by the fact that French is not a

native language for the large majority of people. What is transmitted to French L1

students as writing skills is then surely shaped by this specific status of the language

inside the country. Languages mutate when transplanted, and it will be interesting to see

whether the natural contrast in discourse between French and English are not further

marked by the possible indigenization of French in Senegal.

As one of the few EFL/ESL based theories of writing, contrastive rhetoric can

contribute significantly to attenuating L2 writing problems if more contrastive studies

allow it to be used with more students, and if systematic writing practices beyond

awareness raising can evolve from it. This study will attempt to walk this course.

CHAPTER III

WRITING IN THE SENEGALESE SCHOOL CONTEXT

In this study, the essay writing problems of Senegalese students in US colleges

are examined with the purpose of identifying the possible sources of these in the cultural,

educational, and L1 discourse of the home context. To understand this context and the

possible influence it has on the L2 English writing performance of Senegalese students, it

is important to be aware of the specific characteristics of their home context of schooling,

and the ideals and practices that have informed this literacy development.

3.1. Background

In Senegal, the language of instruction is French. Because the focus of this study

is writing, and also because French is generally the first written language studied

extensively in school, it will be considered as L1. Although the country counts various

historically local languages, some of which are more widely used than French, this latter,

because of its status as the official language and language of instruction, is in practice the

first literate language of most school children. Many of these children are introduced to

Arabic characters in Koranic schools before starting formal instruction, but the

traditionally prevailing practices and outcomes of basic Koranic instruction can hardly

qualify as true literacy development. In Koranic school, children are typically given a

rudimentary introduction to vocalized Arabic characters, and then move on to learn to

memorize verses and suras. The ultimate goal of Koranic school does not seem to be

reading or writing proficiency in Arabic, but mainly, memorization and recitation of what is taught. When children finish this school, even if they can read the vocalized script in which the Koran is written, they cannot be strictly speaking considered as literate in Arabic, since they have only a formulaic knowledge of the language.

3.1.1. Language of instruction

The use of French as the language of instruction in Senegal is a consequence of the colonial past of the country. As early as the mid 17th century, the French established Saint-Louis, and later secured Gorée as colonial trading posts on the coast of what is now Senegal. By the 19th century, the colonizers gained control of the hinterland and created the colony of Senegal. A decree stipulating that French would be the sole language of instruction of a girls' school to be created in Saint-Louis, Senegal, is reported in 1826 (Turcotte, 1981, cited in Bokamba, 1991), but the practice was probably common long before that date. The French had given to their colonial enterprise the objective of assimilation, and one of the means to that assimilation was instruction in the language and ways of metropolitan France.

This language education policy was enacted despite the existence in the colony of different native languages, some of them widely spoken in Senegal -- Wolof, or in the West African sub-region, Fulani. Wolof is the native language of about 40% of the present population of 10 million in Senegal, although the most conservative estimates would put the percentage of Wolof speakers in the country at 85 at least. Fulani is the native language of 23% of the population, but has a larger audience throughout West Africa. Other notable Senegalese native languages are Serere (17%), Mandinka (9%), and

Diola (9%)(Ethnologue, 2000). These languages are mostly oral languages, although in some instances Arabic characters were used to write letters or consign historical data or business transactions. They have also been transcribed using the Greek-roman characters in post-independence language planning moves, and used in adult functional literacy campaigns. The imposition of French as language of instruction in Senegal thus appears to have been essentially motivated by colonial imperialism, not by the socio-linguistic panorama of the land.

3.1.2. The present Senegalese school system

At independence in 1960, French was maintained as language of instruction, in one part because it was a language of wider communication and of access to the knowledge the young country needed for its socio-economic development, in another because 300 years of a colonial presence that declared assimilation to be its goal had ingrained some pro-French sentiments among a notable section of the intelligentsia and leaders-to be. Although there have been different militant calls for the use of native languages in instruction, the position of French does not seem likely to be affected anytime soon. The various constraints involved in developing a thorough metalanguage on which to base teaching materials, training and retraining personnel, convincing the ordinary people that an education in local languages would still be as valuable as education in a wider international language, etc. do not make it likely that any local language will replace French as language of instruction in the medium term.

Schools in Senegal are organized in 6, 4, and 3 year-cycles for the primary, middle and secondary levels of education. French is used throughout all these cycles as

the language of instruction. Perhaps partially because of the use of a nonnative language as language of instruction that pupils need to learn to speak and write at the same time, the rate of western type schooling in Senegal remains average. Only 68 % of school-aged children are literate (MEN, 2000). Another characteristic of the Senegalese school system is that it generates a high rate of dropouts. About 12 % of all middle school students repeat a class (MEN, 2000). Personal experience of the system shows that very often, repeaters drop out before the end of the cycle. At the end of each of the primary, middle, and secondary cycles, there are very competitive exams to determine the number of those who can continue into the next cycle. Those who cannot make it through these exams have to join private schools if their parents can afford it, or drop out of school. When students pass the baccalaureate diploma, which entitles them to begin higher education, they are oriented into areas of study based on their performance and the availability of places in tertiary level institutions. This situation has prompted the tendency among those baccalaureate graduates with the means to turn abroad to other French speaking countries for university studies.

Recently, the trend toward these francophone countries such as France, Belgium, Canada, Switzerland, has opened up to include the US. From 1993 to 2000, the number of Senegalese students in American colleges has increased 53% (IIE, 2000). This opening up to the US colleges will most likely continue and increase in importance due to the combined effects of the progress of EFL in Senegalese schools, the marketing drives of some US colleges towards potential students in the country, and the desire for emulation created of those who have successfully completed their studies in American universities.

3.2. The social context of schooling

In Senegal, the general goals of schooling have been defined as aiming at
instilling into future citizens the fundamental values of their own society and culture,
while preparing them at the same time to be open to universal values, and to avail
themselves of the empowering potential of knowledge of and access to science,
technology, and research (MEN, 1994:3). The school system pursues these goals through
teaching and learning objectives in the traditional school disciplines. Society at large
values schooling, since it is a recommendation of Islam, the major creed of Senegalese
(Koran, sura 96, verses 1-5), but the limited accessibility to employment after education
seems to have affected public response. During the colonial period and in the early years
of independence, the limited schooling infrastructure ensured automatic absorption of
school graduates into government or business jobs, and thus provided an extra reason for
valuing schooling. Today, owing to different factors, access to a job after education is not
as easy. It is possible that, when the uncertain prospects for a job after schooling are
weighed against the material, cognitive, and time investment it requires, this leads to a
somewhat mitigated consideration of the value of schooling in some segments of society.
Schooling and education are nonetheless perceived by the large majority of Senegalese as
a means to a decent job, life, status, and access to the outer world.

The school system briefly described above operates in a traditionally oral society
in which modernity has not totally eroded the traditional substratum. The prevailing
attitude to learning and knowledge is a reproductive one in the sense of Ballard and
Clanchy (1991). This attitude may be pervaded by the reputedly analytical attitude to

knowledge of French (Clyne, 1987), the language of instruction. The effect of this

combination of attitudes may be perceivable if products of the Senegalese system of

education find themselves in a learning environment with different prevailing attitudes.

3.3. L1 instruction and literacy development

Introduced in Senegal by the French colonizers as language of instruction, the

French language was maintained at independence in that function. The guiding

philosophy is that education should ground students in their own cultural values, and at

the same time make it possible for them to be open to other cultures, and to benefit from

scientific and technological advances (M.E.N, 1994; M.E.N 1998). In the pursuit of these

goals, French serves as language of instruction for the different subjects taught

throughout primary, middle, and secondary school. The general goal of the L1 curriculum

is stated as being the promotion of an appropriate mastery of the language in order to use

it to access training, thought and work methods, and culture, without neglecting the social

function of language in everyday life (M.E.N, 1998:2). This section will review different

aspects of L1 literacy development and writing instruction.

3.3.1. L1 writing tasks

When pupils start primary schools at age 6, they are typically illiterate in French,

although exposed to a lot of the language through the public and private media, and

through significant borrowing into traditional local languages. After learning the alphabet

they move to syllables, words and wider combinations. Writing is generally not attempted

before reading, and consists in copying letters, syllables and words, before moving on to

sentences and dictation. By the time pupils complete primary school at about age 12, they are introduced to *rédaction*, the composing of narrative or descriptive passages depicting ordinary social events and structured into introduction, body and conclusion. *Rédaction* has an overall structure similar to the English language writing exercise of the essay, but differs from it in other aspects. It does not prescribe a minimum of 3 different body paragraphs; it is in fact possible for the body to form one single bloc not structured into different paragraphs. The internal workings of its conclusion do not require a summary of the different points raised in the body, as is the case with the English essay, but emphasize the global and personal evaluative perspective of the writer on what he/she has narrated or described.

However, the most important stages of writing instruction in the Senegalese system take place after the primary level, i.e. in middle and secondary schools. The L1 curriculum sets the objectives of writing as being to develop linguistic, communicative, and cultural competencies among students during their attendance of these two school cycles (MEN, 1998:5). In middle school, writing instruction consolidates and expands primary school instruction by covering training in other specific written school genres such as dialogues, letters, narratives, descriptions, reading accounts, instructions, reports, summaries, *explication de texte, dissertations* (MEN, 1998: 42-44). Dialogues consist in written renditions of short oral conversations. Use of this school genre seems to be justified by the belief of the curriculum that writing is an extension of speech (MEN, 1998:14)

3.3.2. 'Explication de texte' and 'dissertation'

Because these two school writing tasks are so central to writing instruction in Senegal, they will be presented separately from the other tasks. *Explication de texte* and *dissertation* are important school writing genres dealing with literary and argumentative texts respectively. Although students are introduced to them in middle school, they are emphasized in secondary school. *Explication de texte* is an exercise which does not seem to exist or occupy an important place in English language writing in US schools. It is a writing task in which writers must show understanding of a text, and then identify and analyze its literary features. This writing task comes in two forms, *commentaire composé* or *commentaire suivi*. As its name suggests, *explication de texte* emphasizes explanation, but in contrast to the explanation that may be found in expository writing, *explication de texte* focuses on stylistic and aesthetic features of written language. It will then be very different from the essay which emphasizes exposition of personal experience or vision.

Dissertation is another writing task of the L1 context of education which is not totally at home in English language school writing. It is an exercise evocative of the old genre of the oration, consisting in discussing the pros and cons of an issue before synthesizing the whole in the conclusion and stating a personal position. *Dissertation* may be easily construed as an equivalent of the argumentative essay but, strictly speaking, it is not. First, it has a basic structure of four parts against 5 for the classic English essay. Second, it allows no place for thesis statement in the introduction, though the writer may recycle the topic and offer a controlling sentence that is typically in the form of interrogation. Third, the conclusion of a *dissertation* is less for summing up

previously developed points than for providing a specific personal response to the question raised in the prompt. The *dissertation* is an exercise in reasoned argumentation concerned more with critical and methodical thinking than with anything else. It is very important in French L1 writing instruction. It is as central to academic writing in the Senegalese system as the essay in the US.

An example of a dissertation, *Le cas du baptème de convenance* (Tremblay, no date), in French followed by a summary translation by the researcher is provided in Appendix 2, pp. 216-217. As we may see, the introduction offers nothing like a thesis statement; it sets the broader context of the topic. Moreover, there are in this paper many rhetorical questions with no answers provided or suggested. Two of the body paragraphs hold opposing views. Also, the author does not give his personal position on the question asked by the prompt until the conclusion. These features are very different from those characteristic of the essay in English school writing.

3.3.3. L1 writing approach

In Senegal, the teaching of writing is not so dependent on writing manuals as in the context of the US, for example. In an underdeveloped context like the one of Senegal, any small range of commercially published support for the learning of writing may not always be accessible to students. They thus greatly depend on teachers' input of what the format and organization of writing tasks should be. Typically, the teacher will explain what is expected in carrying out a given writing task, ascertain through various means whether students understand, and set a task to be completed and evaluated. The tendency for classes to be large -- almost always upward of 50 in urban and semi-urban areas --

will affect very much the conditions of writing instruction delivery.

When teachers evaluate students' writing, they tend to emphasize lexico-syntactic accuracy, although structural organization is very important for the dissertation and *commentaire suivi* or *commentaire composé*, two variants of the *explication de texte*. Comments on the problems of the written paper are generally made for the student to realize their errors and avoid them on future assignments, not for an improved draft of the same paper. The recommendation of the latest version of the curriculum that teachers should move from impressionistic to more criterion referenced evaluation suggests that perhaps the large classes and various other constraints faced by teachers result in a more summative form of evaluation in writing instruction. Prompts are generally less detailed and structurally directive than those that may be seen in ESL contexts in the US. In *dissertation* specifically, many writing prompts ask for the discussion of a quotation or some other issues, which tends to constrain the writer less than would an ESL prompt asking specifically for refutation, arguing for, or description.

One more specificity of the context and practices of writing instruction in Senegal is that learning and developing writing ability is the responsibility of pre-university education. When students complete senior high school, they are supposed to have been taught all they need for academic writing. Tertiary level education does not generally provide any further training in writing, unless it is of professional nature. However, because of streaming into literary and scientific strands in senior high school, and also because of the reliance of the system of promotion on the average grade achieved when all classes are considered, students may complete pre-university education satisfactorily with unsatisfactory writing skills.

3.3.4. Examples of L1 writing tasks

Two actual examples of French L1 writing tasks are provided as an illustration. Figure 3.1. on page 82 shows the French L1 prompt for an *explication de texte* writing task. The supporting text is a poetry passage whose different content, formal, and contextual themes the student writer has to explain. In this specific prompt, the student is given the choice to treat the *explication de texte* as either *commentaire suivi*, i.e. giving explanations following the text from beginning to end, or *commentaire composé*, i.e. organizing his/her explanations into thematic units. If the student is to choose this latter option, he/she is instructed by the prompt to explain how the author creates an impression of charm and delicateness in this poem. This writing task comes from the year 2000 end-of-secondary school baccalaureate exam.

As is apparent, *explication de texte* may be considered as writing from a source text with responsibility for content (Leki and Carson, 1997). Leki and Carson contrast this type of writing, to writing dependent on a simple writing prompt, which is usually the case with school essay writing. Writing based on a source text with responsibility for content is supposed to present some advantages to EFL/ESL writers; because the context of the support text is generally related to the content the writer will be producing, the source text is often used as a scaffolding means. But it is evident that *explication de texte* offers this possibility to no exploitable degree. Much of the content expected by instructors consists of stylistic and aesthetic text features that the writer has to derive from the poem through analytical skills. This writing task, because it emphasizes recognition of already taught content, is very different from the expository essay-writing

82

task prevailing in freshman composition in US colleges, in which students are asked to

expose views.

SUJET II : COMMENTAIRE SUIVI OU COMPOSE

LES VAINES DANSEUSES

«Celles qui sont des fleurs de l'ombre sont venues,
Troupe divine et douce errante sous les nues
Qu'effleure ou crée un clin de lune... Les voici
Mélodieuses fuir dans le bois éclairci.
De mauves et d'iris et de mourantes roses
Sont les grâces de nuit sous leurs danses écloses
Qui dispersent au vent le parfum de leurs doigts
Elles se font azur et profondeur du bois
Où de l'eau mince luit dans l'ombre reposée
Dont un silence immense émane .... Les voici
Mystérieuses fuir dans le bois éclairci
Furtives comme un vol de gracieux mensonges
Des calices fermés elles foulent les songes
Et leurs bras délicats aux actes endormis
Mêlent, comme en rêvant sous les myrtes amis
Les caresses de l'une à l'autre .... Mais certaine,
Qui se défait du rythme et qui fuit la fontaine,
Va, ravissant la soif du mystère accompli,
Boire des lis d'eau frêle ou dort le pur oubli».

Paul VALERY, Poésies (1942) Gallimard

Vous ferez de ce poème un commentaire suivi ou composé. Si vous choisissez le commentaire composé, vous étudierez l'art du poète de créer, grâce à des réseaux d'images, une impression de charme, de délicatesse et d'harmonie.

Figure 3.1: Prompt for a French L1 *explication de texte* writing task in Senegal

The second actual example, Figure 3.2, shows the prompt for the *dissertation*

writing task. It is also taken from the same baccalaureate exam as the writing task above.

The prompt gives a quotation of a given view of poetry, and asks students to comment

and discuss it, making reference to works studied. We notice in passing that the prompt

offers no rhetorical instruction, which is typical of L1 school writing. This is because in

the specific context of writing instruction in Senegal, rhetorical instruction relating to the

task is assumed to be inherent in the title of the task. The word *dissertation* signals to the

83

Figure 3.2: Prompt for a French L1 *dissertation* task in Senegal

student writers the structural organization they will adopt. *Dissertation* is an argumentative writing exercise, but in French this exercise does not require a thesis statement or a body of at least 3 paragraphs. Its concluding paragraph is not a place for recapitulation of arguments developed, but rather the place to give the personal stance of the writer on the matter discussed. This structure is evidently different from that of the English school essay, and this difference may be a source of essay writing problems for students who are not aware of it.

These actual examples of L1 writing tasks in the Senegalese context of L1 instruction are likely to affect the freshman composition experiences of Senegalese students in American colleges because of their difference with the classic English language school essay.

3.4. EFL instruction

Although French is the language of instruction in Senegal, other foreign languages are taught in the Senegalese school system. English is offered at the beginning of middle school through to the end of senior high school. The motivations of the introduction of English as a foreign language in Senegalese schools are not easily

definable, English having arrived into schools in the footsteps of the French colonial

decision that established the French language as language of instruction. In the absence of

referenced sources in our knowledge, it may be assumed that these motivations are those

that presided over foreign language teaching in Europe in the past centuries. Foreign

languages were learnt because they allowed, through reading of foreign literature, access

to the mental discipline and intellectual development associated with writers and their

cultures (Richards and Rodgers, 1986:3). With the increase in contacts between European

countries after the industrial revolution, more pragmatic reasons for studying a foreign

language may have been added to these reasons. This range of reasons is supposedly

what determined the introduction of English as a foreign language to Senegal.

3.4.1. Rationale for EFL instruction

Whatever the original reasons, the teaching of EFL in Senegal today responds to

strategic, political, socio-economic, and national development needs of the country.

During the colonial period, access to the modern know-how that conditioned

emancipation was through the French language and France. After the WWII re-conquest

of France and some other French African colonies by English speaking armies, there was

a subtle sign -- perhaps undetected by many francophone Africans -- that the might of the

colonizer was waning. It would seem from this perspective that it was strategically

important for colonial lands like Senegal, in whose independence the uncomfortable

situation of France during WWII was a factor, to consolidate and develop any EFL

teaching inherited from colonization. It was the more so important that, politically,

independent Senegal was to live with an English speaking enclave, The Gambia, in its

midst. Even beyond the case of The Gambia, pre-independence Pan-Africanist militantism made it clear that living up to the ideals of African unity in the West African sub-region required taking into account demographically important English speaking countries such as Nigeria and Ghana. A third element of this perspective of the motivations for EFL in present-day Senegal may be derived from the very reasons that led to the maintenance of French as language of instruction. French was maintained, among other reasons, because it was a language of wider use that permitted access to the modern know-how the young country was so much in need of for the socio-economic development of its people. For this purpose, English turned out to be at least as attractive as French: it is of wider use throughout the world, and the openness of knowledge in one of its dominion, the US, is more attractive to the seeker of empowerment through knowledge. The rationale for the teaching of EFL in Senegal has then a strong base, which resulted in the steady growth of the subject in schooling in the years after independence.

3.4.2. EFL objectives

EFL holds an important place in the school curriculum, and attracts the majority of students taking foreign languages. Data provided by M.E.N (1996) indicates that 48.5% of teachers in the seven foreign languages offered in middle and secondary school teach EFL, while 68% of all foreign language students take EFL. The recently reformed EFL curriculum derives the goals of English language teaching from the general goal of schooling in Senegal, and states some of the general objectives of English language teaching as being to:

- give students a command of the language likely to be of use in their active

  life;

- enrich students' personality through linguistic access to other values;

- develop to the highest level possible students' speaking, comprehension, and

  writing skills;

- equip students with a command of the language allowing them to pass

  national and extra-national exams;

- gear the teaching of English to the individual needs of learners whenever it is

  possible (MEN, 1994:3).

These objectives are evidently respectable objectives in the context of the present status

of English in the world. It remains however to be seen whether the prevailing EFL

practices, specifically in writing instruction, live up to the objectives set out.

3.4.3. EFL writing practices

In middle school, the teaching of English as a foreign language aims at equipping

students with the basic language skills and, specifically in writing, the ability to produce

written sentences, paragraphs, letters, etc. (MEN, 1994:4). By the end of secondary

school, i.e. senior high school, EFL students should be able, in terms of writing, to

maintain a correspondence with English L1 speakers, and to write appropriately for

different purposes, and different audiences (MEN, 1994:5). However, the curriculum

offers no details, examples or models of written texts for these purposes and audiences.

The practices of writing as reflected in EFL classes and national exam papers

suggest an almost exclusive reliance on controlled writing, with reading comprehension

questions, skeleton dialogues, sentence completion or transformation, etc., as examples.

These classroom and exam writing tasks also include transfer of information, letter and

"essay" writing, but this latter term is perhaps used for lack of a better translation. In

"essay" writing, students are required to write between about 150 and 200 words on a

topic, and personal experience of these essay papers has shown that they are generally

extensions of spoken language into writing, with no concern for the classic school essay

structure, or its characteristic development of ideas. In teaching EFL writing, this

structure of the school essay is generally not made explicit to students.

Three examples of EFL writing tasks set for exams are provided in the following

pages. The first one, Figure 3.3. represents the EFL essay writing section of the end-of-

middle-school exam. Students take this exam after completing four years of English as a

foreign language in post-elementary school. The first writing prompt -- called here essay

interestingly -- is in fact instructing students to write a letter. This confirms the point

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III./ Essay :    (5 pts)  - Choose one of the following subjects (about 150 words) :
            1°/ A mother irritated by her children's scornful and uncharitable attitudes
                to the poor, writes to their uncle to invite him to come and advise them.
            2°/ Imagine the situation of poverty in a country which has faced several
                years of civil war or drought.
            3°/ Skeleton dialogue
                A Storekeeper turns out a customer who keeps asking for loans. Complete
         their conversation.
Storekeeper   - I'm very sorry Mrs Diallo, but this is the third time this week you
                ...............................................................................
Customer      - I haven't forgotten that I already owe you so much, but ...............
                ...............................................................................
Storekeeper   - As the saying goes ...............................................................
                ...............................................................................
Customer      - My husband's away and my children ...............................................
                ...............................................................................
Storekeeper   - You keep inventing pretexts ...............................................
                ................... Now I w.................................................
```

Figure 3.3: **EFL essay writing prompts for the end of middle school exam**

made earlier that perhaps what is referred to as essay in Senegalese EFL is not

necessarily what is represented by the classic school essay prevailing in American writing instruction.

The second prompt asks students to imagine the situation of poverty in a country that has faced drought, but it does not say clearly whether they should describe the situation or discuss it in some other ways. This vagueness in the prompt confirms our earlier point that EFL writing seemed to be dealt with mainly for purposes of linguistic accuracy. A student may however, out of a personal decision, decide to approach this writing prompt as expository writing, but the limit of about 150 words he is subjected to suggests that the discourse produced will be only on the order of the paragraph, not an essay, and thus will be missing opportunities for realistic enactment of important discourse characteristics such as transition or other means of coherence.

The third prompt illustrates the survival of controlled writing in the Senegalese EFL scene; the exercise submitted to students is tightly controlled and requires only completion and linguistic accuracy. It is a dialogue in which turns are missing, and the job of the student writer is to use the context suggested by the previous line to produce a turn. Again here, what seems to be highlighted is linguistic accuracy in a view of writing as extension of speech.

Figure 3.4. shows a writing activity that has come to be a favorite in EFL classes according to personal observation. It tests reformulation and transformation of a sentence; it then embodies an approach to writing below the discourse level; yet, it seems to be practical for checking the mastery of specific linguistic structures, and for that matter will be said to highlight linguistic accuracy, like many other EFL writing activities prevailing in Senegal.

89

C. Rewrite these sentences without changing their meanings. (03 pts)

a. I had been subjected to a lot of beating and torture.
They _____

b. « When did your wife arrive in Senegal ? « his neighbour asked.
His neighbour wanted to know _____

c. We didn't go to the theatre ; we went to the cinema.
Instead of _____

d. What a pity they couldn't come.
I wish _____

e. Kader can sing very well. So can Aïcha.
Both _____

f. Waly hasn't got a job yet. Aziz hasn't got one.
Neither _____

Figure 3.4: Example a commonly used EFL writing activity

Figure 3.5. shows EFL writing prompts for the baccalaureate exam. This exam

marks the end of pre-university education, and it guarantees acceptance into universities

in Senegal in principle. The two prompts are in fact related to the reading comprehension

passage of the baccalaureate EFL paper. The passage is about an eye physician,

Venkataswamy, who is crusading for affordable eye surgery to be available to those who

need it. The first prompt asks for reproduction of information contained in the reading

III - WRITING   (04 points)   (between 100 and 150 words)

Choose one of the following topics

1) - In what way is Venkataswamy an exceptional person ?

2) - Why do you think people in developing countries suffer most from diseases ? what are your solutions to the problem ?

Figure 3.5: EFL writing prompt for the baccalaureate exam

passage, and could thus qualify as a reading comprehension question. The second prompt

is an opinion question, but we have the same limit in length of the writing, with its possible consequences on hindering display of discourse mastery, although this exam is supposed to be testing students at a terminal stage of EFL instruction in four years of middle and three of secondary schools.

These examples of EFL writing activities in the Senegalese context illustrate the potential different schemata Senegalese students may approach writing with in US colleges. It is perhaps necessary to preface this description of EFL writing in Senegal by saying that these practices are not necessarily a reflection of the level of competence of teachers in EFL writing instructions. Because the Senegalese system of education is a nationally centralized one, many things pertaining to classroom activities and exam formats are determined beforehand and do not always leave the room for maneuver needed by the dynamic and change oriented segment of teachers. To reform or change these formats requires long and complicated processes which may involve all the subjects tested in the national exam.

3.4.4. EFL approaches and their influence on writing practices

Some of the prevailing EFL writing practices in Senegal are perhaps best understood, not from the prescriptions of the latest curriculum, but from the cumulative effect of the present and past teaching methods, and the different generations of textbooks concurrently in use. After independence in the early 1960s, the methodological approach to EFL moved from a combination of grammar-translation and reading methods to an adaptation of the audio-lingual approach. In writing, the grammar-translation and reading methods era relied considerably on two types of translation, *version*, translation into

French, and *thème*, translation into English. While both activities tested more comprehension than writing, the latter, *thème*, also doubled as a test of English grammar, usage, and idiomatic form. This approach to writing was not totally unheard of in advanced classes in the mid 1990s.

Strictly speaking, the audio-lingual approach in Senegal was only used in middle school, although textbooks informed by the method were in use in secondary school levels well into the 1990s. In middle school, the audio-lingual method based writing on dialogue construction and the production of short passages of the paragraph order. These written texts could be those produced orally by students during the production phase of the famous PPP (presentation, practice, production) triptych.

The present EFL curriculum is inspired by communicative methodology. This approach normally allows a wider range of writing in the EFL classroom. However, it is a fact that the emphasis of the communicative approach on communication has been taken in many quarters of the EFL/ESL profession as meaning pragmatic day-to-day communication, and this has resulted in emphasizing writing activities extending spoken language. Moreover, the difficulty to devise realistic and meaningful written communication tasks has often resulted in the curtailment of the communicative approach's potential to introduce a wider range of writing in Senegalese EFL classes. Years after the implementation of communicative language-teaching inspired curriculum in Senegal, writing practices still have not significantly changed, and continue to reflect mainly a controlled approach to writing. EFL writing in Senegal is still predominantly metalingual (Vahapassi, 1988) despite laudable curricular provisions.

3.5. Issues and implications of the Senegalese context of L1 schooling

Literacy development in first language can facilitate or complicate the learning of L2 literacy skills (Carson, 1992). The above-presented characteristics of the L1 context of schooling of Senegalese students in US colleges suggest that this will then have the potential of assisting or impeding the English L2 literacy development they undergo in these colleges. This potential arises from the possible specific discourse features of L1 French, the writing genre traditionally highlighted by Senegalese schools, the prevailing attitudes to knowledge and learning, and other characteristics.

Kaplan (1966) argued that ESL students may encounter English language essay writing difficulties stemming, not only from their lack of mastery of the linguistic code, but also from the different discoursal and rhetorical characteristics of their L1. In Senegal, the L1 of instruction is French. There are no studies comparing discourse features of the essay or equivalent forms of essay in French and English. However, Clyne (1987) has suggested that German, along with French, does not look down on digression. In contrast to French, digression is not acceptable in school essay writing in English (Kaplan, 1966). Despite the absence of French- English contrastive studies of essays, it is likely that other discourse organization differences exist between the two languages in essay writing. This study seeks to identify those differences, if any.

The Senegalese context of L1 literacy development is characterized by traditional writing activities common to other educational systems across countries. Dialogues, letters, narratives, descriptions, reading accounts, instructions, reports, summaries, are among these activities. However, the most regular writing activities are *dissertation* and

explication de texte, whose characteristics have been described above. *Dissertation* and *explication de texte* do not seem to exist in Anglophone school writing, at least in the form in which they are taught and practiced in the L1 context of Senegal. Although dissertation may be considered argumentative writing, the mandated structure of the task sets it clearly apart from the argumentative essay one might want to liken it to. Judged by the expected features of thesis and controlling statements, focus and unity principle, number of body paragraphs and structure of the concluding paragraph, the *dissertation* is not the equivalent to the English language argumentative essay. The *explication de texte* is a kind of literary essay that is different from expository writing in that it emphasizes analysis of stylistic and aesthetic text features and explanation of the literary authors' motivations and intentions. ESL students whose L1 school writing has been molded by these tasks are likely to transfer them to expository essay writing, and thus risk experiencing difficulties in the composition class.

Another aspect of the school writing practices of Senegalese students that may be of interest for their ESL literacy development is that the main writing genre in freshman composition, the school essay, does not exist on the Senegalese school writing scene. Different specialists have suggested that the use of the essay as writing instruction exercise is almost universal (Van Peer, 1989; Saari and Purves, 1992); this claim must perhaps be interpreted as meaning by essay in a school activity that elicits writing from a student without the purpose of testing specific content. The school essay as it is conceived in the US context of school writing is unknown in Senegalese school writing. This US essay requires a thesis statement, at least 5 paragraphs, focus and unity in the body paragraphs, coherence, and a concluding paragraph that recapitulates main points,

94

while these requirement do not necessarily hold for the school exercises that elicit writing in French without testing specific content. Confronted with the English language form of essay writing in composition classes, students from the Senegalese schooling system may respond to the prompt without necessarily writing an essay in the true sense.

One more writing practice issue that may stem from the Senegalese treatment of school writing has to do with the concept of expository writing which is so important in English language essay writing. Expository writing has been defined as writing that explains (Irmscher, 1979). This description however does not get at the bottom of what may be considered as the true nature of exposition. Explanations may be different in how greatly they tax cognitive resources. To explain for instance how Senegal came to have French as L1 of instruction is not as constraining on cognition as explaining for instance why investigating the essay writing problems of Senegalese students is worthy as a dissertation topic. In the first instance one is using data that is overtly there. It is possible that this explanation will in fact be mostly repetition or reformulation of utterances already made. In the second instance, one may incidentally repeat or reformulate, but the most valued is to come up with a reason which is a novelty, or at least was never so apparent to the common people.

Attitudes about knowledge and learning may affect foreign students' adherence to instructor expectations in English native speaker educational institutions (Ballard and Clanchy, 1991). Clyne (1987) has argued that one attitude the French language and culture show towards knowledge is that they emphasize theory analysis as opposed to data analysis. French, as the language of instruction in Senegal, may somehow instill these attitudes among students. I am not aware of any studies on the characteristic

attitudes to knowledge of Senegalese native languages, but it may be assumed that whatever attitudes they support, the effect of these may be underlying those of L1 French. Wolof, the most widespread Senegalese native language, is predominantly oral, although it has been transcribed and is used for adult functional literacy. It may be said to have a reproductive attitude to knowledge. In the traditional contexts, knowledge is always passed on by someone else, e.g. the teacher, the spiritual mentor, the elder, etc. Even knowledge acquired individually through insight is interpreted as having been insufflated by some mystical channel. If this underlying traditional attitude is not eradicated by the acquisition of French, it may ooze up at times in the ESL literacy development stage and constitute a source of problems. But even if it were eradicated by the L1, this latter, because it is predominantly analytical while English is reputed to be speculative (Ballard and Clanchy, 1991), would still present a potential source of problems for Senegalese students in ESL classes.

Other additional cultural factors may affect the ESL literacy development experience of Senegalese students in US colleges. Culture and language specific attitudes to communication are easily transferred to communication in another language (Scollon and Scollon, 1981). In discussing the cultural attitudes of Senegalese native languages, we are very much limited by the absence of studies. However, observation of discourse and interactional events suggest that in Wolof, the onus is on the listener to understand what is addressed to him/her. Formal, high register discourse in Wolof has a term, *deggiin*, which may be translated by "understanding", "ability to understand" or "attitude that fosters understanding". This *deggiin* is expected in any decent mature actor of communal life. Adolescent or informal discourse also has another close term, *jelli nga*,

96

which acts as a conversational monitoring term. But the literal meaning of the term suggests the idea of "interception", "making the effort to move from where you are so that to capture". This term is used in conversations to make sure that the interlocutor has "intercepted" or understood what is meant. These two elements substantiate my belief that Wolof shows signs of a communicative attitude bordering on listener responsibility (Hinds, 1987).

In addition to the possible influence of communicative attitude to ESL literacy development, it may be interesting to consider the goal of schooling and education in Senegal, and to wonder whether it will affect attitude to writing in general. This goal has been expressed as being to enable future citizens to access knowledge and the tools of modernity, and to apply them to the task of nation building. Knowledge in education is essentially accessed through reading, and it is sometimes possible to enjoy this access with just speech, at the exclusion of any literate support language. I want to suggest that although the schools may not be at all responsible for this, the emphasis on access to knowledge, combined with the relative invisibility of writing in a semi-literate broader society, may send the signal that reading is more valuable than writing in school. Any such signal will certainly have an effect on the development of L1 and L2 overall literacy skills.

The Senegalese context of schooling and L1 literacy development is thus characterized by aspects that may well have an impact on the expository essay writing experience students will have in freshman composition classes. This study will be paying attention to how this possible impact contributes to the writing problems they may encounter. Products of this context of schooling and L1 literacy development are then

97

likely to see their transition to writing in US colleges affected by the understandable tendency to continue the transposition noted in the case of "essay writing" in EFL classrooms and exams.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to examine the expository essay writing problems

Senegalese students in US colleges may experience in freshman composition classes.

These students have an L1 of instruction, French, which is different from English. In the

past, Senegalese students who had the means to study abroad tended to go to French-

speaking countries such as France, Belgium, Switzerland, or to Quebec, Canada. With the

increasing role of the US as world leader, and also because of the recognition of English

as de facto world language, and the reputation of and opportunities offered by American

higher education, many among these students are now looking to America for academic

training. However, their different linguistic, cultural, and schooling backgrounds mark

them for potential composition problems (Kaplan, 1966; 1987). This section presents the

method used for this study. It will do so by first introducing the general methodological

approach of the project, and then proceeding to discuss the areas of organization

problems anticipated, the sample and sampling technique, the materials used, and the

procedures adopted.

4.1. Overview of the research approach and methods

ESL and EFL professionals have examined foreign language students' writing

problems using different research approaches. In the past, such studies tended to be

quantitative in their approach (Johnson, 1992). However, the quantitative approach

presents problems in that it generally requires focusing on a limited number of issues, leaving out wider background factors that may be very important for the research (Johnson, 1992:33). More recently, this tendency toward the quantitative approach has shifted toward a more common use of a qualitative research approach in investigating L2 writing problems. This research project places itself in this later tendency, and will be essentially qualitative, although some quantification of data derived from survey will not be absent from its midst. It seeks to identify the expository essay writing problems which products of the Senegalese system of education may encounter in composition classes in American colleges. The study will specifically consider the differences in discourse organization of the school essay in French and English by pursuing the following research questions:

1. How do students' writings in English adhere to the typical organizational structure of the English expository school essay?

2. Does the use of paragraphs in these students' writings conform to the paragraph conception of expository essay writing in English?

3. What is the degree of linearity or digressiveness revealed by students' writings?

4. What are the implications of these questions and their answers for the teaching of EFL/ESL writing to Senegalese students?

This research is case study research. In its investigation of Senegalese students' expository essay writing problems in US colleges, it starts with a wider pool of subjects before focusing on five subjects, and examining the problems evidenced by their writing through a case study method. Case studies have been used in EFL/ESL by different

100

researchers (Perl, 1978; Raimes, 1985; Zamel, 1983; Leki and Carson, 1997; etc.). It is a method particularly suited to situations where the phenomenon under investigation is not clearly distinguishable from its wider context (Yin, 1993:3). In the case of this study, it is assumed that the writing difficulties encountered by Senegalese students in American colleges find some of their root in their L1 context of schooling.

Informed by contrastive rhetoric, this study holds that the writing problems likely to be experienced by Senegalese students in American colleges are not so much because of the English language code as because of the way the L1 context of schooling, along with its practices, and wider culture, have contributed to shape them as literate individuals with specific schemas on writing. It is thus fitting that the research project adopted the case study method, using multiple cases. Multiple case studies do in fact replicate each other (Yin, 1993), and this will mitigate the weakness of the method stemming from problems of lack of generalizability. This case study research is descriptive; yet, it will not ignore causal explanations of observed phenomena.

The study used different data gathering instruments. A questionnaire was used to survey subjects about their educational background, school writing experience, and relevant perceptions. Writing samples in English were also collected from the subjects, and whenever follow up on information yielded by the questionnaire or writing sample was required, interviews were used. The researcher also met with some of the subjects' instructors in US colleges to gather third party professional impressions of the subjects' writing ability.

4.2. Sample and sampling technique

The sample for this study is a convenient sample drawn from a pool of 30 Senegalese students present at different colleges in or around a Southwestern metropolitan area between the spring semesters of 2000 and 2001. The students were contacted and a meeting arranged for a presentation of the research project during the 2000 spring semester. The general response of the students was enthusiastic and encouraging; practically all of them felt a problem with English in their different institutions, and appreciated that these problems were to be looked at.

These students were predominantly undergraduates, although there were in the pool of subjects a few graduates; age distribution ranged from 19 to 42, with more than half of the subjects being between 21 and 25 years old. Generally, they had already started higher education at home or in other French speaking countries. Some had even completed a university degree at home, and had held jobs. The group was mixed in gender, but male in majority. Majors ranged from computer science to business, engineering, communication, design, finance, and nutrition, with a wide majority majoring in computing or a combination of computing and another area.

Despite the subjects' enthusiasm and encouragement over the study, getting them to complete the survey questionnaire was not easy. Most turned out to have hectic schedules divided almost exclusively between work, study, and sleep. It was not easy for the researcher under these circumstances to collect all the responses in a reasonable time frame. Given the time constraints mentioned above, only a few subjects were able to complete the questionnaire when it was submitted to them during the researcher's many

visits. Most subjects were given the questionnaire to complete at a convenient time. Obviously, many of these had problems doing this. In cases, even if the questionnaire had been completed, a sure appointment to collect it was not readily obtainable. With patience and persistence however, the researcher managed to collect a total of 30 completed questionnaires out of the total of 56 handed out in the Spring and Fall semesters 2000.

After examination of these 30 survey questionnaires, 8 were thrown out for incomplete or inconsistent responses. Along with the remaining 22 questionnaires, 9 class-writing samples were collected from seven subjects. The researcher decided then to set a specific out-of-class writing task to the subjects to increase the number of writing samples; 7 more writing samples were collected this way. These 16 samples were examined for discoursal and rhetorical expository essay writing problems, and 5 samples selected for the case studies.

4.3. Materials

The material used in this study consists of primary data elicited from subjects through survey questionnaire, follow-up interviews, and a researcher-set writing task, and secondary data in the form of writing subjects completed for regular class work.

4.3.1. Subjects

The subjects of this study are Senegalese students attending US institutions of higher education in the Southwest. The researcher met with about a dozen of them in the Spring semester of 2000 to present the project. The group showed great interest for the

project and spontaneously offered cooperation. After an explanation of what was to be involved in the research, they were given consent forms and questionnaires to complete. Some of the students present at this first meeting provided contact information for other students who were later contacted by the researcher through telephone or email, and their cooperation obtained.

These subjects have at least completed their pre-university education in the home country before joining US colleges. They attend four different institutions (three four-year institutions and a two-year institution). Four of the five cases focused come from one of the four-year colleges, and the fifth case come from a different four-year college, although he exempted from composition classes. The rest of the subjects did take English composition classes in their institution. This study starts with a pool of 22 subjects (Table 4.1) who were surveyed in either Spring or Fall semesters 2000. The Spring data collection drive gathered data from 16 subjects out of the 24 students contacted. Those of these 16 students who were retained in the final pool of 22 subjects for the study occupy the first 13 slots on Table 4.1. Although this represented a rate of return of 66 %, the total number of questionnaires returned, at 16, was feared to offer too thin a margin against the likelihood of questionnaire rejection. The decision was then taken to continue the drive in the Fall semester, given that some of the original 24 subjects had left for summer or transferred to other far-away colleges. This time the drive targeted newly-arrived students because they were likely to show more crudely the writing problems stemming from the context of L1 schooling. Those of these new students retained in the final pool of subjects occupy slots 14 through 22 in Table 4.1. A researcher-set writing sample was also incorporated into this second phase, which covered 14 more subjects and yielded seven

researcher-set writing samples.

The subjects are referred to in this thesis with fictitious Senegalese names to ensure anonymity. All of them underwent pre-university instruction in Senegal where they were introduced to English. The pool of subjects is mixed in gender, but is predominantly male; age ranges from 19 to 42. A striking characteristic of the subjects is in relation to their multilingualism. All report speaking at least three languages. French, as L1 of instruction, is among these languages. Wolof, which I indicated was more widely used in Senegal than French, is also very common among these bilinguals. English, the number one foreign language in secondary school and language of instruction in the subjects' US institutions is also understandably among the three languages.

There are then grounds for believing that the languages acquired before English will impact, in one way or the other, the development of ESL skills, especially when these are literate languages. The major fields of studies of the subjects vary, but many are engaged in computing or computing with some other combination, and their length of stay in the US spans from 2 months to 4 years.

4.3.2. Survey questionnaire

A questionnaire in English was used to survey subjects. They were asked to answer in French or English, but all used English. The questionnaire (see Appendix, 1 pp.212-215) consists of 3 parts focusing on demographic and general information for the first, the context of EFL instruction for the second, and the subjects' experience of writing in US colleges for the third. The first part comprises 13 open-ended and tick-the-

appropriate-response questions. Questions here elicited demographic details such as gender, age, contact address in case follow up questions were needed, length of presence in the US, major, classification, etc.

The second part of the survey questionnaire also numbers 13 questions requiring ticking an answer or providing an alternative response, if listed responses did not correspond to the subject's situation. Questions here typically sought to elicit information about the age at which subjects started EFL, the English language areas emphasized by teachers and/or tested in class or during national examinations, the writing genres practiced in class, instructors' approach to teaching and/or setting writing assignment, writing errors highlighted by teachers' comments, etc.

The third and last part of the questionnaire contains 14 questions geared to the writing genres students were most comfortable with, the extent to which English composition classes in the US were a problem for them, the kind of ESL classes taken in the US, the aspects of writing emphasized in these classes, whether this emphasis was new or not new with regard to writing instruction in L1 and EFL, etc.

The questions in the survey were devised in this way with the aim of confirming, or refuting in the respondents' opinion, the original research assumptions (1) that most subjects would experience some problems in ESL composition classes; (2) that the L1/EFL writing experience presents some contrast to the ESL writing experience; (3) that these differences may offer an explanation to the writing difficulties experienced by the subjects in ESL composition classes.

Subjects	Gender/Age		Languages	Major/Program	Classification	Time in US	TOEFL
1. Khalifa	M	21	Wolof, French, English	Engineering	Junior	2 ½ years	540
2. Baba	M	28	Wolof, French, Pular, Spanish, English	Computing & Bus.	Freshman	9 months	500
3. Modou	M	28	Wolof, French, Pular, English	Computing & Math	Freshman	8 months	500
4. Gorgui	M	25	Wolof, French, English	Mnagement	Senior	3 ½ years	560
5. Coly	M	21	Pular, French, Wolof, Creole, Mandinka, English	Management	Freshman	1 year	500
6. Fallou	M	21	Wolof, French, Spanish, English	MIS	Freshman	1 year	500+
7. Naby	M	22	Wolof, French, Spanish, English	MIS	Sophomore	2 years	510
8. Ndumbé	F	19	Wolof, French, German, English	MIS	Freshman	5 months	547
9. Fanta	F	22	Bambara, French, Wolof, English	Interior Design	Freshman	8 months	500+
10. Moise	M	26	Wolof, French, English	Engineering	Freshman	1 year	500
11. Yandé	F	23	Wolof, French, Diola, Spanish, English	Computing	Graduate	8 months	540
12. Tijaan	M	26	Wolof, French, Spanish, English	Computing	Sophomore	2 years	530
13. Khalil	M	25	Bambara, French, Wolof, Spanish, English	MIS	Sophomore	2 years	517
14. Bourré	M	24	Diola, French, Wolof, Spanish, English	Computing & Finance	Freshman	2 months	500+
15. Mor	M	24	Wolof, French, Spanish, English	Business Ad /Finance	Freshman	2 months	507
16. Diaw	M	21	Wolof, French, English	Finance	Freshman	4 months	510
17. Moké	M	23	Wolof, French, Spanish, English	Computing	Freshman	8 months	500
18. Aly	M	42	Mandinka, French, Wolof, English	Nutrition	Graduate	2 years	610
19. Codou	F	24	Wolof, French, English	MIS	Senior	4 years	500+
20. Ermon	M	24	Creole, French, Wolof, English	Communication	Freshman	2 months	503
21. Lamine	M	22	Wolof, French, English	MIS	Freshman	6 months	510
22. Babou	M	27	Pular, French, Wolof, English	Computing & Business	Freshman	9 months	521

Table 4.1: Background information of students constituting the pool of subject

107

4.3.3. Interviews and writing samples

The design for this research project incorporated interviews, and the collection of writing samples as additional data compilation methods. Interviews were generally used to elaborate further on responses provided in the questionnaire, pursue new questions inspired by responses, or highlight issues not emphasized in the questionnaire. Some of these new questions have been organized into a summary interview guide and appear in Figure 6. In cases, these questions also resulted in other follow up questions. Not all the original 22 subjects of the study were interviewed using this guide. The adverse effect of the subjects' schedule constraints mentioned earlier was very much felt during these interviews; some were made face-to-face, but many were conducted over the phone. The interview method was also used in many instances to elicit answers that were inadvertently not provided on the questionnaire.

Interviews were also used informally to gain insight into instructors' evaluation of Senegalese students' writings in English composition. The two instructors interviewed taught in the composition program of the college attended by the majority of the subjects covered in this study; eighteen out of the total 22 subjects covered, and four out of the five cases focused on attended this college. One of the two instructors dealt with composition in general, while the other regularly taught ESL composition. The ESL composition section in this college emphasized grammar, vocabulary development, reading, listening and paragraph development in the first semester, and essay, research paper, and documentation in the second semester of freshman composition.

The data yielded by the interviews was transcribed on the corresponding

individual sheets containing responses to the survey questionnaire so as to provide an

overall view of a subject's perception of the issues raised.

Summary Interview Guide
What are some of the things you pay attention to when writing/composing a text? Do you pay attention to these things equally when you write/compose in French and English?
What do you think makes a good piece of writing/composition?
How important do you think writing/composition was in schooling in Senegal?
In your school days in Senegal, was writing/composition in French L1 a problem for you?
How important do you think writing is in ordinary day-to-day (out-of-school/office) life in Senegal?
What do you think is the most important type/genre of writing in schooling in Senegal?
Can you remember some writing prompts you have had for class work or national exams in L1 French or EFL in Senegal?

Figure 4.1: Some questions used in follow up interviews

Two categories of writing samples were collected for this study. The first

category, the class writing samples, consisted of writing completed for English

composition class work at the US institution the subjects were attending. They varied in

topic and date of completion. In cases, subjects were attending different schools, writing

classes or sections of the same class. Factors in favor of this type of data are that it was

likely to be the less problematic to have, since it was already completed, and it did not

place a considerable extra scheduling burden on subjects, who only needed to sort it out

from their papers. Moreover, such writing is typical of what students write most of the

time, and it is likely to engage the students more intensely and more intellectually than

the writing they would complete for non-class purposes (Freedman and Pringle, 1980).

Nine different samples were collected under this category from seven subjects (see Table

4.2), and were about different topics such as describing social prejudices, comparing

situations, hypothesizing course of action, explaining/analyzing relationships, etc. In the

institution attended by the majority of subjects, there are two different levels of freshman

Subjects	Questionnaire	Interview	Level 1	Level 2	Writing samples and topic of sample
2. Baba	✔	✔	✔		- Career goals
					- Aspects of Senegalese culture
3. Modou	✔	✔	✔		- Discrimination in Senegal
11. Yandé	✔	✔	✔		- Example of prejudice in Senegal
					- Advantages of being male or female
12. Tijaan	✔			✔	- Strengths and weaknesses of high school experience
13. Khalil	✔			✔	- Child abuse
19. Codou	✔		✔		- Power of changing
20. Ermon	✔	✔	✔		- Secondary school

Table 4.2: Class writing samples and subjects who contributed them

English classes for international students. The first level emphasized on grammar, vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading, paragraph development, and essay writing, while the second level focused on the essay, longer research papers, documentation, etc.

The second category of writing samples consists of non-class writing elicited with a prompt set by the researcher, and which subjects had to complete over a period of a week. The prompt (see Figure 4.2) instructed writers to argue in support or against a proposal to limit to two the number of children a couple may have, this in order to impact global population growth. The prompt was in English. Though this sample type is not likely to ensure the intense intellectual engagement of class assignment, it was decided upon for different reasons. Despite the above-mentioned assumption that completed writings would be easy to collect, they were not with all subjects. Some subjects had

> An international non-governmental organization has proposed to world countries a policy that each family should have no more than two children in order to ease global overpopulation. National governments are split on whether to adopt or reject this policy. If you were to give your opinion concerning this policy, what position would you advocate? Support your position with at least three points of argument that raise family, social, economic, or political issues.

Figure 4.2: Prompt for the researcher-set writing task.

already gotten rid of them or could not find them. Moreover, these class assignments

were often varied in topics, and this variance could be a variable in how the writer engages the task of writing, given the interest of the topic. Seven writing samples were collected in this second category (see Table 4.3). Both categories of samples are believed to be representative of writing ability (Zamel, 1983; Freedman and Pringle, 1980).

The prompt for this category was selected with the goal of eliciting expository writing in mind. The literature review for this study has suggested that the different types of writing are not uniform in terms of the different demands they impose on the writer.

Subjects	Writing samples and topic of sample
1. Khalifa	Population policy
2. Baba	"
10. Moise	"
15. Mor	"
18. Aly	"
20. Ermon	"
22. Babou	"

Table 4.3: Subjects who responded to the researcher-set prompt

Some of these different types of writing have been labeled as mechanical or reproductive (Vahapassi, 1988), composing (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996), creation or recreation (Vahapassi, 1988). Although there is non-agreement on the nature of expository writing, it has been argued in the literature review that there are strong reasons in favor of viewing expository writing as writing involving composing, creation, or recreation at the exclusion of mechanical or reproductive writing. It has also been argued that the difficulties ESL students encounter in English composition classes will likely be in relation to true expository writing, since it involves language use that is markedly different from spoken language. It was then important under these circumstances that

111

expository writing samples from Senegalese students should be among those examined in relation to the identification of the writing problems they may face in English essays.

The different data yielded by the research instruments are presented in Table 4.4. They were synthesized and then examined, categorized or tabulated for analysis. The patterns and tendencies that emerged from this analysis are presented in chapter five.

Subjects	Questionnaire	Interview	Writing samples and topic of sample
1. Khalifa #	✔	✔	1- Population policy *
	✔	✔	1- Aspects of Senegalese culture
2. Baba #			2- Career goals
			3- Population policy *
3. Modou	✔	✔	1- Discrimination in Senegal
4. Gorgui	✔		
5. Coly	✔	✔	
6. Fallou	✔		
7. Naby	✔		
8. Ndumbé	✔	✔	
9. Fanta	✔		
10. Moise	✔	✔	1- Population policy *
11. Yandé #		✔	1- Example of prejudice in Senegal
	✔		2- Advantages of being male or female
12. Tijaan	✔		1- Strengths and weaknesses of high school experience
13. Khalil	✔		1- Child abuse
14. Bourré	✔		
15. Mor	✔	✔	1- Population policy *
16. Diaw	✔		
17. Moké	✔		
18. Aly #	✔	✔	1- Population policy *
19. Codou	✔		1- Power of changing
20. Ermon #		✔	1- Secondary school
	✔		2- Population policy *
21. Lamine	✔		
22. Babou	✔	✔	1- Population policy *

Table 4.4: **Synoptic table of data collected**

(*) indicates researcher-elicited sample and (#) the cases

4.4. Procedures

Different procedures have marked the different stages of this study. They relate to contact with subjects, the approach to the data collection proper, and the treatment of the

data collected for analysis.

4.4.1. Case selection

After the decision was made to approach this research project as a set of case studies, the question of data selection to inform these cases had to be given further consideration. At the outset, the idea of collecting writing samples students completed for their writing classes seemed the simplest thing to do. However, when I started the process of data collection, it became apparent that the procedure would not be as simple as assumed.

First, some of the subjects did not always keep copies of past assignments, either in paper or electronic form. Some remembered they had these copies somewhere in their school things, but could not locate them or devote the time necessary to locate them because of busy schedules. Second, in the cases where copies of completed assignments were actually collected from the subjects, the writing did not always correspond to this research design's preferred view of expository essay writing propounded in Chapter II / 2.3.4. Some papers talked about the native country, high school experience, or future goals of the writer, and did not evidence what could be acceptable expository writing.

To pursue the study's stated goal of looking at Senegalese students' writing problems in the expository essay, part of the data collection had to be adjusted. I consequently selected a specific writing task designed to yield writing that could be positively considered expository. Once both sets of class and researcher-set writing samples were collected, they were examined closely to determine which ones contained expository writing in the sense of Chapter II/2.3.4. This job was not so easy. I discovered

for instance, that a writing prompt devised to elicit expository writing did not necessarily do so, and that perhaps the most important factors are the writer and the type of referential information dealt with in the writing. However, 14 expository samples produced by 9 subjects were thus identified out of the total 16 writing samples, and further examined for the organizational problems discussed in section 4.4.3. of this chapter.

To select the ultimate five subjects on whose writings the study was going to focus, the instances of organizational problems in each writing sample were coded and counted. Nearly all the collected samples evidenced these problems. The authors of the papers with the highest number of problems were selected for the case studies of this research. Nine writing samples were thus identified (see Table 4.5); four were elicited by the researcher-set writing task, and five were completed for class work. Two of these five class-writing samples present the characteristic of being their authors' first essay assignment for a freshman English class. The total size of the corpus examined for the five cases is 4,945 words, with the shortest and longest papers showing respectively 284 and 783 words.

The themes of these samples are varied. The researcher-set writing task's prompt asked students to argue for or against the adoption of a policy limiting the number of children in a family to fight against global population growth, while the topics of the remaining samples ranged from aspects of one's native country, high school experience, career goals, and advantages of being male or female.

Subjects	Questionnaire	Interview	Writing samples and topic of sample
1. Khalifa	✔	✔	1- Population policy *
			1- Aspects of Senegalese culture
2. Baba	✔	✔	2- Career goals
			3- Population policy *
11. Yandé		✔	1- Example of prejudice in Senegal
	✔		2- Advantages of being male or female
18. Aly	✔	✔	1- Population policy *
20. Ermon	✔	✔	1- Secondary school
			2- Population policy *

Table 4.5: **The five cases and data elicited from them**

4.4.2. Data treatment and analysis

The five writing samples selected from the writings of the subjects constitute the focus of the present case study research. The writings were examined to determine whether the organizational structure they reflect adheres to the organization structure of the English language expository essay as it is conceived in writing manuals and composition classes. This examination focused on organizational features of text, specifically on the overall structure of the expository essay, along with its sub-components of introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion, as well as some attendant discourse features which have an impact on text organization. These elements which constitute some of the writing problems anticipated in this study are described in more details below.

4.4.2.1. Overall essay structure

As it appears from the literature review, the ideal English school essay has a specific structure characterized by introduction, body, and conclusion, with the body

consisting generally of three or more paragraphs (Clouse, 1997; Roberts and Turgeon, 1998; OSU English Department, 1999-2000). It is this structure that is referred to as overall essay structure. These different constitutive elements each play a function in achieving the overall purpose of the piece of writing. The introduction brings in the topic and indicates the specific point the writer wants to make through the thesis statement. This paragraph is also the place for the "essay map" (Reid, 2000: 300) or controlling statement.

The school essay in American English accords great importance to the thesis statement. It is an advanced organizer that is fundamental in easing the readers' tuning up into the substance of the writing. The different body paragraphs develop the points and ideas raised in support of the thesis statement. Each body paragraph is characterized by a topic sentence stating the main idea of the paragraph, followed by supporting details in the form of explanation, exemplification, or other illustration of the main idea, before closing the paragraph. The conclusion of an essay typically recapitulates the thesis statement and the main points argued, and may add to this a personal insight gained through the discussion of the topic.

However, as I suggested in the discussion of writing in the Senegalese school context, the structure of some of the most common L1 French writing tasks -- *rédaction*, *dissertation*, and *explication de texte* -- is different from that of the English school essay. Although *rédaction* and *dissertation* are structured around a triptych of introduction, body, conclusion, the *rédaction* body may consist of only one paragraph block, while the *dissertation* generally shows a two-part body. *Explication de texte* may have a different structure, since the latter is generally dependent on the specific instructions of the task, or

the stylistic or thematic richness of the text supporting the task. It may then be hypothesized that, if Senegalese students evidence text organizational problems in essay writing, these will be in relation to overall text structure. The study will seek to determine these overall structural problems by looking at the writing samples of Senegalese students and checking for how they reflect or depart from the English school essay overall structure.

4.4.2.2. Basic paragraph structure

The paragraph is the mainstay of exposition in English language school writing. However, the concept of paragraph is viewed differently across languages or even writing genres in the same language (Le, 1999; Enkvist, 1987). In school essay writing, the paragraph is defined as a discourse unit developing one single idea (Kaplan, 1966; Enkvist, 1987). This idea is often developed through a deductive sequence of claim or statement of the idea, details in support of the idea, and closure to the discourse unit.

There is however much more to making a good paragraph than just meeting the terms of the above definition. To allow effective exposition of views, a paragraph requires other characteristics. It first needs to show unity by focusing on one single idea. This single idea is stated in the topic sentence; all the other components of the paragraph should be related to this main idea so as to minimize distracting the readers' processing focus and comprehension of the information conveyed. Comprehension by the reader, the ultimate aim of writing, brings in a second underlying characteristic of the paragraph; any data presented in the paragraph needs to have a logic that is recognizable by the reader. In the culture of the English language, the most commonly recognized logic is a deductive

one, although inductive logic is not totally foreign (Kaplan, 1966).

Coherence is another characteristic required in a paragraph. Coherent discourse is marked by a smooth flow of sentences. Each idea conveyed by a sentence follows from old or given information (Prince, 1981; Chafe, 1994). This coherence requirement also contributes to ease of text processing and comprehension. According to Enkvist, it appeals "to a receptor's ability to build a coherent universe of discourse around a text" (1987: 25), and thus minimizes the risk of contradictory interpretation. By achieving coherence in a text, the writer ensures another characteristic of the paragraph, linearity, and avoids by the same token the great writing sin of digressiveness. Lastly, ideas and points raised should be thoroughly developed so as to convey accurately what the writer means, and to thus avoid a conveyance of meaning based on cues, which by definition involve multiple interpretations.

It is not evident that the English language school essay definition of paragraph prevails in other languages such as French, the L1 language of the subjects of this study. Even if it were to prevail, awareness of this conception of the paragraph in L1 school writing could be curtailed by the non-centrality of writing manuals in writing instruction in Senegal, which was mentioned in Chapter III. Moreover, other underlying characteristics of the English expository paragraph such as the principle of paragraph unity, the requirement for logic, and the apparent preference of deductive logic over inductive logic, are not necessarily indigenous to French, or to the context of the subjects' L1 development.

Logic is arguably culture or sub-culture specific. French being only L1 of instruction, not a native language, as has already been pointed out, it is to be expected

118

that Senegalese students will potentially be operating in the logic of their native culture and language -- a logic possibly different from that of English. But even if one were to downplay the possible resurgence of indigenous logic when Senegalese students write paragraphs in English, French, their L1 of instruction, is also potentially different from English in this respect. Both languages are indeed products of the same ancient-linguistic, philosophical, and geo-cultural womb, but they may not share the same inclination for deductive or inductive logic. Clyne's (1987) finding that German and French accepted digression in academic writing while English did not, when all three languages have developed under the same cultural area of Western Europe lends strong credence to the possibility of French and English having diverging attitudes on the preference of the deductive mode of logic. Kaplan (1966) reached similar conclusions in suggesting that Romance languages and English evidence discourse organization contrasts. For all these reasons, paragraph level problems may be expected in the expository essay writing of products of the Senegalese school system taking composition classes in US colleges.

4.4.2.3. Introductory paragraph structure

The introductory paragraph of the essay brings in the topic of the essay by generally going from general to specific and/or recycling the writing prompt. It is also the place of the thesis and controlling statements as indicated earlier. Beyond the different components of the introductory paragraph, what seems to be of prime importance here is the implicit code determining the interaction between the writer and the prompt s/he is to write about. In English school essay writing, this code views the rhetorical instructions of the topic as binding for the writer, in the same way that the latter is bound to fulfill the

119

promises made through the thesis and controlling statements.

L1 French school writing shares with English the need to bring the topic into the introduction and to suggest some sort of guidance as to what issues the body will discuss. Nonetheless, the binding nature of the prompt's rhetorical instructions is not so relevant in *dissertation*, for the task is more an exercise in critical and informed reasoning than an act of rhetoric. This binding nature generally does exist for the *dissertation* which requires students to discuss an issue. However, because in French the term *discuter* (discuss) -- which is often used as the main instruction in the prompt -- may share domains of meaning with other terms, such "argue for", "argue against", "compare", etc., common in prompts' instructions, it is possible that, faced with an English language essay prompt, products of the L1 French context of schooling will interpret these terms as "discuss," this with notable consequences for the implementation of the binding nature of these instructions in the writing. For although the term "discuss" shares domains of meaning with "argue for," "compare," or "describe," it is in essence wider. There are many things one is allowed to do in discussing, which are not acceptable in "arguing for," "comparing," or "describing."

Another source of difference between the introductory paragraph in English and in French is that, in French, there is no requirement for stating a personal position in the introduction. Whatever personal position the author has to state is acceptable after s/he has given reasoned arguments building up to this position. In other words, French seems to show adherence to Cartesian inductive logic that English does not. René Descartes, the inspirer of cartesianism, was French one might want to add. It will be interesting to see whether the different expectations as to the introductory paragraph results in noticeable

120

problems in the English essay writing of Senegalese students in freshman composition classes.

4.4.2.4. Concluding paragraph structure

The essay concluding-paragraph essentially reinstates the thesis and recapitulates the different points made in support of this one. It may afterwards add a lesson learnt from the discussion of these points. In French school writing, the non-obligation to state a personal position in the introduction leaves the conclusion as the most likely place for this. The conclusion in *dissertation* makes a synthesis of the points raised to form a personal position. It also can, and often does, point to new issues not really posited by the topic, but which have appeared as important in the course of the discussion. This raising of new issues is unacceptable in the English conception of the school essay conclusion. It is then possible that Senegalese students who have not yet made a successful transition to essay writing in American institutions of higher education will aggravate writing instructors with "illogical" conclusions.

Although mechanical and semantic problems were not among the specific writing problems the study set out to examine, some instances of these problems are nonetheless considered because they seemed to be a result of the subjects' experience in their context of L1 literacy development. Examples of these problems are the confusion noted in some papers between dummy "it" and existential "there," unclear personal pronoun referencing, etc. These elements of text organization, discourse features, mechanics and semantics were analyzed to gain insight into the writing problems in the samples.

Examination and analysis of the above-mentioned elements was not however

limited to the five subjects selected for the case studies. The remaining writing samples were also examined. The results of the analysis will primarily focus on the five case studies, but whenever necessary they will refer to the rest of the samples in the wider pool of writings collected, and the information elicited by the survey questionnaires and interviews.

In general this analysis will be organized around the different levels of essay organization already described, i.e. the overall essay structure level, the introductory paragraph level, the basic paragraph level, and the concluding paragraph level. A fifth and last level will center on all the other various essay writing problems not covered by the four first categories of problems.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research project investigated the composition problems Senegalese students attending US colleges encounter in expository essay writing. The focus of the study is on discourse level problems potentially accountable to the contrast between French, the L1 of instruction of the subjects, and English, their language of instruction in American colleges. The problems examined are related to the organizational structure of the subjects' writing. This chapter reports the findings. It will focus on the five case studies making up the study, but will also broaden the scope of the analysis by examining trends in the larger pool of data submitted by the subjects among whom the five cases were selected. This pool of data includes the responses to the survey questionnaires, the information elicited during interviews, and the original 16 writing samples collected from the pool of subjects.

In the presentation of the results, I will first deal with the respondents' characteristics and perception as they are captured by the survey. Then the findings from the examination of the sample writings will be presented case by case, with a description and illustration of the most striking organizational problems. Finally, a synthesis of these problems will be provided and considered against the background of the findings from the wider pool of data, before a discussion of the possible meaning and explanations of these problems and their implications. Where appropriate, tables and figures will be used to help in this presentation of results.

5.1. Respondents' characteristics and perceptions

As indicated in Chapter IV, a questionnaire was used to survey subjects on their individual background, home context of schooling, and English language writing instruction experiences in US institutions of higher education. The questionnaire is provided in Appendix 1, pp.212-215. The first section of the questionnaire centered on demographic information. The substance of responses to these questions is synthesized in Table 4.1. p. 104.

The second section of the questionnaire revolved around the subjects' home context and experience of EFL writing instruction. Responses indicate that this experience took place in Senegal; subjects generally started EFL at about age 12 or the beginning of middle school. Most of this EFL experience was in middle or secondary school where classes had more than 50 students and about four contact-hours of English a week. When asked their perceptions of EFL instruction in Senegal, the respondents provided the responses synthesized in Table 5.2. According to the subjects' responses, it appears that the major emphasis of EFL was, in decreasing order, grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, pronunciation, speaking, and listening. The subjects reported that writing, the focus of this study was not so much emphasized by teachers. When it was dealt with, writing was generally approached in the form of the genres of description, narration, letter, argumentation, or dialogue building, essay, and presenting an idea, in decreasing order of frequency. We note that it is only once that a respondent chooses essay and presenting an idea as types of writing practiced in the EFL class. This perception is interesting because the writing section of EFL exam papers at the BFEM

and Baccalaureate exams is called "essay" (Figures 3.3 and 3.5). Yet, the subjects seem to perceive overwhelmingly that the types of writings they practiced were not essay-like. There is in all likelihood non-agreement on what these respondents and exam officials call an essay.

Responses in the second section of the questionnaire suggest that, in writing, students are generally not given a model to follow. Fourteen out of the 22 respondents in the study ticked the box corresponding to the response: "A topic is given and students asked to write about it without a clear model from teachers." Other responses supported different perceptions, viz. that "A completed model is shown to students before they write about a topic," or "An explanation on how to write and organize an essay from introduction to conclusion is given before students write," but the majority of responses seemed to suggest that students were expected to already have a model to abide by, or that the structural organization of the text produced was not important for raters.

The question about the length of EFL writing pieces was in the form of an open question because the researcher wanted to avoid any undue influence by setting fixed choices. As a consequence, the resulting responses were varied in what they took as the unit of length of writing. Some gave this unit in lines, others in paragraphs, and others still in pages. Despite the differences, the students' perception of the length of the writing expected is traditionally around one or two paragraphs. These responses are in line with those about the types of writing tasks given. They logically exclude the true essay or any writing task of similar length as a common staple of EFL writing in Senegalese schools.

As for teachers' comments when evaluating writing, subjects indicated that the teachers tend to focus on grammar and vocabulary, the emphasis of EFL. Grammar,

Subjects	EFL Emphasis	EFL Writing types	EFL Writing Approach	Length of writing	Teachers' comments
1. Khalifa	Grammar, Vocabulary, Reading, writing, Pronunciation, Speaking, Listening	Description, essay writing	A completed model is shown to students before they write on a topic	Half a page	Grammar / vocabulary errors; logical development of ideas and their sequence
2. Baba	Grammar, Vocabulary, Reading, Pronunciation, Writing, Listening, Speaking	Dialogue, narration, description, letter	A completed model is shown to students before they write	20 lines	Grammar and vocabulary mistakes
3. Modou	Vocabulary, Grammar, Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening	Description, narration, letter	A completed model is shown to students before they write	One or two paragraphs	Grammar / vocabulary mistakes, essay too short
4. Gorgui	Vocabulary, Grammar, Speaking, Writing, Reading, Listening, Pronunciation	Narration, description	A topic is given and students asked to write about it	1 page	Grammar / vocabulary mistakes, lack of clarity
5. Coly	Pronunciation, Vocabulary, Grammar, Listening, Writing, Reading, Speaking	Narration	A topic is given and students asked to write about it	10-15 lines	Grammar / vocabulary errors, lack of details
6. Fallou	Vocabulary, grammar, Pronunciation, Reading, Speaking, Listening, Writing	Dialogue, narration, description, letter, argumentation	A topic is given and students asked to write about it	Between one paragraph and one page	Grammar / vocabulary mistakes, essay too short, insufficient details
7. Naby	Listening, Pronunciation, Reading, Speaking, Writing	Description, argumentation,	A topic is given and students asked to write about it	About 150 words	Grammar / vocabulary errors, too short, organization, lack of clarity, cohesion, details
8. Ndumbé	Pronunciation, Vocabulary, Reading, Listening, Grammar, Speaking, Writing	Narration	An explanation on how to write and organize an essay from introduction to conclusion is given before students write about a topic *	Between 200 and 300 words	Grammar / vocabulary errors
9. Fanta	Vocabulary, Grammar, Writing	Description, argumentation	A topic is given and students asked to write about it	-	Vocabulary mistakes
10. Moise	Grammar, Vocabulary, Speaking, Writing, Reading, Pronunciation, Listening	Dialogue, narration, description, argumentation	A topic is given and students are asked to write about it	5 to 10 lines	Grammar / vocabulary mistakes, too short, clarity
11. Yandé	Grammar, Reading, Vocabulary, Pronunciation, Writing, Speaking, Listening	Narration, letter	A topic is given and students are asked to write about it	Half a page to one page	Grammar / vocabulary errors, clarity, cohesion

Table 5.1: Respondents' perceptions of some aspects of EFL in Senegal

Subjects	EFL Emphasis	EFL Writing types	EFL Writing Approach	Length of writing	Teachers' comments
12. Tijaan	Listening, Reading, Pronunciation, Speaking, Grammar, Vocabulary, Writing	Narration, description, letter, argumentation	A topic is given and we have to write about it without a clear model from teachers	One page	Grammar / vocabulary errors, details, clarity
13. Khalil	Pronunciation, Grammar, Vocabulary, Speaking, Writing	Dialogue, description, letter	An explanation on how to write and organize an essay from introduction to conclusion is given to students before they write	Almost one page	Grammar / vocabulary mistakes
14. Bourré	Grammar, Vocabulary, Reading, Writing	Dialogue, narration, description, letter, argumentation	(Ticked all 3 possibilities)	25 lines	Vocabulary mistakes
15. Mor	Grammar, vocabulary, Reading	Argumentation	A topic is given and students are asked to write about it	One page	Grammar errors
16. Diaw	Pronunciation, Vocabulary, Grammar, Reading, Writing	Description	A topic is given and students are asked to write about it	-	Grammar errors and vocabulary mistakes
17. Moké	Grammar, Vocabulary, Writing, Reading, Speaking, Pronunciation, Listening	Narration, description, letter	A topic is given and students are asked to write about it	About 20 lines	Essay too short
18. Aly	Grammar, Writing, reading, Vocabulary, Speaking, Pronunciation	Narration, description, letter	An explanation on how to write an essay is given before students write	10-15 lines	Grammar / vocabulary errors, organization
19. Codou	Grammar, Vocabulary, Writing, Reading, Pronunciation, Speaking, Listening	Dialogue, narration, description, argumentation, presenting an idea	A topic is given and students are asked to write about it	Half a page to one page	Grammar errors, vocabulary mistakes
20. Ermon	Pronunciation, Vocabulary, Grammar, Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing	Narration, description, letter, presenting an idea	Both topic with or without a model before writing	About 15 lines	Grammar errors
21. Lamine	Speaking, Writing	Argumentation	A topic is given and students are asked to write about it	-	Grammar errors
22. Babou	Vocabulary, Grammar, Reading, Writing, Pronunciation, Speaking	Description	A topic is given and students are asked to write about it.	-	Grammar / vocabulary mistakes

Table 5.1: Respondents' perceptions of some aspects of EFL in Senegal (ctd).

vocabulary, reading, writing and speaking were also reported to be what is covered in the EFL paper of exams; writing in these exams is in the form of topic on which students have to write, or sentence completion/transformation. Other features of writing on which these comments bear are the length of the paper, lack of clarity, cohesion, organization, etc. Logical development of ideas, an important feature of the English school essay according to the literature review, is listed by only one respondent as an area commented upon by teachers.

The last section of the questionnaire surveyed some of the subjects' perceptions of their experience of writing in US colleges (see Table 5.2). In 12 cases out of 22, the Senegalese student had intensive English classes before joining the mainstream program of his/her college. Many of those who attended intensive English classes report writing instruction based on paragraph development and such enabling linguistic elements as tense in narration, coherence, vocabulary, etc. In college, writing emphasis is on short essays and longer papers, essay structure and organization, process writing, developing ideas, etc.

Most respondents consider the emphasis on these aspects of writing to be new (7 students) or partially new (7 students) for them, while seven other students think it is not new. This specific question is not applicable to one of the subjects, Aly, who exempted from English classes. The majority of surveyed students view themselves as having some (12 students) or considerable (3 students) problems in English composition, while 7 students believe they have no problems. For those who acknowledge problems, these are in vocabulary, poor English, developing ideas, unclear sentences, organization, essay structure, not being sure whether one is writing the right way or not, citation, and

128

reference. Those who report no problems credit following what the teacher says, length of stay in US colleges, good grammar, vocabulary and general knowledge as explanations for this lack of problems.

The question on the types of writing students were more comfortable with showed argumentation and narration as the easiest writing types (each was designated 9 times), followed by letters (6), description (3), dialogue (1), presenting an idea (1). Essay was not specifically entered as an easy writing type, although one respondent indicated that he was at ease with all types. The main reason the subjects invoked for the ease of argumentation is that L1 writing provided training in it with the *dissertation*; some other respondents noted the different following reasons though: "with argumentation, the teachers focus on the ideas expressed," "here you already have the ideas, so it's easier." For narration, a verbatim explanation that reflects many others is "You know the story, and you just remember and write." One interesting reason given for the ease of writing a letter is that, in this case, one is writing for someone other than the teacher.

These responses suggest that behind writing problems are different factors such as absence of specific training, the generation of ideas, or the anxiety over the awareness that one's writing will be considered critically.

When asked whether EFL instruction in Senegal is helpful in their US writing classes, only half of the respondents say no, while the other half consider that it is helpful or partially helpful. Those who consider that it is not helpful invoke such reasons as "We did not write as much in EFL" (Fallou) or "The level of EFL you receive in high school is not enough for university studies" (Moise); those who think it is helpful invoke the foundations it has given them in grammar, vocabulary, etc. It is also to be noted that

129

some subjects who report no problems in English composition did so, not because of the helpfulness of their EFL experience, but because they had learnt a lot on the matter since they arrived in the US (Gorgui), or express nonetheless some dissatisfaction with the treatment of EFL writing back home (Naby).

The last question of the survey asked the subjects to enter any comments they had after completing the questionnaire. Not all subjects responded to this question, and not all responses provided were deemed relevant by the researcher, but many emphasize the need for more time for and emphasis on EFL in Senegal. Another one welcomed the fact that Senegalese students' problems were being looked at. One comment however, seems to sum up the assumption of EFL writing inadequacy that is at the origin of this research project. It is by Diaw and reads: "In Senegal teachers don't care about organization. Just write something correct and it's OK."

This study also strove to gather US college-writing instructors' perceptions of Senegalese students' writing problems. Two teachers at the institution attended by the subjects covered in the study were informally interviewed. In this institution, two sections of freshman composition are specifically devoted to ESL students. The first section emphasized language development, while the second addressed writing proper, with the essay, longer research papers and documentation. One of the instructors interviewed regularly taught composition to international students while the other generally dealt with mainstream composition. Their responses suggest that, generally, Senegalese students have no writing problems compared to international students from other parts of the world.

This instructors' perception seems to be different from the bulk of the subjects'

130

feelings on their own essay writing ability, and also from the evidence from the samples. An explanation of this difference may reside in the common conception of writing as linguistic accuracy. Composition teachers should normally be aware of the importance of the discoursal aspects of writing, but when they are faced with many nonnative students with considerable general proficiency problems, as they often are, they may see those students with less accuracy errors as free of problems.

The same situation whereby a great portion of the population of nonnative ESL students shows considerable problems with the linguistic code, may lead to a characterization of the less overt discourse problems as not being real problems. Although this tendency may be understandable, we need to guard against it. A writing problem is not defined by its gravity or relative seriousness. Rather, it is any deviance from the norms of the discourse community. If despite the relative accuracy of Senegalese students' writings, their papers present organizational differences from the norm, these should not be discarded.

5.2. Cases

For anonymity requirements, the five cases highlighted in this study are designated under aliases. I will consider their writing samples to describe any problems therein, providing each time the background information likely to help put them in context. Excerpts from the samples will be used as illustrations, and where necessary, the specific problem in the excerpt will be highlighted with underlining or some other means. These excerpts may contain typos that I resisted correcting so as not to alter their true nature of nonnative writing. Problems found in the cases' writings will be organized

Subjects	Intensive Engl /Fresh Comp	Emphasis of Writing class	Emphasis new/ not new	Writing Problems	Easiest writing types	EFL helpful in US Writing classes	Respondents' General Comments
1. Khalifa	Fresh Comp	Short essays and longer papers	New for long papers	Some problems developing ideas, even in French.	Argumentation; you know what you're talking about.	Yes. Writing is basically the same in all languages.	Irrelevant
2. Baba	Both	Tense in narration	Not new	No problems. My grammar, vocabulary, and general knowledge are good.	Narration, letter, argumentation because you talk about experience.	No. My science stream did not emphasize EFL.	Took ESP classes, but that's the same as composition
3. Modou	Both	Grammar, process writing, topic sentence, supp. details.	New	No problems. I do what the teacher taught us.	Argumentation. I studied dissertation in French.	No. I have now problems in English in my classes.	We need to start EFL earlier in Senegal
4. Gorgui	Both	Grammar, cohesion	Partly new	No problem. I have learned a lot in the 3 years I spent here.	All types.	No. Not enough EFL time. Also did not take it seriously	N/A
5. Coly	Both	Summarizing	Not new	Considerable problems. I use the model of writing of Senegal.	Letter.	No. Not enough summarizing (Does he mean paraphrasing?)	We need to use US textbooks in Senegal
6. Fallou	Fresh Comp	Grammar, coherence, supporting details, citations	Partly new (citations)	No problems.	Argumentation. French training in dissertation	No. We did not write as much in EFL.	N/A
7. Naby	Intensive Engl. + Transfer	Grammar, vocabulary	Not new	No problems. I liked English and studied hard for it.	Description, presenting an idea, argumentation,	Yes. Teachers insisted on grammar and vocabulary.	Irrelevant
8. Ndumbé	Fresh Comp	Process writing, essay structure	New (essay structure)	No problems. I knew part of what is needed in high school.	Argumentation. Learned this in French writing.	Not too much helpful. EFL did not teach all the details.	Good that someone is looking at our problems.
9. Fanta	Fresh Comp	Argumentation, revising and editing	Not new	I have some problems. Citations and reference are still a problem for me.	Narration and description. I can follow my own plan.	Yes	N/A
10. Moise	Fresh Comp	Comparative, narrative and personal essays; referencing	New	I have considerable problems. My vocabulary is poor.	Narration. There are less rules here; the story is the rule.	No. The level of EFL you receive in high school is not enough for university studies.	EFL should be used for instruction in secondary school and university.
11. Yandé	Fresh Comp	Paragraph structure, process writing, format	New	I have some problems. Used to write long, unclear sentences, but it's better now.	Narration and argumentation. Here you already have the ideas; so it's easier.	Yes, but not for essay writing here; what we wrote in Senegal was too short.	Irrelevant

Table 5.2: Respondents' perceptions of some aspects of their writing experience in US colleges

Subjects	Intensive Engl /Fresh Comp	Emphasis of Writing class	Emphasis new/ not new	Writing Problems	Easiest writing types	EFL helpful in US Writing classes	Respondents' General Comments
12. Tijaan	Both	Organization, clarity, grammar, vocabulary	New	I have some problems in English. Still not happy with vocabulary and organization when I write.	Narration, description, letter. You know what you are writing about in these cases.	No, but this is maybe because I took a science stream where English is not emphasized.	The questionnaire should be different according the stream of students
13. Khalil	Both	Structure of an essay, process writing, listening, grammar	New	I have considerable problems. Grammar and vocabulary are poor. I also did not know the essay structure.	Dialogue, description, letter. I easily express myself when writing these.	No. I still have problems in grammar and listening.	N/A
14. Bourré	Both	Essay organization, grammar, vocabulary	Not new	I have some problems.	Writing a letter. You write for someone other than the teacher.	Yes. It taught me how to write introduction, development, conclusion.	N/A
15. Mor	Both	Organization, grammar, vocabulary	Not new	I have some problems.	Narrating a story. You just write what you see.	It helped in grammar and vocabulary, but not in organization of writing.	N/A
16. Diaw	Both	Thesis statement, topic sentence, etc.	New	I have some problems. Not comfortable enough with English.	Narrating a story. You have things to write about in this case.	No. we write only a few lines, with no insistence on organization or structure of the essay	In Senegal teachers don't care about organization. Just write something correct and it's OK.
17. Moké	Both	Essay structure, narrative essay, vocabulary, etc.	More or less new	I have some problems. I did not do any EFL since I finished secondary school.	Argumentation. With this, instructor always focuses on ideas.	Yes, but pronunciation is very different here.	We must give more importance to English in schools in Senegal.
18. Aly	N/A	N/A	N/A	I have no problems. One of my majors at the university is English.	Presenting an idea. I have developed this skill through education.	Yes. It focused grammar; grammar is important in academic English.	Irrelevant
19. Codou	Both	Developing ideas; clarity, grammar, vocabulary	New in the details	I have some problems.	Writing letters. You know who you writing to.	No. it did not go into details.	N/A
20. Ermon	Both	Essay structure, narrative essay, vocabulary, etc.	More or less new	I have some problems. I stopped English two years before.	Argumentation. The instructor focuses the ideas, not the form.	Yes, but it is not sufficient.	We need to give more importance to English
21. Lamine	Fresh Comp	Organization, supporting details.	New	I have some problems.	Narrating a story. You know the story, and you just remember and write	No. How people use English here in school is very different.	N/A
22. Babou	Fresh Comp	Essay structure, grammar, listening, reading and speaking.	Not new	I have some problems. I have good grades, but I can't be sure before.	Narrating a story, description, argumentation.	Yes, in grammar and vocabulary, but in other areas, no.	We must insist more on American English, less on British English

Table 5.2: Respondents' perceptions of some aspects of their writing experience in US colleges (ctd.

around the typology of problems posited in Chapter IV, i.e. overall essay structure, introductory paragraph structure, basic paragraph structure, and concluding paragraph structure. If the writing sample(s) shows no significant problem relating to one of these categories of problems, the rubric will be skipped or combined with another rubric.

5.2.1. Case 1: Khalifa

Khalifa is a junior in his early 20s who has been in the US for two and a half years. He was admitted with a 540 TOEFL score, and is majoring in engineering. Although he believes writing is practically the same in all languages, he confesses to having some writing problems in English, specifically with developing ideas. His difficulties in developing ideas, he says, are not only in English, but also in French, his L1 of instruction. He contributed one sample of 369 words (Khalifa1, Appendix 3, p. 219), the response to the researcher-set task. Generally speaking, this sample is fine in terms of language, and even some aspects of organization. In the introductory paragraph, the author does quite a nice job of implementing the recommendation for a gradual movement from general to specific, recycling the topic smoothly into the introduction, and laying down a map of the essay. Yet, detailed analysis reveals that the paper has different organizational problems in other areas.

5.2.1.1. Overall essay structure

Although robustly argued, the paper presents the structural peculiarity of presenting three distinct parts -- the introduction, the body, and conclusion -- with the body consisting of only one-block paragraph (1). A consequence of this peculiarity is that

this essay presents only three paragraphs in lieu of the traditional five paragraphs expected. A question may be posed as to the breadth of discussion of the topic that can be achieved in one essay with only one body paragraph, with presumably only one main idea in support of the point made. In fact this problem exists in this sample. The author bases his rejection of the proposed population policy only on one argument --religious creed -- the main idea of the one-block paragraph, while the reader was justified to expect as many as three main ideas.

(1)   *Overpopulation is a problem that many countries face nowadays.*
           Even the countries that are not overpopulated yet try to anticipate
           on this issue by forcing families to limit their number of children
           to two or sometimes three. People from different cultural backgrounds
           have different opinions on this issue. Being a muslim, judgment on
           whether something is good or bad is really not a problem because
           I have a guidance, the only and true guidance that is the Quran.
           Limitation of children using contraception or another method is not
           allowable in Islam, the main reason being that God is our creator
           and owns everything. Therefore he gives his wealth to anybody he
           wants to. It does not matter whether you have one or twenty children.
           In addition, it is important to emphasize that wealth is not beneficial
           to someone who does not realize that it is the property of God and
           therefore he or she needs to use it the way God wants him to use it.
           A rich couple might have one child, if they do not do what God order
           to them to do, they will never find happiness. On the other hand, a poor
           couple may have twenty children, if they submit to God, they will find
           happiness.

Approached as to the reason for this, Khalifa explained that he was not totally aware of the requirement to have three different ideas or paragraphs in support of the argument he was making. He also argued that the spur of putting down on paper the thoughts in his mind may have played a factor in this. Perhaps this peculiarity of Khalifa's sample needs to be put in the context of some of the responses he provided in the survey. He acknowledged having problems in developing ideas clearly in L2 as well as in L1. At the same time, he considers that writing is the same practically in all

135

languages. It is likely that Khalifa's problems in this sample of writing are related to attitudinal factors that do not make easy accommodation to new guidelines about writing. He indicated that what he learnt in writing classes in US colleges is partially new, yet he does not seem to be able to incorporate this new knowledge in his writing, at least in this sample.

5.2.1.2. Introductory paragraph structure

As already noted, the introduction to the essay brings in nicely the topic of discussion, gives clearly the general purpose of the paper, but has no thesis statement (2). This thesis, or what can be considered as the author's position on the matter is given in the one-block paragraph of the body; it is underlined in excerpt (1), p. 132. This absence of the thesis statement in the introduction is a notable shortcoming with potential serious consequences from the perspective of the English school essay. By depriving the reader of the radar with which to monitor the stance of the author and his/her adherence to this stance as s/he moves on with the discussion of the topic, this absence constitutes an open door to lack of focus and other related essay discoursal problems.

(2)   *With the development of technology in the medical field, many diseases*
         in the past in the past people did not have answers to can now be cured.
         As a result of this fact, people live longer and therefore the world population
         at a great. Many people believe that this increase in population causes some
         problems in certain countries among which, Senegal because of the lack of
         space and mainly because of limited resources per family. The governement
         of Senegal has decided to pass a bill that is going to limit the number of
         children per family to only two. The purpose of this document is to
         determine whether the bill should be passed or not.

Khalifa explains in a positive tone that in writing an introduction, one must strive to bring in the problem under discussion smoothly, and that there is no place for giving one's position at that stage. Asked whether that explanation came from his study of

writing in French or English, he indicated he is sure that's what French recommends, but seemed surprised at the implication that English might require something different. We need here to remember that this is the subject who believes writing is practically the same in all languages. It is then probable that Khalifa is primarily relying on writing schemata developed in L1, and these seem to be an obstacle to applying new rules of writing.

5.2.1.3. Basic paragraph structure

The one-block paragraph of the body of this writing sample is very robustly argued. The paragraph nonetheless starts strangely with what looks like another gradual introduction to the topic (3). As happens almost all the time in introductory paragraphs, this introduction-like beginning of the body is followed by what could be taken as the thesis statement if it were not oddly situated in the body of the essay.

Even if one wanted to go with Khalifa's sense of paragraph organization and decided to take the underlined sentence as topic sentence of the paragraph, and not as misplaced thesis as I argued, one would still be faced with the problem of non-conformity to the traditional place of the topic sentence in the paragraph, which is either at the beginning in the case of the deductive paragraph, or at the end in the case of an inductive one.

(3) *Overpopulation is a problem that many countries face nowadays.*
Even the countries that are not overpopulated yet try to anticipate
on this issue by forcing families to limit their number of children
to two or sometimes three. People from different cultural backgrounds
have different opinions on this issue. Being a muslim, judgment on
whether something is good or bad is really not a problem because
I have a guidance, the only and true guidance that is the Quran.
Limitation of children using contraception or another method is not
allowable in Islam ...

A third structural problem here is that there is no closure to the paragraph. From the thesis or topic sentence (depending on how one wants to see it), there is only support

137

or illustration of this support. When he ends up his point, the writer does not do this by tying this end back to the main point made in the paragraph, as recommended by essay writing cannons (4).

(4) *...Limitation of children using contraception or another method is not allowable in Islam, the main reason being that God is our creator and owns everything. Therefore he gives his wealth to anybody he wants to. It does not matter whether you have one or twenty children. In addition, it is important to emphasize that wealth is not beneficial to someone who does not realize that it is the property of God and therefore he or she needs to use it the way God wants him to use it. A rich couple might have one child, if they do not do what God order to them to do, they will never find happiness. On the other hand, a poor couple may have twenty children, if they submit to God, they will find happiness.*

5.2.1.4. Concluding paragraph structure and other various problems

The concluding paragraph is only recognizable as the conclusion because it is the last one of the essay, and it is shorter than the others. There is no transition device signaling that it is the conclusion; there is also no recapitulation of points raised in the development.

Another problem evidenced in this sample is that Khalifa failed to follow strictly the terms of the writing prompt. This latter asked him to argue for or against adoption of the proposed policy with family, social, economic or political arguments, but Khalifa centers his argumentation on only religious creed. Moreover, the way this religious argument is put forward does not show the author as a discerning subject. Instead he appears to be saying "this is what the rule has been, let's apply it," whereas the problem is already here. He seems not to discern between the preventive edicts of the creed, and the need for remediation to pending problems. The problem here is that, although this is not at all addressed overtly by writing instruction, what many writing tasks are gauging is

discoursal proof of a discerning mind. A reproductive approach to knowledge, as seems to be the case with Khalifa here, is not always the best means of showing a discerning mind. Nonnative speakers of English need to understand this so as to incorporate it in writing.

5.2.2. Case 2: Baba

Baba is in his late 20s, and is presently working on a Computing & Business degree in a US college. In Senegal, he completed a diploma in civil engineering and held a related job before joining his present institution in the US with a 500 TOEFL score. Three writing samples were collected from him; the first one (Baba1, Appendix 3, p. 220) was written on aspects of the home country (396 words), the second (Baba2, Appendix 3, pp. 221-222) on career goals (514 words), and the third (Baba3, Appendix 3, pp. 222-223) dealt with the researcher-set prompt (512 words). Both the first and second samples were completed for class work in freshman composition I. Baba considers that he has no problem in English composition because his "vocabulary, grammar, and general knowledge are good." However, he thinks that narration, letter, and argumentation are easier school writing types for him because in these you talk about something you have experienced.

Baba1 and Baba2 are actually easy to read despite the presence of some organizational problems. They seem to be of the kind of texts which I argued are not truly expository because they organize discourse along the structure of what is out there, or how the related discourse has been originally organized. In writing, texts of this kind are consequently less challenging to tackle than texts requiring structuring or restructuring of

discourse from scratch or on a new basis. This kind of texts represented by Baba1 and Baba2 is among the writing types respondents indicated are easier to write, and Baba himself seems to be aware of the challenge-reducing characteristic of these when he indicated that texts dealing with something you have experience of are easier to write. The relative ease of reading of these two texts then is a result of their speech-like or narrative-like nature, since they present aspects of Senegal (which are likely to have already been presented at different times in the structure Baba is using), or give an account of how his career goals developed; this account is pretty much structured by the chronology of development.

Baba's papers present no notable overall essay structure problems. They however do evidence problems of introductory paragraph peculiarity, absence of thesis statement and controlling idea, new idea and lack of recapitulation in the concluding paragraphs.

5.2.2.1. Introductory paragraph structure

Baba1 introduces aspects of the home country. In the introduction, he brings in the sub-topics he will be covering, after saying how pleased he is to be doing this. This is adequate since, as already suggested, this discourse event is framed as scripted face-to-face discourse. But the same introduction goes on, without any paragraph break, to cover the substance of the presentation, by providing background information on the home country (5). Of the 12 lines constituting what is visually the introductory paragraph, 9 (in

(5)   *Let me be among the first to welcome you to the University Cheikh*
             Anta DIOP de DAKAR. It is a pleasure for me to introduce you to
             Senegalese political ideas, religions and educational system. Senegal
             is a French country with a geographic position favorable in international
             relations. Independent since April 4th, 1960, the main political idea is

             democracy. Opinion polls show that three out of five Senegalese can give
             a meaningful concept of democracy.Like every democratic country, there

is executive, legislative and judicial power. All these powers are separated.
There are more than twenty political parties but the two most important are
the "Socialist Party" and the "Senegalese Democratic Party. Every seven
years Presidential elections are organized democratically and since our
independence the "Socialist Party" is in charge of Senegal's destinies.

bold) are devoted to this background information on the home country, Senegal. This

background information would have been more appropriate if it were given as the first

body paragraph, in which the writer introduces the home country in general terms, before

going on to focus on the specific aspects he promised to talk about in the introduction.

Another introductory paragraph problem in this paper is that the introduction has

no thesis statement, although this does not seem to hurt at all. In fact, it seems that

providing a true position statement to this specific discourse event would be a challenge

for even the mature writer. Discharging this event does not require a position statement.

In the Baba2, there is a thesis statement, but no controlling idea (6), or if it has,

this controlling idea is not reflected in the movement of the rest of the essay. The two

sentences following the underlined thesis could be interpreted as suggesting that the body

(6)   *In Senegal, the family has a great influence in our future career. But*
              sometimes, it is so hard to do the career that your family wished for, or the
              one you always aimed for when you were a teenager. Two facts can point to
              this: the personal capacities and the means. But with a good deal of
              courage, people can achieve any career. My former career goal was to be a
              military pilot and then it became civil engineer. First of all, civil engineering
              is very interesting and second of all, you earn a lot of money. Actually civil
              engineering is needed in Senegal and you are going to be a very versatile
              person once you get knowledgeable in building roads and water supplies.

of the essay would dwell primarily on how civil engineering is interesting and highly

paid. Instead, the body deals with how parents try to orient children toward a select

number of careers (see body paragraph 1 in Appendix 3, p. 221), how the authors' career

goals evolved (body paragraph 2), how he worked hard to prepare and succeed in and out

of engineering school (body paragraphs 3 and 4). After these failed reader expectations,

141

the latter is justified to wonder about the adequacy of the presence of those two sentences after the thesis statement.

Other introductory paragraph problems are present in Baba3; there is no thesis statement in the introductory paragraph; the writer just provides a controlling idea through questions (7). This last characteristic of providing the controlling idea with the help of rhetorical questions seems to be a carry over from the L1 writing task of

(7)   *One of the crucial topic that the world is being face is the overpopulation. The world population knew an exponential growth and it is estimated to five billions of persons. Specialists in demography think that this overpopulation might have some environmental effect and in the future will be the main point of lot of trouble such as many endemies, problems of space and famine. In their daily activities to avoid such a desaster for our planet the World Population organization (WPO) propose a new resolution to the government of the countries member of United nations which, limit to two children each family should have. Such a proposition is it fair? What about the human rights to decide about the size of their family in one hand and at the other hand does the world population could have any aspects in social, economic or political issues?*

dissertation which, out of a need to avoid what may be considered a covert insult to the readers' intellectual ability to apprehend the writer's meaning, prefers this way of offering orientation. It should not be lost sight of the fact that, because of the reputation of French as a reader responsible language, the writer may not be held to stringent requirements of accuracy in textual metadiscourse. This peculiar controlling idea through questions is then a possible consequence of this typology of the French language.

5.2.2.2. Basic paragraph structure

Baba's samples also reveal paragraph structure problems. In Baba1, the first body paragraph (8) does not easily reveal what the topic sentence is; the two sentences constituting the paragraph seem both to be claims, because the second sentence

(underlined sentence in excerpt 8), cannot qualify as support for the first sentence. It is

(8)   *The educational system in Senegal, as an ex- French colony, has the*
       same educational system as France which is different from the one in the
       United States. Our educational system is composed of an elementary cycle of
       six years, a medium cycle of four years, a secondary cycle (high school) of
       three years and then the university.

not because an educational system is composed of an elementary school of six years, high

school of three, and then university that it is the same as the French one. This sentence

not qualifying for support, the only other thing it may be taken for is another claim, i.e.

that the Senegalese school system is characterized by an elementary level of six years, a

high school of three, and then a university cycle.

In the same paper, there is one more paragraphing problem coming from the same

idea straddling two separate paragraphs (9). We can see that the last part of

(9)   *The educational system in Senegal, as an ex- French colony, has the same*
       educational system as France which is different from the one in the United
       States. Our educational system is composed of an elementary cycle of six
       years, a medium cycle of four years, a secondary cycle (high school) of three
       years and then the university.

       After the medium cycle, every pupil has to choose a general major called a
       serie. There are four series: L like literature section, S like science section, T
       like technique section and E like economic section. S and T open the way to
       engineering school and specially S for health faculty .The future lawyers,
       journalists and others have to choose L and business men, economists, and
       accounts choose E section. English is the first foreign language and the
       second year of the medium cycle, pupils choose a second foreign language
       between Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, German, Russian or Arabic.
       University of Dakar has all these departments.

excerpt (9) is distinct as a paragraph from the preceding one, but the concern of both

units is the Senegalese educational system. So they should have been better presented as

one paragraph, following the principle of unity.

5.2.2.3. Conclusion paragraph and other various problems

The third set of problems in Baba's three papers is located in the concluding

paragraph. In Baba1 the author brings into the conclusion new aspects of Senegal not announced in the introduction (10). This conclusion starts, in fact, in a very acceptable way by using the metadiscoursal device "in conclusion" to signal that the paper has come to an end. It also does well in reinstating the main focus of the paper, Senegal, and how it is attractive, but what spoils this conclusion, like hair in the soup, is the presence of a totally new idea. This attractiveness of the country is not only because it is open and modern, as is apparent in the previous parts of the essay, but also because of

(10)   *In conclusion, SENEGAL is an open and modern country where*
       everybody can feel a great ease to life. You will enjoy Senegalese
       entertainment like beaches, soccer, basket- ball and our great
       "Mbalax national" (dance and songs).

entertainment, which is mentioned nowhere before in the paper, whether it is in the introduction or the body.

Baba2 presents another concluding paragraph problem; there is no recapitulation of points developed, but just a coda offering a metacomment. These two features in the conclusion paragraphs of Baba's writing are not in line with what is traditionally recommended in school essay writing. The mention of the new idea after the signal that the paper has come to an end brings confusion for the typical native speaker reader. The lack of recapitulation of points raised is also a potential problem for him/her, because it does not package these different points in a way that maximizes ease of comprehension.

One notable problem in the various other problems rubric in Baba3 is that this paper is strictly speaking off-topic; it does not squarely address the prompt's demand of arguing for or against the policy proposal, but chooses a median stance in which the author shows he can understand both positions (see Appendix 3, pp. 222-223). Baba

explained that he did this because his L1 schooling taught him to adopt a critical outlook that went beyond the limited context in which problems are set. This is certainly a fact, but this researcher wonders whether the main factor for this steering away from the topic is not due to an unconscious interpretation of the task as *dissertation*, with a requirement to discuss broadly the issue under consideration.

5.2.3. Case 3: Yandé

Yandé is one of the few female subjects in the pool of subjects the case studies are derived from. She is in her early twenties; after pre-university education in Senegal, she completed a degree in France before joining her present US college, with a 540 TOEFL score, to major in computing. She admits to problems in English composition, though the pieces of writing she contributed are among the most fluent. She explained in a follow-up interview to the survey that her problems come from a tendency to use long unclear sentences, but considered that this was getting better. Two class samples written for the first semester of freshman composition were collected from her. The first one (Yandé1, Appendix 3, pp. 223-224) is about an example of prejudice in Senegal (437 words), and the second (Yandé2, Appendix 3, pp. 224-225) deals with advantages and disadvantages of being male or female (783 words). Yandé did not complete the researcher-set writing task.

The two samples submitted by Yandé are generally very fluent. They present no notable overall essay structure problems. The problems noted are with regard to the introduction, paragraph structure, and various other writing errors such as the confusion between "existential" there and "dummy" it.

5.2.3.1. Introductory paragraph structure

Yandé1 has an introduction with a thesis statement, but does not show any map or controlling idea (11). In lieu of the controlling idea, there is interpersonal metadiscourse (Vande Kopple, 1985). This type of metadiscourse does not contribute to text

(11)   *There have always been different kinds of injustice and discrimination everywhere in the world. In my country, Senegal, the non-education of girls because of their sex can be considered as discrimination. Most Senegalese people think that it's no use for a girl to go to school. <u>But that idea should be given up, since there is no reason why a girl cannot study and succeed.</u>*

organization, but simply gives the feelings of the writer on the issue under discussion. This constitutes an organizational shortcoming in the text, in that textual metadiscourse meant to provide organizational clues, is replaced with a type of metadiscourse which does not fulfill this organizational function. This problem of overuse of interpersonal metadiscourse is common in both papers by Yandé. Behind this issue lies the problem of student writers' awareness of the types of information they can reasonably include in school writing tasks. The controlling idea expected in the introduction is supposed to orient the reader as to what the writer will specifically cover in the essay; it ought to be referential, and cannot be functionally replaced by personal perception of what should or should not, as is the case in the last sentence of excerpt (11).

5.2.3.2. Paragraph structure

The first body paragraph of Yandé1 is noticeable for the textual role of its constituents. This paragraph has a topic sentence, but at least half of the remaining part of the paragraph is devoted, not to supporting the main idea propounded in the topic sentence, but the writer's personal feelings (12) on the phenomenon she set out

146

(12)   *Indeed, the rate of Senegalese women who had not been at school is very*
        high. While almost all the boys are getting educated, girls stay at home most
        of the time. It's a really sexist idea because the only reason they give: "She is
        a girl, she does not need to go to school. She should stay at home, help her
        mother, learn how to cook and take care of a family." Most of the time, you
        *will hear from Senegalese men: "School is not for girls; it's for men." **Almost***
        half of the few girls who go to school stop at the middle of high school.
        Moreover, the boys kept asking us what we were doing in that class.
        According to them, that was not a domain for women.

primarily to expose. This already reported tendency to resort to interpersonal

metadiscourse, as opposed to referential discourse, is also visible in the second (13) and

(13)   *People should stop having such a point of view because it's revolting for*
        women. In addition, that's the best way to make them feel unconfident and
        have a certain complex of inferiority. Why can't a female think like a male?
        Is it proved that boys are more clever than girls? The answer is "No"
        because experiences have shown that women have the ability to do things as
        well as men. Sometimes, they do it much better.

third (14) body paragraphs. In excerpt 12, the predominance of the interpersonal

metadiscourse bordering on emotion and invective makes almost unnoticeable the only

piece of ideational information in this paragraph, i.e. women have the same abilities as

men, and can even do better.

Excerpt 14 is equally problematic as traditional school essay discourse, because it

is mainly a juxtaposition of unsubstantiated opinions and recommendations. What these

problems seem to point to is that, perhaps, there are many types of social discourse out

(14)   *In my opinion, women should fight for their right to be educated. Boys and*
        girls should have the same right to learn. And girls who are already in
        school should do their best to have good results. That's the only way to win
        the challenge and prove to people (men) that they can make it even if they
        are girls. Also, I'll suggest that the Senegalese government establishes
        programs to encourage more parents to send their daughters to
        school. That will make girls improve their talent and capacities in order to
        succeed later in their professional life.

there that are not amenable to the structure of the school essay paragraph. If this is the

case, they need to be clearly identified so that writing instructors and student writers may

147

learn to avoid them as writing activity or not to intrude them into essay writing.

Another notable problem in this paragraph comes from the bump to coherence the reader feels when going through the two sentences in bold in excerpt 12. It is difficult to make sense of the relationship between the two sentences linked by the conjunction "moreover," probably because this transitional device has not been appropriately selected.

There are also paragraphing problems in Yandé2; body paragraph 1 starts with what looks like a topic sentence, but then this latter is abandoned in favor of another idea supported with some details in the paragraph (15). As we can see, we are under the

(15)   The disadvantages for men are their violence and their complex of
            superiority. The first advantage of being female is the ability and the
            happiness of having children. It's a gift from God that have been given to
            women. What's more wonderful than having a baby for a woman? Moreover,
            experiences have shown that children are closer to their mother than they are
            towards their father. We can explain that because women are the ones who
            mostly take care of them.

impression that the paragraph will be about disadvantages of men, but in the end it talks more about women's advantages. Two more paragraphing problems in this paper come from the lack of closure to body paragraph 5 (16). Again, the information given in the

(16)   *Moreover, men have less biological problems than women. They don't feel*
            the pans of being pregnant and having babies. Psychologically, some
            husbands are anxious when their wives are giving birth. But, it's known that
            in that moment the woman suffers more. You have to be a woman to see how
            painful it is to give birth. It's so painful that some women cannot stand it and
            die.

paragraph is not packaged so that to maximize easy processing on the part of the reader. This may be a consequence of non-reader responsibility of the L1, French.

5.2.3.3. Conclusion and various other problems

Yandé2 offers no recapitulation of points argued in the essay (17). This problem,

148

which by now seems to be turning into a pattern in the cases' samples, may be

understandable because the conclusion in L1 does not require a recapitulation of the ideas

(17)   *Most people agree with the fact that males and females are born with
different needs, desires and capabilities. Men have their roles and females,
theirs. God has given to both of them some advantages and disadvantages.
<u>But despite that, it should not exist a lack of understanding between men and
women.</u> They should complete each other since that's the best way to stay
together. It's a great thing that women can give birth and men can take care
of them with their children. And, instead of ill-treating women, men should
respect them. They should also let them express themselves and have more
access to education and employment.*

developed. In L1, the conclusion is essentially the place for sharing any valuable insight

resulting from the discussion of the topic. In the underlined sentence in excerpt (17),

there is a case of "there" and "it" confusion. Although this is not an organizational

problem, it deserves mention in this study because in my sense, this error is accountable

to how French renders existential "there" and dummy "it." Both pronouns are rendered

through the same dummy personal pronoun *il*. This seems to be the reason why Yandé

believes that in English the same mechanism applies.

In terms of other problems, there is first a case of non-thorough development of

an idea at the end of the introductory paragraph (18). It is not easy to clearly apprehend

what the writer means here just by depending on the information provided by the text.

(18)   *Since the creation of the Human Being, there have always been differences
between males and females. Those differences are most of the time subject of
discussion. So, what are the advantages and disadvantages of being male or
female? I'll mention as advantages for females the happiness of maternity,
the females' sensibility and, their particular power." For men, I'll talk about
their strength and, the fact that they don't feel the pains of motherhood.
<u>Talking about disadvantages, we have the exclusion of women because of
their sex.</u>*

If any sense is made of this part of the introduction, it is because the reader has probably

used his/her background knowledge to bridge up what the text does not give. This

149

incomplete development of an idea results in fact in a problem of incoherence; since this section of the text does not ensure unequivocal comprehension by itself, it makes the relationship with what comes before and after bumpy.

5.2.4. Case 4: Aly

This subject is a mature student who is in a US university for a mid-career graduate training program in nutrition. He has an outstanding general English language proficiency attested to by a 610 TOEFL score. He had in fact already spent a year in an American higher education institution on a non-degree exchange program. Only the researcher-set writing sample (Aly1, Appendix 3, pp. 226-228) was collected from him (he is not taking any composition class). In the questionnaire, in response to question 3.7, he indicates: "I have no problems in composition" and goes on to explain that he has "acquired English composition skills through education at the secondary and university levels." What he means by this is that he was exposed to EFL writing at secondary school as well as at the university levels, since this subject completed a B. A. in English in the home country. He in fact shows signs of these writing skills in his 629-word essay. The topic is introduced with a general-to-specific movement that adroitly recycles the main question of the prompt. The body contains three paragraphs whose sentences flow into one another comfortably. The concluding paragraph brings closure to the discussion of the issue at hand, and the ideas developed are very much to the point.

However, when the structure of this fluent essay is examined in detail, organizational issues relating to thesis statement, an idea straddling two separate paragraphs, and thorough development of an idea can be raised. In addition, the

impersonal feel of the writer's personal position attracts attention, without being so much of an organizational problem.

5.2.4.1. Introductory paragraph and basic paragraph structures

The introductory paragraph of Aly1 has no thesis, but just a controlling statement giving the points the argumentation will bear upon, with no indication of a personal stance, as is illustrated in (19). This shortcoming is by now a common feature, since it has been observed in many of the writing samples examined.

(19)   *Now, in order to answer the question as to whether the enforcement of a birth rate control program limited to two children is worth doing or not, let us put under close scrutiny three main aspects: the religious issue, the relationship between such a program and a Nation's economy and welfare, its impact on health and nutrition.*

Another shortcoming from the perspective of school writing in English has to do with paragraph structure. Two of Aly's body paragraphs (20) can hardly qualify as separate paragraphs with distinct main ideas. The first of the two starts with the idea that

(20)   *It is true that a hundred of people can perform a better job than a dozen but only if the performance of each individual within both groups is the same. But if a Nation has a big population of malnourished, sick and infected people, the outcome of their total production would result in a negative balance. Whereas, a limited but healthy and productive population will end up with a positive balance in which everybody can take advantage - the welfare of the group as it were- proving once more Adam Smith's theory which states in other words that the overall welfare of a Nation corresponds to the sum of all of its individuals' welfares.*

    The health and nutrition status of a group is better controlled if the food supplies and health facilities match the number of its population. If there is a discrepancy, then occurs starvation and diseases forcing people into adapting themselves to the prevailing situation. **This adaptation is most of the time biased and gives birth in several cases to robberies, corruption and misbehavior.** *How many times one can see in the media, a strike or politics-related riots in overpopulated developing countries, showing the "strikers" rushing and breaking into food stores and then leaving with bags of goods?* *In addition, an overcrowded house is most of the time the nest of pathogenic microbes and parasites leading to impaired sanitary conditions, the first step of endemic diseases.*

large numbers of people can constitute an advantage, but also a disadvantage. The second one, when examined carefully, does in fact carry on with supporting details of the main idea mentioned above, by arguing that welfare is ensured by keeping a balance between supplies and population size. This failure to circumscribe one idea to one paragraph is a problem essay writing manuals insistently guard against.

Another paragraphing problem exists in Aly's second paragraph of the two. The sentence starting with *"This adaptation..."*(in bold in excerpt 20) could have been an appropriate beginning or topic sentence for a new paragraph, but, because the previous paragraph was not adequately sectioned off, nor closed formally, this paragraph now presents the unbecoming peculiarity of carrying on with an idea from the previous paragraph, thus killing the potential for a new paragraph start of this sentence.

5.2.4.2. Conclusion and various other problems

As a consequence of Aly's failure to offer a thesis in line with the central instruction of the prompt -- arguing for adoption or rejection of the proposed policy -- he states his personal position on the issue under consideration only in the concluding paragraph (21). Aly explains that withholding of the personal position is what he was taught and that he considers this to be more adequate than stating it at the beginning.

(21)   *The analyses carried on the major aspects underscoring a society's status that is religion, economy, health and nutrition issues, have clearly proved that the implementation of a birth rate control program in most overpopulated regions of the world is mandatory to insure a good standard of living and welfare and above all, to restore man's faith and dignity as the superior animal.*

This thesis statement in the conclusion is framed in a fashion that attracts some attention. Aly seems to suggest that this position is not really his, but was out there,

masked by some contingency which was cracked by the tools of analysis. A similar finding is present in case 1, Khalifa. This different tone in responding to the question of the prompt seems to be a writing problem not addressed by the writing instruction literature. If the Anglo Saxon outlook on the world seems to prefer an approach whereby the individual resorts to his/her reason to subjugate adhesion, can an approach that takes a contrary course, i.e. letting one's reason be subjugated by analytical tools out there, make sense? A definitive answer to this question surely needs more thinking, but it seems that there is a potential source of problem there. If an essay is summed up as answering a question in the prompt by making adequate lexical-syntactic choices within adiscourse organization familiar to native speaker, this type of response noted in Aly1 (and also in Khalifa1) may distract the reader. So far the literature on contrastive rhetoric seems to suggest that the native speaker-like feel is achieved primarily by adhering to the preferred organizational structure of discourse. There may be other factors, and it is possible that the particular tone noted in Aly's and in Khalifa's papers are possibly among these other factors.

There is also in this essay a case of an idea not thoroughly developed. Half way through the middle of the second of the two paragraphs in excerpt (20), Aly uses a rhetorical question, and, without answering this question, or indicating clearly the point he meant to make through this, he brings in an additional point whose relationship to the previous is left to the reader to infer. This results in a lack of smooth flow of information, a shortcoming in the written discourse of the essay. It is possible that language and/or culture-specific expectations underlie this bump to the coherence of the passage. The fact that Aly raises a question and proceeds without giving the answer to this question is

153

perhaps based on the assumption that his audience can infer the answer. If this is the case, this assumption is one more sign of the reader responsible characteristic of communication I have suggested as marking the context of Senegal.

5.2.5. Case 5: Ermon

Ermon is in his first semester in a US college. He is 24; he did not attend university back home, and came out of the Senegalese equivalent of high school directly into his US college with a 503 TOEFL score. He is majoring in communication, and explained in the questionnaire that he has some problems in English composition because he stopped studying English when he passed the TOEFL 2 years before. Two samples were collected from him. The first one (Ermon1, see Appendix 3, pp.228-229) is about secondary school memories (316 words), and the second (Ermon2, see Appendix 3, pp. 229-230) is a response to the researcher-set task (284 words).

Ermon1 required writing about secondary school memories. Although short, this paper presents no notable organizational problem; it however contains mechanics errors. Like Baba2, it is essentially an account of past experience already structured by chronology, with the author giving an account of school memories in the sequence in which they happened, and drawing a conclusion about these memories at the end. This low level of organizational problem with written discourse reconstructing past experience again points to the importance of a clear distinction in modes of written discourse. This kind of text is also the one the survey suggests students have fewer problems with.

Ermon2 is this subject's response to the researcher-set prompt. It asked students to argue for or against limiting to two the number of children a family can have, this in

154

order to fight against global overpopulation. This text presents problems with the thesis, paragraph structure, and conclusion paragraph.

5.2.5.1. Introductory paragraph

What might have been taken as a thesis in the introduction is not in line with the demand of the prompt to argue for or against the policy in one's country; instead, this inadequate thesis broadly states how the country should evaluate this proposal (22).

(22)   *World growth is inevitable and it is expected to reach about nine(9) billion in 2050. In order to control this increase, it's prominent to materialize an innovative policy which should adjust the political and socioeconomic trend in concert with the nations involved in this plan, without ignoring beliefs and values. <u>Senegal need to address implications of changes in coherence with its cultural and religious context.</u>*

This irrelevant thesis is highlighted with underlining. It signals a steering away from the original prompt, and constitutes a serious problem, since, if presumably, students can write out of the frame indicated to them, the criteria for judging will not be uniform.

5.2.5.2. Paragraph structure and various other problems

The second set of problems in this second paper is in relation to paragraph structure. Both the first and second body paragraphs are made up of double claims with no supporting details (23). The first paragraph makes the claims that (a) increase in

(23)   *Demographic increase in Senegal will result in a growing of working ages, however there will be a continuous need to increase and develop infrastructures in terms of education, health and employment. All african countries are facing these same problems of population because of their low Gross National Product (GNP).*

With reference to the economic stategies, a great population might be a potential provider of consumers and profits for the free-market. Globalization is a new trend in this new millenium, planned and sustained by some institutions such as the international monutary fund and the World Bank which dictate their policies to african countries.

155

population will result in growth of working age, and (b) there will be a need to increase infrastructures, but there is no coherent support of these. Like in Ermon1, there are notable mechanical problems in these excerpts, but they are not the major concern of this study. In the second paragraph, we have again two seemingly unrelated claims consisting in the idea that a large population may present advantages, and international institutions dictate policies to African countries. Visibly, Ermon does not seem to be aware of how an acceptable expository paragraph is structured in English at least.

The last body paragraph of this second paper also shows coherence problems, and the last paragraph of the paper is hardly recognizable as a conclusion, because it neither recapitulates nor provides closure. In addition to the problems described above, Ermon's two papers are characterized by short paragraphs.

5.3. Summation of problems

The above description of the problems evidenced in the writing samples of the cases under consideration confirms the initial assumption of this study that Senegalese students will encounter some difficulties in composition classes. All the five cases, irrespective of their perceptions of writing problems in composition classes, do show multiple signs of these problems.

In response to the first research question (How do students' writings in English adhere to the typical organizational structure of the English expository school essay?), we may say that the writing of the cases studied here do not generally adhere to the typical organizational structure of the English expository essay. This divergence is reflected at different levels of the essay, i.e. overall essay structure, introduction, body paragraph,

conclusion, and various other inappropriate features affecting discourse and text organization.

Table 5.3 sums up the major organizational problems evidenced in the cases' samples. We can see from this table that there were many paragraphing problems in the cases' samples; in many cases, there is in fact more than one paragraphing problem in a sample as the number of checks shows. These are varied however; they range from one idea straddling distinct paragraphs, two apparent topic sentences in a paragraph, and the introduction assuming the role of body paragraph, to lack of support or closure. Two other frequent organizational problems are the introduction without a thesis, and the conclusion. Absence of the controlling idea and what is called here writing off-topic occupy the third rank of essay problems in a tie with the controlling idea problems. Coherence, incomplete development of an idea, and overall essay structure are also among the problems evidenced, but they are less prevalent.

This answer to the first research question suggests an equally negative answer to the second research question (Does the use of paragraphs in these students' writings conform to the paragraph conception of expository essay writing in English?). The use of paragraphs by most of the subjects suggests that the latter's conception of the paragraph is different from that of the English essay. Judging by the findings from the cases' samples, paragraphing problems rank very high in the organizational problems experienced by the subjects. Six out of the nine samples from the cases reveal paragraph-structure problems. Of the three that show no paragraphing problem, two (Baba2 and Ermon1) are among those types of texts which the survey indicated are easier for students, because they are not structurally very different from the writing types students

157

Cases & Smples		Essay Struct.	Thesis	Cont. Idea	Paragr. Structure	Conclusion Paragraph	Off topic	Cohe.	Inc. Dev
Khalifa	1	✓	✓		✓✓	✓	✓		
Baba	1		✓		✓✓	✓	✓		
	2			✓					
	3		✓	✓					
Yandé	1			✓	✓✓	✓		✓	✓
	2				✓				
Aly	1		✓		✓	✓			✓
Ermon	1								
	2		✓		✓✓		✓	✓	

Table 5.3: Summary of organizational problems noted in cases' writing

were most familiar with in L1school writing. In other words, if we ignore those two samples it is six out of seven essay-like samples that show paragraphing problems. There seem to definitely be a mismatch between the subjects' conception of paragraph or paragraphing and that of the English expository essay.

As for the third question (What is the degree of linearity or digressiveness revealed by students' writings?), its answer is more mitigated. Perhaps before the answer to this question is given, it is important to revisit the notions of linearity and digressiveness. Linearity is that information sequence expected in exposition in English and which is characterized by topic sentence, support, and closure (Kaplan, 1966: 4). Linearity is dependent on two elements of essay writing which give substance, unity and coherence. As for digressiveness, the same author suggests that it is the characteristic which ensures that nothing that does not belong to a paragraph is there.

From the above clarification of the two concepts, it appears that the equation traditionally established between non-linearity and digressiveness may be questioned. For if non-linearity evidences lack of unity and incoherence, digressiveness, although it

entails absence of unity, does not involve incoherence necessarily. In excerpt (24) for

instance, there is a break in the smooth flow of information which results in non-linearity.

(24)   *How many times one can see in the media, a strike or politics-related riots in*
        overpopulated developing countries, showing the" strikers" rushing and breaking
        into food stores and then leaving with bags of goods? In addition, an overcrowded
        house is most of the time the nest of pathogenic microbes and parasites leading to
        impaired sanitary conditions, the first step of endemic diseases.

However, we cannot say that this non-linearity is digressive, because everything in this

excerpt contributes to the central idea that overpopulation brings about problems. We

then have here non-linearity without digressiveness. One more illustration of the

questionable nature of the non-linearity/digressiveness equation is in excerpt (25).

(25)   *Unfortunately, in spite of all the opportunities of becoming a developed*
        country, Senegal is still belongs to the third world countries, and the level
        of educations is still low and I sincerely believe that education occupies a
        very, important place in the development of a country.
        This is why, if I was given the power to change something in Senegal, this is
        where I would start first.

        As far as the culture is concerned, I'm not very worried because it's
        a greet and rich one.

        The major problem that faces my country is the lack of education
        and this needs to be worked on. The Senegalese government has to
        help its population, fight this obstacle by sensitizing its people.
        Colonization has played an important part in changing Senegalese
        mentality. In fact, France has occupied Senegal in the 18th century .
        The French imposed their religion, language, mentalities, in general
        during that time and this had lot of effects in the country especially in
        the culture and mentalities of people.

        So we have to create our own way of education based on our culture,
        our mentality, because the culture itself is not so bad. However, this
        creation should be appropriate to us.

        This inappropriate colonization, which is really different from its culture,
        has made of Senegal a corrupted one what needs to be fought. Corruption
        also is a direct consequence of colonization, and we need to get rid of it.
        It can be a big handicap in the development of a country and it's the main
        reason why the Senegalese economy is not doing very well.

        All the problems need to be solve, but if I had the power to change anything,
        I would start with the education because that is what can change mentalities,
        the more...

In the above excerpt, the author seems to be promising to talk about why education needs to be changed in her thesis statement, the first underlined sentence. But after making this promise, she does not follow through with it, and, instead, devotes many paragraphs to matters not directly contributing to the central question of why education should be changed. However, this digression does not reveal any characteristic of incoherence in the sense of a break in the smooth flow of information.

The different paragraphing, coherence, and non-thorough development-of-ideas problems found in the samples result generally in non-linearity in the cases' writing samples. It is not however evident that these problems can necessarily qualify as digressions, for digression is not automatically incoherent. On the contrary, it is a textually organized temporary foregoing of the main focus of the discussion. The question of the assumed antonymic relationship between non-linearity and digressiveness in the contrastive rhetoric literature is at stake here. This assumption needs to be re-examined and the assumed antonymy corrected if need be. The non-linearity observed in these samples seems to result from non-thorough development of ideas, poor paragraph structure, etc., and the ensuing incoherence, but not from digression.

The above answers to the first three research questions, derived from the examination of the cases' samples, are supported by the data from the wider pool of subjects. As Table 5.4 shows, paragraphing, along with concluding paragraph errors, are the most prevalent problems. Nonetheless the distribution of conclusion problems over almost the whole of the pool of subjects is striking; all of the subjects' writing samples, except two, reveal this type of problem. These concluding paragraph problems take the form of lack of recapitulation of raised points, presence of thesis statement in conclusion,

160

Subj. & Samples		Essay Struct.	No Thesis	Cont. Idea	Intro Parag	Basic Paragr.	Concl. Paragr	Off topic	Coher.	Inc. Deve
Khalifa	1	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓
Baba	1		✓		✓	✓✓✓	✓			
	2						✓			
	3		✓					✓		
Modou	1						✓			
Moise	1	✓				✓✓	✓			✓
Yandé	1					✓✓✓				
	2					✓	✓			
Tijaan	1					✓	✓			
Khalil	1		✓				✓		✓	
Mor	1				✓	✓	✓			
Aly	1		✓			✓✓	✓✓			✓
Codou	1			✓		✓✓✓✓	✓✓		✓	✓
Ermon	1						✓			
	2		✓			✓✓		✓		
Babou	1	✓				✓	✓	✓		

Table 5.4: Summary of organizational problems in the samples of the wider pool

conclusion of the essay appearing in distinct paragraph blocks, etc. The recurrence of the lack of thesis, and the tendency to steer the topic of writing away from the prompt are also noticeable, but this last problem applies only to the researcher-set prompt, and is thus more significant than it appears on the table.

5.3.1. Introductory paragraph problems

It's of notoriety that the introductory paragraph of the English school essay places great importance on the thesis statement, and also on the controlling idea. The thesis statement orients the reader by providing him/her with the personal stance of the writer on the issues raised by the prompt. The controlling idea suggests the different points the writer will be using in support of his/her personal position. These two components of the introductory paragraph are crucial in implementing, at this level, the writer's

responsibility in conveying the meaning of discourse.

The writing samples of all but one of the five cases focused upon in this study show problems with either the thesis statement or the controlling idea in the introductory paragraph. Khalifa introduces the topic very competently, but does not give a thesis statement. He however provides some kind of orientation by indicating that "[t]he purpose of this document is to determine whether the bill should be passed or not." This suggests that the writer understands the need for the inclusion of minimal orientation in the introduction on the intentions of the author. That this understanding does not translate into the formal thesis expected in essay writing is a question of interest that will be explored further in the discussion.

Two of Baba's three samples reveal problems with the introduction too. Baba1, a descriptive sample, has no thesis. However, this absence does not seem to greatly affect the paper. This raises the question of whether the thesis statement is equally central to all modes of essay writing. Baba2, the researcher-set essay, presents a thesis, but does not show a controlling idea. The two sentences coming immediately after the thesis seem, at first sight, to be a clumsy attempt at giving the controlling idea, but looked at in relation to the body of the essay, they are not, for the rest of the body paragraphs develop no ideas related to the content of these sentences. Yandé1 and Aly1 also present introductory paragraph problems similar to those summarized above.

These introductory paragraph problems are in fact very much prevalent in Senegalese students writings if we go beyond the five cases focused to consider the wider set of samples. As Table 5.5 shows, practically all of the writing samples examined in this research present introductory paragraph problems, with the absence of thesis

statement being the most recurrent one. The table also reveals a tendency among these writers not to include a controlling idea or to use unanswered rhetorical questions to suggest the plan of the essay. Another introductory section problem is that, in many cases, what might be taken as a thesis steers the topic of writing away from the specific requirements of the prompt.

Subjects & Samples		No Thesis	No C. Idea	Question As C. Idea	Topic Steered away	Intro Structure
Khalifa	1	✓				
Baba	1	✓				
	2		✓			
	3				✓	
Modou	1			✓		
Moise	1				✓	
Yandé	1		✓			
	2					
Tijaan	1					
Khalil	1	✓				
Mor	1					✓
Aly	1	✓				
Codou	1			✓		
Ermon	1					
	2				✓	
Babou	1	✓				

Table 5.5: Introductory paragraph problems in wider pool of writing samples

5.3.2. Paragraphing problems

The examination of the selected cases' writings revealed various paragraphing problems (Table 5.3). The paragraph in essay writing is conceived as a discourse unit revolving around one single idea introduced as a claim in the form of a topic sentence or idea, and substantiated by supporting details, before closure is brought to the whole unit. As already seen, many cases' samples did not conform to this conception of the paragraph. Errors resulting from this non-conformity range from the same idea straddling

163

two separate paragraphs, to the existence of two claims (hence two ideas) in one paragraph, claim without supporting details, no closure to paragraph, and to comments used as support.

As in the case of the introductory paragraph problems, these paragraphing failures are also reflected in the wider set of writing samples (Table 5.6). Paragraphing problems related to unity and focus seem to be widespread, since at least seven writing samples show evidence of this type of problem under the form of one idea, or variants of the same idea, straddling two paragraphs, or the same paragraph containing two claims or ideas. Other paragraphing problems consist in non-adoption of the claim + support structure in paragraphs, no closure for paragraphs, one-sentence paragraphs, etc.

We also note two aspects of writing which, although they are not paragraphing problems, are peculiarities that can have some effect on the evaluation of school essay

Subjects & Samples	One-paragr. body	One idea over # paragr.	Two ideas In one paragr.	No support to claim	No closure to paragr.	Comments as support
Khalifa 1	✓					
Baba 1		✓	✓	✓		
2						
3						
Modou 1						
Moise 1			✓			
Yandé 1				✓	✓	✓
2			✓			✓
Tijaan 1						✓
Khalil 1			✓			
Mor 1					✓	
Aly 1		✓				
Codou 1						✓
Ermon 1						
2			✓			
Babou 1					✓	

Table 5.6: Paragraph problems in wider pool of writing samples

paragraphs. One is revealed in Modou1, and consists in tagging the idea of the next

paragraph to the end of the previous. This practice, common in French L1 writing, may

not be at home with the most common practice in the English school essay, and

consisting in tagging the transitional device at the beginning of the paragraph. We see in

excerpt (26) that the idea of "having a very bad time" (underlined section) with which the

previous paragraph ends is the topic of the following paragraph.

(26)   *(..). The jobs were passed from father to son even if the son did*
          not meet the criteria for the job. So the poor stayed poor and the rich stayed
          rich. This history is still going on in Senegal but it is disguised nowadays
          and the young are having a very bad time *with it.*
              Actually, young people in Senegal are suffering *from the discrimination*
          between the castes. They cannot understand or distinguish the differences
          among them, so very often they do have a friend or girl friend from the other
          caste.

The other one is found in Babou1 (27), and is constituted by an inductive

structure of the paragraph, which annihilates the need for a wrap-up to the paragraph.

(27)   *In most African countries in the past , the main economic activity was*
          agriculture. Few decades before, industrial activities was not known in our
          coutries. In these countries, where there was no machines , people based on
          human labor to develop their economic activities. It was frequent to see a
          man who had twenty children. Usually these big families were the big land
          owners and had several farms or fields. The need of developing economic
          activities in a non industrialized environment could explain the fact that
          people used to have many children to help them in their activities. Thus this
          traditional attitude continue to be hold by some people who still live in
          traditional era although we have reached an era of huge industrialization
          and information, an era where human labor tend to be substitute more and
          more by automatic systems.

This paragraph is essentially saying that, although we live in the age of industrialization,

some people are leading a traditional life, which makes having many children necessary.

But because of the inductive structure of discourse adopted by the writer in developing

this idea, the reader gets the point of the paragraph only when he reads to the end. The

inductive structure is said to be acceptable in English expository essay, although the

deductive mode is preferred (Kaplan, 1966). There is however one problem resulting

from the adoption of this inductive structure in essay writing. As we may see, Babou's paragraph does not have a wrap-up or closure nor a specific topic sentence. Essay writing students are taught that, to bring closure to a paragraph, they need to reiterate the topic-sentence at the end of the paragraph. With the inductive structure of Babou's paragraph, this recommendation becomes very difficult to achieve. There is then a potential source of problems in saying that this structure is acceptable in essay writing, for it does not allow adhesion to the paragraph structure taught as a model of expository writing in English.

5.3.3. Concluding paragraph problems

The concluding paragraph problems in the cases' writings are related to the absence of reference to the thesis and/or recapitulation of the different points argued. All the cases' responses to the researcher-set prompt except one, fail to recapitulate. One other problem noted in the conclusion is the mention of a new idea (Baba1).

The wider pool of writing samples also shows concluding paragraph problems. Table 5.7 recapitulates these problems; it shows that twelve papers out the total of 16 considered in this study do not carry a recapitulation of points raised in the essay. Other problems revealed here are in relation to the presence of a new idea in the conclusion and statement of the writer's broader sentiments on the general issue raised by the prompt at the exclusion of other components of the conclusion (Ermon2 and Codou1). One concluding paragraph problem noted here is striking though; it is constituted by the presence of no concluding paragraph at all in the essay. Because this is such a striking problem, and also because it is difficult to judge if there is a conclusion or not without the

166

Subjects & Samples		No Recap	New Idea	Two Parag. blocks	Thesis in conclusion	No conclusion at all to essay
Khalifa	1	✓				
Baba	1		✓			
	2	✓				
	3					
Modou	1	✓				
Moise	1	✓				
Yandé	1					
	2	✓				
Tijaan	1			✓		
Khalil	1	✓				
Mor	1					✓
Aly	1	✓			✓	
Codou	1	✓				
Ermon	1	✓				
	2	✓				
Babou	1	✓				

Table 5.7: Concluding paragraph problems in wider pool of writing sample

essay, I provide the whole paper as an illustration (28). It is to be noted that this paper,

Mor1 also does not have an introduction in the true sense; the first line tackles directly

(28)   *As far as I am concerned, I don't agree with international non governmental organization which (h)as proposed to world countries the policy that each family should have (no) more than two children in order to ease global overpopulation.*

   One of my three reasons is a familial one: the Senegalese family is large; we usually have two or three uncles, three or four ants and a lot of cousins and nephews. Besides every grandfather of my country is so proud to see his family growing up in number.

   My second reason is economic: my country is not developed as many European countries or the United States to have less people in the field to develop our agriculture. We don't have a motorized agriculture as western countries; we still have an artisan one. That involves more hands, in other words we need more people in our fields.

   My last reason is a political reason: I think that European countries, which an old population, are scared to be invaded by a labor coming from the third world. They don't want third world people in their countries. What is so paradoxical is that this policy of two children to each couple is not applicable to countries, which have an old population; on the contrary, they (should) have a policy, which encouraged people to have more children.

the question posed by the prompt. Mor, the author of this paper, explains that in both EFL

167

writing and his first semester freshman composition classes, students did not produce pieces of writing with conclusion or introduction. In EFL, they usually answered content questions, and in freshman composition, the class emphasized paragraph development.

The different types of essay problems presented above suggest clearly that Senegalese students whose writings are examined in this study have a problem in constructing the concluding paragraph of an English school essay.

5.3.4. Overall essay structure and various other writing problems

The last type of discourse-level problems noted in the writing of the five cases of this study has to do with overall essay structure and various other problems. Because some of the overall organizational problems were covered in the introductory paragraph section, I will focus here on some various other problems noted in the study.

Three of these five cases technically wrote off-topic by steering their essay away from the terms of the writing prompt. This was specifically noted in the researcher-elicited writing sample, not in the class writing samples. (In many of class samples, the subjects gave a title or an approximate rendition of the prompts; it is not possible then to judge how closely they responded to these prompts.) Khalifa1 argues for a rejection of the proposed policy, but does so, based only on religious grounds, not on family, social, economic, or political issues as the prompt required. Baba3 argues for rejection and adoption at the same time, although the prompt required writers to argue for either one or the other. This tendency to write off-topic may be interpreted as resulting from the influence of *dissertation*. This task allows a broad approach to the question raised by the prompt. The translated example of dissertation in Appendix 2, pp. 217-218, shows this

broadness. When students apply this broad approach to the prompt of the English language essay, with its specific rhetorical instructions, the result can be a steering away from the topic that is not technically different from writing off-topic.

The writings of other subjects in the study also reveal problems either with the overall structure of the essay or of other nature. These have to do with various paragraphing problems, problems with the satisfactory development of the points raised, the place of the thesis statement in the essay, etc. Some of these paragraphing, coherence, or incomplete development problems result in non-linearity of passages or text. Examples of this consequence are present in Ermon2 and Khalil1 (see Appendix 3, pp. 229-230 and 233-234, for full papers).

In Khalil1, there are paragraphing and coherence problems preventing different paragraphs to flow into one another and to be in line with the overall theme of the essay. In other words, there is no linearity in the sequence of paragraphs as is apparent in (29). These three paragraphs follow an introduction whose controlling idea indicates that the author will discuss how children are abused because of their status. However, the main idea of the first paragraph is that the author's parents divorced when he was a child, and

(29)   *"Who do you want, to live with? Stop picking your nose and answer me." I was nine years old when my father asked me this question. My parents were getting a divorce, and they wanted me to choose a side. I stood there with my fingers in my nose and cried because I knew something terrible was happening with my family and I could not comprehend all of the emotions that were coursing through my body. I stood there frightened and confused. At that time, all I wanted to do was to be a little boy enveloped by the security of my parents. I said all of this, not to say that I was an abused child because I was not. My parents divorced and my mother remarried a man who treated me as if I was his biological offspring. I mentioned my childhood because every evening watching the news, with Elian Gonzales case, I am reminded of the day my parents wanted me to choose which person I would live with.*

On the continents of Asia and Africa girls as young as eleven are given by their parents to be married to men up to four times their age. These pubescent girls are forced to undergo female genital mutilation, this

technique partially or totally remove the clitoris. It is thought that, if girls on the eve of sexual maturity undergo this excision they would be less inclined to have sexual relations before marriage. After they are married, sex will not be for gratification but for procreation. Often this practice is wrapped in cultural and religious mosaic, and this people are more inclined to maintain this custom, The illustrious American writer Alice Walker wrote a book on this practice, and has formed an association to discourage this brutal and often a life threatening act.

Even though the Universal Human Rights Declaration stated over fifty years ago, that education was a fundamental right, it is estimated that more than forty million children are being denied their rights. This is child abuse because if a child is limited by his or her ability to read and write then, his life will more than likely be shackled to poverty and violence.

he was subsequently raised by a nice step-father; the second paragraph is about young girls who are victims of genital mutilation in Asia and Africa; and the third suggests that non-access to education is a form of child abuse. Nowhere in this paper, do we see an attempt at bringing these different statements in line with each other, or with the overall theme of the discussion the reader was promised in the introduction. As a consequence, this paper suffers from lack of linearity in the points raised; there is an abrupt break in the smooth flow of connected discourse from paragraph one to paragraph two, and from paragraph two to paragraph three.

In Ermon2, there are local coherence problems in one of the paragraphs (30). The theme of the first sentence of this paragraph is that there is a "plan" out there designed by some organizations, but in the second sentence, while the reader expected elaboration on the details of this plan, the writer shifts to speaking about Senegal not being obligated to (world) organizations. This again results in problems of linearity, although there is no digression.

(30)   *The regulation of population growth is a plan of such organizations.*
            With a population of 9 million inhabitants Senegal is not obligated to adopt
            these plans. Beside these facts, the cultural and religious background is
            contradictory to this policy: poverty and misery which result in promiscuity,
            abortion and sexually transmitted diseases are the consequences
            of our dependency upon foreign countries and a lack of morality.

170

Other various problems evidenced in the samples consist in incomplete development of an idea resulting in incoherence and/or lack of linearity. The following excerpts provide illustrations of this. In (31) Moise suggests that, now, people think differently on matters of family size; but the reader is not told clearly what this difference is. In (24) Aly uses a question to make a point, but since he does not provide

(31)   *One other aspect of this idea is economic. In Senegal, the two third of the population are farmers. And they need a lot of person to exploit their land because the agriculture is not industrial and uses people instead of machine. The tradition too requires the children to take care financially their parents whenever they start making money. So the fewer children the parents have, the less money they receive from them. But with the transformation of rural city to town, and nature of business, people start to think different.*

(24)   *How many times one can see in the media, a strike or politics-related riots in overpopulated developing countries, showing the " strikers" rushing and breaking into food stores and then leaving with bags of goods? In addition, an overcrowded house is most of the time the nest of pathogenic microbes and parasites leading to impaired sanitary conditions, the first step of endemic diseases.*

an answer to the question, the reader may be confused over the exact point the question meant to make, this as a result of the ensuing break in the flow of information.

5.3.5. Conclusion

This study's examination of writing samples from Senegalese students in US college composition classes shows that (1) these writings do not adhere to the typical organizational structure of the English expository school essay; (2) the Senegalese students' conception and use of paragraphs does not seem to conform with that of the English expository essay, and that this is in part an explanation of (1); (3) Senegalese students' writings show some instances of non-linearity, but the latter does not always result in digressiveness.

The various specific organizational problems evidenced in these writings at the

overall essay, introduction, body paragraph, and conclusion levels have been presented in the preceding sections. They support the findings summarized in this conclusion section.

5.4. Discussion

An assumption of this study of Senegalese students' writing was that, accordingly with the contrastive rhetoric theory, the latter would reveal problems largely accountable to the instructional L1 of the subjects. The study has revealed that, (1) generally the writings of Senegalese students do not adhere to the traditional organizational structure of the English language essay, (2) that the subjects' use of paragraph does not conform to the paragraph conception of the English essay, (3) that Senegalese students show cases of non-linearity in their writing, although this non-linearity is not necessarily to be viewed as digression.

In this section, the meaning of these findings is discussed. This discussion will bear on some of the specific organizational problems supporting the above responses to the research questions. Limitations of the study are also considered in this section.

5.4.1. Organization structure problems

Organization structure problems are essentially reflected at four levels of the essay: the overall structure of the essay, the introductory paragraph structure, the basic paragraph structure, and the concluding paragraph structure. At each of these levels, these problems generally take the form of divergence from what is traditionally expected from the structural organization of the school essay in English as it is advocated in the context of writing instruction in the US.

172

5.4.1.1. Overall essay structure

The overall structure of the English school essay is typically characterized by an introduction, conclusion, and body; this latter consists of at least three paragraphs. This structure is not only for typographical purposes, but has important implications for the efficiency of the essay as a communication tool. Attitudes and approaches to knowledge in the Anglo-Saxon world expect that an essay is focused, critical, reasoned, and competent (Ballard and Clanchy, 1991). Some of these expectations are hardly achievable if the structure of the essay is not respected. The need for focus, for instance, is charted out early in the structure of the essay through a thesis in the introduction, while the expectation for a truly competent discussion of the topic can hardly be achieved in an essay with only one body paragraph.

Different problems with the overall structure of the essay are evidenced in the writings of the subjects of this study. Khalifa1 presents a body of the essay in one-block paragraph; Codou1, despite many repetitions and separate paragraphs, has only one idea in the body of the essay (change the educational system); consequently, she has material for only one true essay paragraph. Babou1 shows an inductive structure of paragraph development that does not allow the accommodation of the preferred basic paragraph structure in English school essay writing. I consider below the possible meaning of these overall organizational defects.

The problem of a one-block paragraph of the essay body revealed by one of the papers (Khalifa1) is not easily explained. This feature of the subjects' writing is somewhat perplexing. The *dissertation*, which is considered the closest equivalent of the

173

English school essay, does not have a one-paragraph body. Another writing task of the Senegalese schooling system, the *rédaction*, accepts this characteristic of a one-paragraph body, but this latter task comes so early in writing instruction that one would hardly understand that, after an almost total de-emphasis in senior high school, its overall structure remains so vivid in the minds of students that it appears during their transition toward writing in L2 at the university level.

It is possible that the most evident reason for this structural error in writing is the unawareness, on the part of students, of the requirement for three different body paragraphs in the English school essay. The different conception and use of paragraphing in L1 French and L2 English suggested in the response to the second research question, combined with the above mentioned unawareness, can be a supplementary factor. Cultural attitude may also be a factor in the explanation of this problem. In the Anglo Saxon culture, one implication of competent treatment of an essay is that it must raise sufficient different arguments (Ballard and Clanchy, 1991). For some oral cultures like the ones of the traditional native languages of Senegal, credibility -- which in this context may be related to competence -- is not necessarily assessed through discourse, but rather through social validation; one convinces people, not necessarily because of elaboration on what one has to say, but because one's social standing identifies you as a credible person worthy of trust, even without the presentation of extensive proof. It is possible that such a cultural attitude induces a certain preference for brevity, which is apparent in the one-paragraph body.

Codou1 is an effusive paper with many paragraphing problems. The author touches on many issues in the course of the paper, but in reality, she has only one main idea in

this essay, i.e. that if she could change one thing in her country, that would be the educational system. The length and variety of the non-focused sub-topics the essay touched upon are due to the fact that Codou did not seem to have a clear plan of what to write. This is manifest in the introduction where she first says that if she had to change something, she would not know where to start. Presumably, instead of pausing to plan her writing, she laid down all the leads her mind was considering, before deciding that changing the educational system is what deserves to be highlighted.

This suggests one important aspect of writing sometimes ignored by student writers. The type of writing valued in the context of schooling needs to follow a plan or structure, and cannot be a replica of an exploratory monologue, or any type of spoken discourse. In L1 French, the distinction between the spoken and written modes in the prescriptiveness of the rules of grammar is however less apparent, and this can lead students to assume that written communication can be approached in the same manner as spoken communication.

The inductive paragraph structure noted in Babou's paper is not by itself a problem, because this structure is said to be acceptable in English school writing. Where it may be a problem for essay writing is that it does not allow the accommodation of the classic expository paragraph with topic sentence, support, and closure. In the case of Babou, this problematic structure is understandable since, in his L1, this structure of paragraph is widely used. The important point this study wants to make is not, however, the explanation of the problem for students with French as an L1, but the fact that this inductive structure, although accepted in English, seems to be incompatible with an important aspect of essay writing in English, i.e. the classic structure of the expository

175

paragraph. There seems to be a need for a greater awareness of the implications of this paragraph structure so that student writers are not led to problems by the advice found in writing instruction manuals or classes.

5.4.1.2. Introductory paragraph structure

The findings of this study suggest that Senegalese students' writings do not follow the typical organizational structure of the English language expository school essay. At the level of the introductory paragraph, the organizational problems in Senegalese students' papers are in relation to the thesis statement, controlling idea, and other expected features of the introduction. The literature review has shown that the English school essay places high premium on the thesis statement and controlling idea. The structure these two features imply in the introductory paragraph is to be adhered to strictly, since clear understanding of the information conveyed by the essay depends in part on it.

In French, the L1 of instruction of the subjects of this study, despite many suggestions to the contrary, there does not seem to be, strictly speaking, any analogue of the English language essay prevalent in US college composition classes. Different school writing tasks across languages and schooling traditions are often generically referred to as essay. But considered in detail within a given language or schooling context, the preferred organizational structure of this generic essay may not be the same. If we consider the English language essay in terms of its specific organizational structure, French does not have a similar school writing task.

In terms of its general academic value, the most important of the L1 French

school writing tasks is without contest the *dissertation*. Its introductory paragraph structure values a smooth bringing-in of the topic, like the English essay, but has no such requirement as the thesis statement. Because the discursive traditions of French lean more toward Plato than Aristotle, and emphasize rationality in the reader, they tend to walk him/her through any argumentation which is to be provided before stating the logical conclusion of the discussion. These factors explain the absence of a thesis statement in the introduction of the *dissertation*. Like the English school essay, the *dissertation* mandates an orientation of the reader, but this orientation is generally achieved through rhetorical questions.

The high rate of introductory paragraph problems (absence of thesis statement / controlling idea, or the use of questions as controlling idea) in the writings examined is likely a result of this structural discrepancy between the introductory paragraphs in the English essay and the *dissertation* in French. This is mirrored in the interviews of some of the subjects. Khalifa, we may remember, considered that writing is practically the same in all languages. Because he was among those whose writing samples show introductory paragraph problems, we can assume that he applied principles of writing in L1 French to his essay in English. In the post-essay interview he, in fact, indicated that it is not adequate to give a personal statement on an issue before analyzing it in detail. Aly, whose writing also reveals introductory problems, declared that he is aware of the need to have a thesis statement, but thinks that this denotes some kind of mistrust in the intellect of the reader, and must generally be avoided.

5.4.1.3. Basic paragraph structure

Because of the distribution of this category of problems among the subjects of this study, and its potential for affecting the overall quality of the essay, paragraphing errors rank high among the writing problems evidenced in the writing samples. These problems take here the form of unconventional sectioning-off of paragraphs (Codou1), the same idea straddling two separate paragraphs (Baba1, Aly1), two claims and no support in the paragraph (Baba1, Yandé1), no 'claim + support' structure in paragraphs (Yandé1), one-sentence paragraphs (Codou1), etc.

Clearly, the subjects' conception and use of paragraphs does not conform to the English essay conception. Le's (1999) view reported in the literature review that French and English use of paragraphs in academic writing is different seems to be supported by the data examined in this study. By and large, the subjects' use of paragraphs does not abide by the conception of the paragraph as the base of one idea.

When some of these subjects were asked to give their definition of a paragraph based on L1 instruction, most were very tentative. They generally saw the paragraph as a group of sentences, although some (Baba and Ermon) prefaced this by saying that this was their inference, not what was taught.

This researcher's personal experience of the L1 context of education confirms the approximate conception of the paragraph in L1 French school writing. It is largely envisioned as a typographic or textual device that may be used differently by writers, even when they are writing on the same topic. This situation is perhaps the result of different emphases in language regulation in French and English.

In French, the preservation of the integrity of the language is a very important matter entrusted to the famous *Académie*. In policing the French language, the *Académie* seems to act essentially at the level of the most common features of language, i.e. the lexical and morpho-syntactic features, at the quasi-exclusion of discourse, which is considered to be a matter of the creativity of the speaker or writer.

In English, on the contrary, the overall regulation of the language does not seem to be as central as in French. If there is any overt policing of English, it applies mainly at the level of some written discourse communities and their genres of predilection. This policing of written genres goes beyond the mechanics of language to invest the domain of discourse and organizational structure. In the case of the English school essay for instance, this approach has resulted in a far more detailed description of textual features than in any comparable school written genre in French.

These varied emphases in language regulation may be at the basis of the above-suggested differences in the accuracy of the metalanguage of discourse in French and English. The French approach, because it catered to the language as a whole, may have resulted in a lesser gap in the lexical and morpho-syntactic gap between spoken and written modes of language, thus resulting in a more marked extension of spoken French into writing, without the need for the more detailed codification of discourse and organizational features which mainstream school writing in English enjoys in the US.

That writing instruction in the US is so important at the university is another factor in the difference in codification of school writing between French and English. Because English composition, through its domiciliation into academia has had to develop theoretical tools for reflecting over and teaching writing, this subject enjoys in English a

179

conceptual breadth it does not have in French. The paragraph could thus be very accurately defined in English essay writing without this being the case in writing instruction in French.

5.4.1.4. Concluding paragraph structure

Many of the writings studied show problems with the concluding paragraph. Four of the five cases, and 12 of the total 16 samples examined show this characteristic. Another concluding paragraph problem noted in almost all the samples examined is the lack of recapitulation. Other concluding paragraph defects consist in the inclusion of a new idea in the conclusion (Baba1), and the existence of no concluding paragraph at all (Mor1).

These concluding paragraph problems in Senegalese students' writing in English are understandable, since the structure of *dissertation*, by privileging the structure of arguments before logical conclusion, calls for the ultimate convictions of the writer to unfurl only in the conclusion. This is in fact what is the case in Aly1, and to some degree in Ermon2, who give their personal position on the question under discussion only in the conclusion.

As for the lack of recapitulation in the conclusion, this characteristic of the English school essay conclusion is not mandatory in French school writing, although it is noticed in writings. Yet, what writers generally use the conclusion for in the L1 context is to focus on what they consider to be the most important aspect of the discussion. This may be very different from the main points argued, and in fact, it often takes the form of insight developed in the course of the discussion of the topic, or a new issue exposed by

this discussion. The prevalence of this problem may then be attributable to the subjects' L1 writing traditions.

Baba1 presents the major concluding paragraph problem of introducing an idea never mentioned in the introduction or the body. Again, this error may be attributable to the influence of L1, since if the conclusion can be about insight developed in the course of the discussion of the topic, this insight may be only indirectly related to the topic. In such a case, the frontier between this indirectly related insight and a new idea will be difficult to draw. However, the text in which it appears is very much speech-like. It in fact looks very much like scripted speech, since the students were asked to write an essay in which they give information about their country. The way Baba introduces his address shows that he has framed the discourse event as an oral one. Whether this spoken nature is the reason for the new idea is also a possibility.

Mor1 has no conclusion at all. Mor explained this feature by insisting that both his writing experience in EFL and English composition classes led him to responding to writing prompts without providing a formal conclusion. In EFL, the writing prompts were generally questions to be answered with no formal introduction or conclusion, but only with emphasis on the content; this predominance of the short length of writing produced in EFL classes was already suggested by the survey. Mor also indicated that, in English composition, his class emphasized single paragraph development, without concern for a conclusion or introduction. It seems then that the distractive effect on L2 writing does not only come from L1 practices. Some L2 practices, while they make short-term pedagogic sense, can result in exacerbated writing difficulties for the student later. The ESL logic of focusing training in composition first on the paragraph may need to be re-examined to

make sure that it is not complicating the essay writing difficulties of nonnative students.

5.4.2. Other discourse level problems

Different papers show various discourse-related problems ranging from steering the topic of the paper away from the prompt, to non-thorough development of an idea, and lack of coherence. In the results from the cases, the tone in which the thesis was given in some papers was also considered to be peculiar enough to border on discourse level problems.

A number of the writing samples examined, especially in the responses to the researcher-set prompt, show the problem of a paper developed away from the terms of the writing prompt. Khalifa used only one point of argument not recommended by the prompt to support rejection of the policy. Baba3 argued for both rejection and adoption of the policy, while the prompt asked to argue either for or against. Ermon2 presents a similar problem.

These problems may be determined by school-writing traditions in the home context. *Dissertation*, I have already shown, is an exercise in reasoned discussion of issues and problems; *dissertation* writing prompts typically ask for a discussion of an issue, and don't generally limit the domain of the discussion with specific rhetorical instructions, as English essay prompts tend to do. It is possible that when the subjects are faced with English essay prompts with specific rhetorical instructions, the habit they have developed over the years to envision a broad discussion of the topic takes over, and they thus fail to notice the details of what the English essay prompt is requiring. Ballard and Clanchy (1991) pointed to this influence on L2 writing, which is not discourse related,

but stemming from attitudes and beliefs developed in L1 literacy. There seems to even be a value-laden consideration here. Two of the subjects, Ermon and Baba strongly argued for the need to go beyond the prism offered by the prompt; there are possibly other issues which are very important outside the scope of this prism.

Some of the samples studied present problems of ideas not thoroughly developed (Khalifa1, Moise1, Aly1, Codou1). This characteristic, which results in incoherence in the papers may be due to a combination of factors. French, the L1 of the authors of these writing samples, has been categorized as reader responsible language (Clyne, 1987). This characteristic of the language may foster an attitude of non-explicitness in exposition, because the reader is expected to take a considerable part in constructing the meaning of utterances addressed at him/her. I have also indicated that one notable local language, Wolof, shows signs of this typological characteristic. Both the L1 and the wider communicative style of Senegalese students may predispose them to not elaborating information.

One more factor not to be totally neglected is the highly standardized context in which schooling takes place in Senegal. Curricula, syllabi, and even textbooks, in some cases, are determined nationally and apply to all schools. This has the effect of calibrating students and teachers as far as the content of most topics is concerned. This calibration may have reinforced discourse attitudes which do not always require elaboration of information, because what is being conveyed has been studied by fellow students, and is perhaps better known by the teachers who teach it over and over again. A possible consequence of this is reliance on mere suggestion or cueing up of this shared knowledge among interlocutors instead of due elaboration.

A second type of incoherence problem noted in this study comes from paragraphs failing to flow into one another, and is reflected in Khalil1. This problem is perhaps due to an influence from traditional local languages, Wolof in particular. This language shows instances of unconnected discourse, especially in epic and laudatory songs, a form of poetry. In this genre, the singer seems sometimes to be just displaying snapshots of what the mind is thinking. The listener is not necessarily put off by the apparent disconnectedness of these snapshots; he uses the overall theme to piece these together and construct meaning. Khalil's paper seems to evoke in many respects this structure of discourse. The author shows an appealing command of vocabulary and idioms, yet, he does not bring his different paragraphs to adequately fall in line with the overall theme of the thesis.

The lack of information elaboration and coherence problems in the samples often results in non-linearity (see excerpts 28a and 28b). In contrastive rhetoric, non-linearity has often been equated with digressiveness (Kaplan, 1966). The observations of this study seem to suggest that this equation may need re-examination. While many cases of incoherence and incomplete development of an idea have been noted in the samples examined, only one case of digression was found. It is present in Codou1 (see Appendix 3, pp. 235-237). After some hesitation on whether to focus the essay on culture, people's mentality, or education, the author comes to the decision that she will change education, six typographic paragraphs into the essay. This decision may be considered the thesis, although one may question whether it is in the introduction as any thesis would be (32).

(32)   *Unfortunately, in spite of all the opportunities of becoming a developed country, Senegal is still belongs to the third world countries, and the level of educations is still low and I sincerely believe that education occupies a very, important place in the development of a country.*

184

> *This is why, if I was given the power to change something in Senegal, this is where I would start first.*

After stating this thesis, the author devotes quite a long time to explaining why the other areas (culture, mentality, etc.) were not chosen. This feature in Codou's essay is the only case of digression found (33). As we may see, it does not present striking problems of

(33)　　　*As far as the culture is concerned, I'm not very worried because it's a greet and rich one.*

The major problem that faces my country is the lack of education and this needs to be worked on. The Senegalese government has to help its population, fight this obstacle by sensitizing its people. Colonization has played an important part in changing Senegalese mentality. In fact, France has occupied Senegal in the 18th century. The French imposed their religion, language, mentalities, in general during that time and this had lot of effects in the country especially in the culture and mentalities of people.

So we have to create our own way of education based on our culture, our mentality, because the culture itself is not so bad. However, this

creation should be appropriate to us.

This inappropriate colonization, which is really different from its culture, has made of Senegal a corrupted one what needs to be fought. Corruption also is a direct consequence of colonization, and we need to get rid of it. It can be a big handicap in the development of a country and it's the main reason why the Senegalese economy is not doing very well.

All the problems need to be solve, but if I had the power to change anything, I would start with the education because that is what can change mentalities, the more...

incoherence, and the flow of information is reasonably smooth. The fundamental problem it creates in the essay is that it is developing extensively information that the reader was in no position to expect. Codou comes back to changing education after four long typographic paragraphs of digression; even if education is mentioned in this long digression, it is not in the perspective of the thesis statement. This illustration is fundamentally different in terms of the non-linearity resulting from incomplete development of an idea or incoherence illustrated in (29a) and (29b).

185

The findings of this study indicate that the organization structure of the Senegalese students' writing samples examined is different from that typical of the English school essay. They also suggest that these students' use and conception of paragraphs is not the same as the one for the English essay. Their writings reveal non-linearity, but this latter may not be equivalent to digression, as was generally believed. The discussion of the findings showed that many of the organizational problems evidenced in these samples are attributable to writing practices in L1 or its wider culture and attitudes. The next chapter will consider the question of the implications of these findings.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In this study, the discourse level problems students from Senegal may encounter in expository essay writing in ESL composition classes were investigated along the lines of three specific research questions: (1) How do students' writings in English adhere to the typical organizational structure of the English expository school essay? (2) Does the use of paragraphs in these students' writings conform to the paragraph conception of expository essay writing in English? (3) What is the degree of linearity or digressiveness revealed by students' writings?

After an overview of issues of writing in general, writing in EFL and ESL, and of the context of the students' L1 writing, the study examined the data collected and arrived at answers generally suggesting that, (1) the subjects' writings do not conform to the typical organization structure of the English essay; (2) the students' use of paragraphs does not generally reflect the paragraph conception prevalent in the school essay in English; (3) these writings did not always show linearity, but this non-linearity did not always translate into digressiveness.

This section will highlight a number of points deriving from the research, its findings and discussion. These points will cover the main problems evidenced by the samples, the specific nature of expository essay writing and the supplementary challenge it is likely to present for ESL writers, and the cumulative potential influence of the culture, L1, and schooling context in ESL writing. These concluding points will also

address the question of the implications of the research, both in terms of L2 writing instruction, and further research.

6.1. Organizational problems evidenced

Different organizational problems were evidenced in the writing samples examined in this study. Among these problems the most prevalent are in relation to (1) the basic paragraph, (2) the absence of the thesis, and (3) the concluding paragraph if we restrict our observations to the samples from five cases. If these observations are extended to the wider set of samples, there is very little difference in the order of this prevalence; basic paragraph problems come first, followed by conclusion problems, thesis statement, controlling idea, off-topic, and essay structure respectively. This almost similar distribution of problems among the five cases and the remaining subjects suggests that the problems evidenced are very much common among the subjects of this study.

This study was conceived as a case study. Despite the *a priori* lack of generalizability of case studies, the above-mentioned wide distribution of some of the organizational problems evidenced suggests a pattern which can hardly be ignored. This pattern is the more so important that it is in relation to an academic genre, the essay, that was originally adopted in English, not so much for literary purposes, but for the need to achieve effective written communication in the scientific fields of knowledge. If, as already indicated, the goal set to education in Senegal is, among others, to ensure access to scientific knowledge, then this issue should be of importance to Senegalese students. Writing is intricately related to reading, and ability to write can only be beneficial to ability to access knowledge through reading.

6.2. Expository essay writing and the challenge of ESL writing

The literature review section of this study showed the central place occupied by the essay in writing instruction in the context of the US. It has also raised the issue of the different modes prevailing in essay writing, and the specific question of the varying definitions of the expository mode to argue in favor of the view that this latter is fundamentally distinct from the other modes of discourse such as narration, description, argumentation, and persuasion. It is important to make the distinction between these, though at times this one may appear to be tenuous. The leading line of distinction between written exposition and the other writing modes is that, while the latter modes can invariably reproduce events, entities, or arguments which are already structured by their nature or original sequence, some types of writings don't carry in them these composition challenge-reducing characteristics. These types of writing require that the writer takes into consideration the absence of a perceptual perspective (Sridhar, 1989) in the framing of the information, in order to optimally organize the written discourse so that to ensure ease of understanding on the part of the reader. The writer in this case has to invent the structure of the discourse, taking into account his/her purpose of conveying an understandable message to the reader. It is this type of writing, which involves composing and transforming (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996), is referential and generates ideas, mental states, or alternative worlds (Vahapassi, 1988), which I suggest is true expository writing.

Making this distinction is very important, because writing problems tend to be more prevalent in this mode than in description, narration, or argumentation. In this

respect, the findings of this study pointed out how two papers in the samples examined stood out in the fewer organizational problems they presented in comparison to other samples. Both of these papers (Baba1 and Ermon1) are markedly narrative-like, and would thus not qualify as expository writing. On the other hand, the papers presenting the most problems (Codou1, and also most of the responses to the researcher-set prompt) required composing, transforming, and invention of an organizational structure of the discourse, and could thus qualify as expository writing. As far as the subjects of this study are concerned, there seems to be more essay writing problems when this writing is clearly expository.

The distinction in modes of written discourse called for here may have other advantages for the teaching of essay writing. In English composition classes, the structure of the essay is taught as applying to any essay. But as the narrative-like papers alluded to show, the thesis statement, although it is very important in an expository essay, may not be so fundamental in a narrative essay, because this latter may have a plot of its own not requiring a thesis. This is perhaps what was the case when, as pointed out earlier, the absence of a thesis statement did not seem to mar so much Baba2.

A clear distinction between expository writing and description or narration could help in making some of the organizational recommendations taught in essay writing instruction more relevant if, for instance, the precaution is taken to indicate that they apply specifically to the expository essay, and not to narration or description. The second advantage is that this may help pinpoint the problem areas of nonnative students in ESL writing classes, and work out the specific pedagogic solutions likely to remedy these problems.

6.3. Contrastive rhetoric and cultural relativity approaches to writing

This study examined the essay writing problems of five Senegalese students in US composition classes within the framework of contrastive rhetoric. This line of research initiated by Kaplan (1966) holds that the English language composition problems of nonnative speakers will be as much reflected at the discourse level of writing as at the linguistic one. As shown in the literature review section, some circumstances led to the shunning of the theory in its early years. Later, interest in contrastive rhetoric was revived with a number of studies investigating the comparative discourse features of academic and/or professional writing in English and other languages (Clyne, 1987; Hinds, 1987; Eggington, 1987).

As instrumental as these studies have been in the revitalization of interest in contrastive rhetoric, they are generally outside the original concern of contrastive rhetoric as a means for understanding and remedying the writing problems encountered by nonnative speakers of English. This study wants to insist, in its conclusion, on the necessity for those who need it the most, i.e. EFL professionals, to be aware of this original concern, and to work out the means for using the insight it offers in enhancing the writing skills of students.

There are different reasons for the necessity called for above. First, contrastive rhetoric has faced different criticisms since its inception. One of these is that the native English language standards to which texts from other languages are compared are not derived from actual writing practice, but from the prescriptions of textbooks (Leki, 1991). Another set of criticism is that some contrastive rhetoric studies may compare different

text types (Grabe, 1987), and Eggington (1987) has also shown that a given language can have a written structure imported from another language, thus making cross-linguistic comparisons sometimes meaningless. Yet another criticism is that the emphasis on the English discourse model of writing is ideological paternalism and should be supplanted by approaches promoting multicultural communication (McKay, 1993).

All these criticisms however, do not seem to be relevant when contrastive rhetoric is envisioned in its original concern for the teaching of expository essay writing to nonnative speakers of English. Freshman English models of writing may be defined by textbooks, not by actual students' writings, but in most other countries too, the cannons of writing instruction are also not defined by actual students' writings. The cannons of school writing, as genre, present the peculiarity of being best reflected, not so much by what students actually write, but by the textbook models they are striving to emulate. Under these circumstances, comparison of school writing text types based on text book prescriptions is not invalidated, because the terms of comparison are the same through schooling contexts. Comparison of two models of writing both equally determined by textbooks and course syllabi is then not a problem for contrastive rhetoric geared to the teaching of essay writing.

As for the cases of the potential comparison of different text types or the importation of a given discourse model into a language, the first one seems irrelevant in the concern of original contrastive rhetoric, since what is of import to the writing teacher is exactly the differences, not the similarities, between school text types. McKay's (1993) point is surely one that potentially echoes well among nonnative speakers of English, who in most cases come from contexts that have experienced colonial subjection and

paternalism. Yet, in the specific case of the original concern of contrastive rhetoric, this criticism is irrelevant. The EF/ESL student has an important instrumental need to understand the covert demands of writing in a language that is not his/hers; he/she is, in fact, already making or trying to make a commitment to multicultural written communication for the purposes of satisfying specific needs, and is most likely far from experiencing this as paternalism. It is, on the contrary, not bringing to his/her attention the covert differences in discourse that is suggestive of the negative connotation inherent in paternalism.

The second reason for the necessity of EFL professionals to be aware of contrastive rhetoric is that they stand to use it more profitably than the predominantly monolingual L2 professionals of the Anglophone world. As the name suggests, contrastive rhetoric supposes knowledge of how writing differs from L1 to L2. EFL professionals, by definition, know both the L1 and L2, and thus have the potential for dealing with the insight from contrastive rhetoric with first hand experience of both L1 and L2.

The third and last reason is that, in the present context of the great attraction of educational institutions in English speaking countries, an implementation of L2 writing instruction inspired by contrastive rhetoric is likely to result in different positive outcomes for students and even countries. Students may come out of pre-university education as better EFL/ESL school writers, who are more likely to exempt from the extra burden of writing skills classes in US colleges. As individuals, these students may develop better communicative skills from a better grasp of written discourse in English, and adaptation of its features to L1. For countries with a predominantly oral culture

193

engaged in language planning and development, this awareness may have an impact comparable to the one Latin had on the development of Western European languages and their transition to writing.

The benefits to be reaped from an adoption of the original concern of contrastive rhetoric in EFL are made even more significant by the insight contributed by new strands in this line of research. Scollon and Scollon (1981), Ballard and Clanchy (1991), Carson (1992) have shown that beyond the specific written discourse characteristics of a language, ethnic communicative style, beliefs and attitudes fostered by culture, and the context and practices of schooling can all be a factor in the writing difficulties experienced by nonnative speakers of English in colleges and institutions of higher education in the English speaking world. The discussion of the findings of this study suggests that a number of the problems evidenced can indeed be explained by attitudes informed by the specificities of the home context.

The implementation of approaches to writing informed by contrastive rhetoric and insight from cultural relativity theory are likely to help relativize dogma and false assumptions of universality in literacy and discourse. It is often the case that literacy beliefs and beliefs in one language are assumed to be valid for other languages. This assumption is reflected in the common negative transfer from L1 to L2 reported in the literature review; the same assumption seems to inform one of the study's subjects' statement that writing is the same in all languages. These false assumptions can be cleared by an approach to writing informed by contrastive rhetoric. This adoption however, need not be blind and uncritical. It will be more beneficial to EFL contexts if professionals there use it vigilantly so that to help refine it, since, as suggested above, the

original essay writing pedagogical thrust of contrastive rhetoric does not seem to have been followed up seriously; its findings or assumptions of the start need then to be tested for confirmation.

6.4. Implications

This study has confirmed its original assumption that Senegalese students in US colleges will encounter expository essay writing problems. These problems are at the level of the structure of the whole essay, the introductory paragraph, the basic body paragraph, conclusion paragraph, as well as at the level of other different discourse features. I consider here the last research question: What are the implications of these questions, and their answers for the teaching of EFL/ESL writing to Senegalese students?

6.4.1. L2 writing implications

The first implication of the findings of this study seems to be a reconsideration of the place and treatment of EFL writing in Senegalese schools. An overview of the teaching of writing in EFL as well as of L1 French in schooling in Senegal was given in Chapter III. It shows that in EFL, writing is not a focus of classroom activities. In addition, whatever EFL writing instruction is provided is either essentially a support to language teaching and acquisition (with a predominance of controlled writing activities such as reading comprehension questions, skeleton dialogues, sentence completion or transformation, etc.), or very much influenced by the conceptions of school writing prevalent in L1 French. This influence or transposition of L1 writing practices to EFL sometimes happens despite the EFL writing tasks being referred to with the typically

195

English language school writing term of essay. Writing prompts are sometimes vague, with no accurate rhetorical instruction for the task at hand, and the expected length of writing, with a limit of 150 to 200 words, revealed these tasks as very different from the English school essay. To minimize the potential problems evidenced by this study, it seems important to reconsider prevailing EFL writing practices.

This reconsideration should not necessarily result in a substitution for the controlled writing tasks prevailing in Senegalese EFL classes. As tools for language teaching and acquisition, these are appropriate and necessary, since the prerequisite to composition is language development. It is however important that, through this reconsideration, EFL writing reflects writing conceptions and practices prevailing in major native English school contexts. In relation to the writing conceptions and practices regarding the school essay, it needs to be remembered that the adoption of the essay in Britain was not so much for literary purposes than for the need to ensure unequivocal written communication in the context of the early stages of the industrial revolution. Essay writing then is of interest to all those who may be undertaking advanced studies in English, irrespective of major. In this respect, an introduction of the essay as a writing task needs to be considered. The teaching of this essay needs to emphasize the specific structure, organization and discourse features which define it in English language school writing. In addition to giving Senegalese students a true measure of writing in the foreign language they opted for, this may have the added advantage of preparing them for a smoother transition into writing in such Anglo Saxon educational institutions as American colleges.

Such a reconsideration seems imperative, given the goal of the teaching of

English within the Senegalese educational system, and the important worldwide role assumed by English. As indicated, the general goal set for education in Senegal is to allow access to knowledge, science and technology for the socio-economic development of the country. However, it is often lost sight of that accessing resources in a language is done essentially in a language mode other than the spoken mode on which the teaching of EFL seems to focus. The focus of EFL then, at least, at some levels of pre-university education, should be oriented more toward typical native English writing genres than is presently the case.

The writing instructions implications of this study are not limited to EFL contexts. The teaching of ESL writing in US colleges may benefit from its findings. Some of the subjects' instructors contacted during the data collection phase had praise for the writing skills of Senegalese students, as compared with students from other countries. However, as this study has found, there are many organizational problems in the writing of these students. It is then important that writing instructors in American colleges be acquainted with contrastive rhetoric so as to be able to perceive and address discourse problems in students, even if linguistic accuracy is relatively strong.

It appears that, faced with the often very significant writing problems of international students, some ESL writing programs gradually introduce students into basic units of writing such as the paragraph. This strategy may be pedagogically understandable, but it seems that some students at least may see their acquisition of essay writing skills greatly hampered by this strategy. The results section has pointed out the case of a subject writing an essay with no formal introduction or conclusion, because the paragraph development focus of his ESL writing

class did not include these aspects of the essay. ESL writing programs need to be aware of these consequences of paragraph development strategies, and develop sound ways of moving from the paragraph to the essay, if this paragraph focus cannot be dropped. The aim in ESL writing development is the essay, not the paragraph, and any strategy that is likely to endanger attainment of this aim needs to be reconsidered.

6.4.2. Limitations

This study has investigated the organizational problems likely to be encountered by Senegalese students in US college composition classes. The findings suggest that, generally, the writings of these students show notable organizational problems at the overall essay structure, introduction, and conclusion levels. However, because of the many variables involved in learning a language and writing in that language, there are limitations against which these findings may be considered.

First, this study assumes that these organizational problems in expository essay writing are there as a result of negative transfer from L1. Yet, the L1 writing ability of the subjects has not been ascertained, and this constitutes a limitation to the interpretation of the findings.

A second factor that may might have had an influence in the findings arrived at is the ESL experience of these students at either the intensive language program or in the freshman composition class. One subject at least indicated that some of the problems found in his samples are apparently there as a result of the practices and approach of these ESL classes. This also may be a limitation of the interpretation of problems offered.

6.4.3. Further research implications

Some of the findings of this research point to issues that need to be clarified by further research. One such issue is the equation established in contrastive rhetoric between non-linearity and digressiveness in the English school essay. The findings of this study suggest that this equation does not necessarily hold. The writing samples examined revealed instances of incoherence or incomplete development of an idea resulting in non-linearity without digression. It seems then necessary to further investigate this issue to ascertain this. The equation mentioned above dates to the beginning of contrastive rhetoric, and it seems important to substantiate or correct it.

One of the concluding points above has called for more awareness of contrastive rhetoric in EFL contexts and among L2 professionals, so that the insight of the theory may be used profitably in writing instruction. For this to be feasible, research on the features of school writing genres in Senegal is necessary. One specific point that needs to be researched is the nature and use of paragraphs in L1 French. The findings of the study show that many of the samples examined reveal a conception and use of paragraphs in composition that is markedly different from what is expected in English expository writing. Knowledge of this sort is important for an effective use of contrastive rhetoric among students with French L1 background. It is important that when they are taught what the characteristic features of the English expository paragraph are, they be clearly told how this paragraph differs with the French one.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Survey questionnaire

In US colleges and universities, writing or composition is a required subject for undergraduate students. Because Senegalese students who join these institutions are not native speakers of English, and also because they have learnt English only after acquiring literacy in another language, French, they are likely to initially experience some problems in writing and composition classes. The study this questionnaire is about targets some of these students and plans to examine the writing and composition problems they may encounter in US institutions of higher education. The study will also seek to determine whether implications for both the treatment of writing in the teaching of English as a foreign language, EFL, in Senegalese secondary schools and composition in US institutions of higher education can be drawn from this research.

Please take the time to read through this questionnaire before completing it as thoroughly as you can. Depending on the questions asked, you will have to answer by providing information, ticking inside the box (✓) provided to indicate what applies in your situation, or ranking items. For any question for which the space provided for answers is not sufficient, please use the back of the paper to continue; write the number of the question next to where you continue the answer in that case. If you cannot answer a question, don't leave it blank; write "I don't know", "Not applicable", or something similar.

====*====

Part 1: Background information

1.1. Name: _____ ☐ Male ☐ Female Age: _____.

1.2. Country of origin: _____ E-mail:_____

1.3. Country of secondary school or pre-university education: _____

1.4. Main language of secondary school or pre-university education: _____

1.5. Native language or mother tongue: _____

1.6. Which other language(s) do you speak in addition to those indicated in 1.4. and 1.5.?

_____

1.7. In which one of the languages you speak do you think you write best? _____

1.8. What is the name and location of your present US college / university?

_____

1.9. How long have you been attending this college / university? _____

1.10. Which other US colleges/universities did you attend before the present one?

_____

1.11. What is your program of study/major at your present institution?

_____

1.12. What is your classification as a student?
☐ Freshman   ☐ Sophomore   ☐ Junior   ☐ Senior   ☐ Graduate

1.13. How long have you been in the US? _____

Part 2: EFL experience

2.1.   In what country did you learn most of your English before coming to the US? _____

2.2.   At what age and class level did you start learning English? _____

2.3.   In what kind of institution did you learn most of your English language in that country?
    ☐ Secondary school   ☐ Language institute/program   ☐ University
    ☐ Other (Specify): _____

2.4.   On average, how many hours of English a week did you have in that institution? _____

2.5.   What was the average number of students in your classes? _____

2.6.   Which of the following areas of English do you think were emphasized by teachers in your classes? Please rank them in order of decreasing emphasis.
    ☐ Pronunciation   ☐ Vocabulary   ☐ Grammar
    ☐ Listening   ☐ Speaking   ☐ Reading   ☐ Writing
    ☐ Other(s)(Specify): _____

2.7.   Which of the areas of English listed in 2.6. were generally tested in class or given as assignments? _____

_____

2.8.   If writing is among these areas, indicate which of the following genres of writing you usually had to do in class or as assignments?
    ☐ Composing a dialogue ☐ Narrating a story   ☐ Describing an event
    ☐ Writing a letter   ☐ Defending an argument ☐ Exposing/presenting an idea
    ☐ Other (Specify) _____

2.9.   Which of the following is closest to the way writing in English was taught in your classes in the country you indicated in 2.1.?
    ☐ A topic is given and students are asked to write about it
    ☐ A completed model essay is shown to the students before they write about a topic
    ☐ An explanation on how to write and organize an essay from introduction to conclusion is given to the students before the write about a topic
    ☐ Other (Specify) _____

2.10.   Generally, how long were the essays you had to write during these tests or assignments?

_____

2.11.   When teachers corrected these essays, which of the following weak points did their comments generally point out?
    ☐ Grammar errors   ☐ Vocabulary mistakes   ☐ Essay too short
    ☐ Poor organization   ☐ Poor ideas   ☐ Lack of clarity
    ☐ Insufficient details   ☐ Lack of cohesion   ☐ No audience awareness
    ☐ Others (Specify): _____

2.12.   Which of the following were covered in the English language subject of the national exams (e.g. DFEM or Baccalauréat) you have taken in your country?
    ☐ Pronunciation   ☐ Grammar   ☐ Vocabulary   ☐ Spelling
    ☐ Reading   ☐ Listening   ☐ Speaking   ☐ Essay writing
    ☐ Other (Specify): _____

2.13.   If essay writing was covered, describe briefly how it was tested during these exams?

_____

_____

Part 3: Students and writing in US colleges

3.1.   What English language requirement(s) did you have to satisfy to be accepted by your past or present US institution? _____

3.2.   Did you take any intensive English language classes in the US before being accepted by your college / university? _____

3.3.   Please indicate any English composition classes you have taken or are presently taking in your US institution. If you are taking such classes now, also give the class time and teacher's name.

_____

_____

3.4.   In these classes, what aspects of writing or composition do teachers emphasize?

_____

_____

3.5.   Did you study these aspects of writing when you were learning English in the country indicated in 2.1.? _____

3.6.   Did you study these aspects of writing when you were learning the language indicated in 1.4.? _____

3.7.   Which of the following corresponds to your personal situation in your US institution?
☐ I have no problems in English composition
☐ I have some problems in English composition
☐ I have considerable problems in English composition

3.8.   Explain here your answer to 3.7.

_____

_____

3.9.   Which type of writing assignment is easier for you, writing for the English composition class or writing for other subject classes? _____

3.10. Which of the following genres of writing in English do you think is the easiest for you?
☐ Composing a dialogue   ☐ Narrating a story   ☐ Describing an event
☐ Writing a letter   ☐ Defending an argument v Exposing/presenting an idea

3.11. Explain here your answer to 3.10.

_____

_____

3.12. Do you think your English language classes in your country of pre-university education have or have not prepared you well enough for the writing/composition demands of your present program of study? _____

3.13. Explain here why you think so.

_____

_____

_____

_____

214

3.14. Give here any comments or supplementary information that you wish to give in relation to this questionnaire. _____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your cooperation /

Appendix 2: Example of a *dissertation* in L1 French

DISSERTATION

Sujet : Doit-on sacrifier au baptème de convenance de ses enfants quand nos convictions
personnelles s'y opposent ?

Le cas du baptème de onvenance

Dans toute société, les conflits de valeurs sont fréquent; ils le sont d'autant plus que
certaines de ces valeurs ne sont pas partagées par tous. Le cas à l'étude est très
représentatif de cette situation. Il met aussi en évidence un autre problème. En effet, la
question se pose à savoir s'il est préférable d'agir conformément à ses propres principes
ou s'il ne vaut pas mieux dans certaines circonstances faire taire ses principes et se plier à
un certain conformisme social. C'est d'autant plus important dans ce cas, que les
principales victimes d'un ostracisme bien réel sont de tierces personnes et de surcroît des
personnes tout à fait innocentes dans ce débat d'adultes, nos propres enfants ! Ce
problème est de nature éthique, car dans notre société la liberté de culte et le libre choix
en matière d'enseignement religieux sont inscrits dans la loi. Mais on ne peut obliger
personne à être amis avec nous ou à faire preuve d'ouverture d'esprit! Ainsi, nous sommes
en droit de penser que nos enfants pourraient souffrir de l'affirmation de nos convictions
agnostiques et qu'ils pourraient devenir la risée de toute l'école, voire du quartier, pour
cette raison! Ne devrions-nous pas, comme le dit l'adage, - mettre un peu d'eau dans notre
vin " et à tout le moins préserver les apparences ?

Le recours à la philosophie morale de David Hume peut nous servir de guide dans ce
contexte. Pour Hume la raison seule ne peut pas diriger nos décisions morales, car si elle
permet de choisir en connaissance de cause, ce n'est pas la raison qui établit nos buts,
lesquels dépendent surtout de nos sentiments. La seule chose qui soit universelle en
matière de morale est l'approbation ou la désapprobation de notre entourage. Ainsi tout
sens moral n'a de sens que dans la mesure où il se réfère à une certaine culture. C'est
pourquoi les jugements moraux peuvent différer totalement d'une époque ou d'une culture
à l'autre. Pourtant, il y a des points communs dans tous les cas : l'amour de ses enfants en
est un exemple. Il est certain que dans ce cas, le désir d'approbation et l'affection portée à
nos enfants devraient nous inspirer un conformisme prudent. Pour Hume l'appartenance à
une communauté est une valeur très importante et si pour l'incarner il faut camoufler un
peu ses convictions religieuses, il n'y a pas de problème, puisque rien sur le plan de nos
convictions les plus profondes ne peut être affecté par cette attitude. D'ailleurs, on peut
soupçonner que plusieurs membres de la communauté agissent déjà de cette manière.

Néanmoins, cette solution comporte une part d'hypocrisie. Être fidèle à soi-même, vivre
selon ses propres convictions, sont aussi des principes auxquels nous tenons beaucoup.
D'ailleurs, Nietzsche n'a-t-il pas montré que le conformisme est à l'origine d'une morale
étouffante, la morale du troupeau ? Est-il vraiment bon de transmettre à ses enfants, des

216

valeurs de duplicité et de soumission à l'ordre moral de la majorité. En agissant ainsi ne les condamne-t-on pas à la médiocrité, à la peur, au refoulement ? L'individualisme est à l'origine de toutes les grandes créations. Il renforce le caractère et permet à chacun d'exprimer sa volonté de puissance intrinsèque. En lieu et place de l'hypocrisie, il substitue la franchise et l'affirmation pleine et entière de soi: bref, il développe l'autonomie, même si cette autonomie se paie d'un peu de souffrance. Bien entendu, un tel choix dans ces circonstances particulières implique que nous imposions quelque chose à nos enfants, mais en y réfléchissant bien n'est-ce pas ce que font tous les parents ?

Placés dans une telle situation, nous prenons conscience du caractère social de la morale. Faire baptiser ses enfants est le comportement requis d'un bon catholique. Les catholiques auront tendance à considérer que les gens qui ne font pas baptiser leurs enfants sont soit ignorants (des païens), soit méchants: seules des personnes malveillantes peuvent désirer que leurs enfants ne puissent entrer au royaume de Dieu à cause du péché originel! C'est du moins ce qui découle de la logique des croyants. Mais, comme Nietzsche le fait aussi remarquer, il est heureux que les croyants eux-mêmes ne soient pas aussi stricts que la religion l'exigerait et - trichent " à l'occasion. De cette manière, notre dissidence religieuse pourra être acceptée par certains d'entre eux.

Il apparaît donc clairement que le meilleur choix, le plus honnête et aussi le plus affirmatif, consiste à braver l'opinion publique et à affirmer notre différence. Il faut cependant être conscient du fait que ce choix implique une certaine bravoure et une vigilance constante afin d'affronter les brimades qui pourraient affecter notre famille, et particulièrement les enfants. Il faudra aussi nous appuyer sur l'action des personnes les plus tolérantes, dans l'espoir que les mentalités évoluent graduellement.

TRANSLATION

Topic : Should one sacrifice to baptism of offspring when personal convictions are against this tradition ?

Convenience baptism

In every society, clashes of values are usual, since these values are often not shared by all the members of the society. The case in point is representative of this situation while highlighting another problem. The question at hand is tantamount to deciding whether it is preferable to act according to one's own principles, or whether, under given circumstances, it is better to repress one's standards, and sacrifice to a certain social conformism. This question is very important, because in this case, the potential victims of ostracism are innocent third parties, and our children, in this adult debate! This problem is an ethical one, for the freedom of worship is guaranteed by the law. Yet one cannot force others to be open minded towards our choices, and our children may well suffer from the exercise of our agnostic beliefs, by becoming laughing stock at school and in the neighborhood, for that matter. Shouldn't we in this case compromise our convictions as the saying goes, in order to preserve appearances?

David Hume's moral philosophy may offer guidelines in this situation. For him, reason alone cannot guide our moral decisions, for even if it can be of help in making reasoned decisions, it does not establish our goals, which are essentially dependent on feelings. The only standard in terms of morals is the approval or disapproval of those around us. Consequently, any moral sense does not make sense unless it refers to a culture. This is why moral judgment can differ considerably from epoch to epoch or culture to culture. However, there are common points: the love for our children is an example. It is clear that in such a case, the love for one's children and the wish for them not to be ostracized should inspire a prudent conformism in us. For Hume, belonging to a community is an important value, and if one has to camouflage one's religious convictions to live up to the community, it is not a problem, for nothing in our deepest convictions can be affected by this attitude. We may, by the way, suspect that many in the community are already acting in this way.

Nonetheless, such a solution contains some part of hypocrisy. Being truthful to one self, living one's own convictions are principles dear to us. Hasn't Nietzsche shown that conformism is the cause of the stifling moral of the herd? Is it good to transmit to one's children values of duplicity and of submission to the moral order of the majority? By acting in this way, are we condemning them to mediocrity, fear, and self-repression? Individualism is at the origin of all great inventions. It reinforces character and allows each to express their intrinsic will of power. Individualism substitutes hypocrisy for frankness and full self-affirmation. It develops autonomy, although this latter involves suffering. Under these particular circumstances, such a choice implies imposing something to one's children, but after all, isn't this what all parents do?

Put in such a situation, we realize that morals are social in character. To get one's children baptized is required from a good catholic. Catholics will tend to believe that those who don't baptize children are ignorant or mean: only malevolent people may deprive their children of salvation. This is at least how the logic of the believer goes. But, as Nietzsche pointed out, it is fortunate that believers are not as strict as religion would demand, and cheat occasionally. In this way religious dissidence will be accepted by some of them.

It seems then that the best choice, the most honest, and also the most affirmative consists in defying public opinion and affirming one's difference. One however needs to be aware that such a choice implies courage and constant vigilance, so as to face up to the frustrations that may affect the family, and particularly the children. One also will have to depend on the more tolerant people in the hope that mentalities will change gradually.

Appendix 3: Writing samples

Khalifa 1: Population policy

With the development of technology in the medical field, many diseases in the past in the past people did not have answers to can now be cured. As a result of this fact, people live longer and there fore the world population at a great. Many people believe that this increase in population causes some problems in certain countries among which, Senegal because of the lack of space and mainly because of limited resources per family. The governement of Senegal has decided to pass a bill that is going to limit the number of children per family to only two. The purpose of this document is to determine whether the bill should be passed or not.

Overpopulation is a problem that many countries face nowadays. Even the countries that are not overpopulated yet try to anticipate on this issue by forcing families to limit their number of children to two or sometimes three. People from different cultural backgrounds have different opinions on this issue. Being a muslim, judgment on whether something is good or bad is really not a problem because I have a guidance, the only and true guidance that is the Quran. Limitation of children using contraception or another method is not allowable in Islam, the main reason being that God is our creator and owns everything. Therefore he gives his wealth to anybody he wants to. It does not matter whether you have one or twenty children. In addition, it is important to emphasize that wealth is not beneficial to someone who does not realize that it is the property of God and therefore he or she needs to use it the way God wants him to use it. A rich couple might have one child, if they do not do what God order to them to do, they will never find happiness. On the other hand, a poor couple may have twenty children, if they submit to God, they will find happiness.

All problems of Senegalese and all Muslims are afcing nowadays are due to only on thing: we do not follow our guidance, the Quran. If we had done so, overpopulation would not be a problem because God would protect us in every situation.

Baba 1: Aspects of the Senegalese Culture

Let me be among the first to welcome you to the University Cheikh Anta DIOP de DAKAR. It is a pleasure for me to introduce you to Senegalese political ideas, religions and educational system. Senegal is a French country with a geographic position favorable in international relations. Independent since April 4th, 1960, the main political idea is democracy. Opinion polls show that three out of five Senegalese can give a meaningful concept of democracy. Like every democratic country, there is executive, legislative and judicial power. All these powers are separated. There are more than twenty political parties but the two most important are the "Socialist Party" and the "Senegalese Democratic Party. Every seven years Presidential elections are organized democratically and since our independence the "Socialist Party" is in charge of Senegal's destinies.

The educational system in Senegal, as an ex- French colony, has the same educational system as France which is different from the one in the United States. Our educational system is composed of an elementary cycle of six years, a medium cycle of four years, a secondary cycle (high school) of three years and then the university.

After the medium cycle, every pupil has to choose a general major called a serie. There are four series: L like literature section, S like science section, T like technique section and E like economic section. S and T open the way to engineering school and specially S for health faculty .The future lawyers, journalists and others have to choose L and business men, economists, and accounts choose E section. English is the first foreign language and the second year of the medium cycle, pupils choose a second foreign language between Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, German, Russian or Arabic. University of Dakar has all these departments.

In the religious field Senegal is a multiple religion state. This means there is more than one religion. The religions in Senegal are Islam and Christians. The population is composed of about 95% of Muslims and 5% Christian so Muslims and Christians live together in peace and totally harmony. The Islamic culture deeply influences the daily life of the Senegalese. People respect everybody especially elder people.

In conclusion, SENEGAL is an open and modern country where everybody can

feel a great ease to life. You will enjoy Senegalese entertainment like beaches, soccer, basket- ball and our great "Mbalax national" (dance and songs).

Baba 2: Career Goals

In Senegal, the family has a great influence in our future career. But sometimes, it is so hard to do the career that your family wished for, or the one you always aimed for when you were a teenager. Two facts can point to this: the personal capacities and the means. But with a good deal of courage, people can achieve any career. My former career goal was to be a military pilot and then it became civil engineer. First of all, civil engineering is very interesting and second of all, you earn a lot of money. Actually civil engineering is needed in Senegal and you are going to be a very versatile person once you get knowledgeable in building roads and water supplies.

Every parent wishes that his son or his daughter became either a doctor, a lawyer or an engineer. These three majors are most important for our parents. According to them, no one can get a better job than those three professions. They persuade their children to have a future in these ways medicine, law or engineering. These majors open the way of success, prestige and fortune. So then the parents will be very proud. Opinion polls also show that a number of government members and those responsible for the country are formed on these three majors.

When I was a kid, I was raised in the Air Force headquarters. The pilot's uniform was my first impression. My brother a military pilot told me that if I wanted to do aviation, I would have work hard in math and physics. That I did, and I got a high school diploma in physical and natural sciences. Then I found out about civil engineering. I met a civil engineer who was my brother's friend. He explained the diversity of this science and told me it could be a gold mine and how interesting I would find it because usually all professions with science bases contribute to rich experiences.

Like every major, civil engineering is an applied science that requires a strong base in math and physics. Usually an engineering school cannot have a large number of students because of the extensive and high cost of the training. In Senegal, the government manages the engineering schools and every student gets a scholarship. Thus,

few students get to go. Every year a national contest is organized and the best students are selected.

To be among the best, I had to do more than my official program in high school. Especially in math and physics, I tried to master all the programs and do research. Once in engineering school, one tried to have permanent regularity because new classes like strength of materials and hydraulics are news.
One feels satisfaction and accomplishment when you achieve any goal you have had on your primary project. Sometime many facts can be the causes of your failure because usually an ambitious career will be not a piece of cake. People have to be patient and have so much courage and the rest will depend on their seriousness in the studies.

Baba 3: Population policy

One of the crucial topic that the world is being face is the overpopulation. The world population knew an exponential growth and it is estimated to five billions of persons. Specialists in demography think that this overpopulation might have some environmental effect and in the future will be the main point of lot of trouble such as many endemies, problems of space and famine. In their daily activities to avoid such a desaster for our planet the World Population organization (WPO) propose a new resolution to the government of the countries member of United nations which, limit to two children each family should have. Such a proposition is it fair? What about the human rights to decide about the size of their family in one hand and at the other hand does the world population could have any aspects in social, economic or political issues?

Our knowledges about the world show an inequality between the geographic areas. A country such Senegal or Mauritania need more population, while countries such India, Pakistan and China have an overpopulation. It will unfair to make a generalization which is limited to two children for each family if the parents have the means to raise more than two children. In Africa our economic support which is the traditional agriculture needs hands in order to maximize the products. In such countries 'infantil' mortality rate is high. Limited to have more than two children is not safe and the most important important about that is no religion encourages the limitations of a family.

222

Islam, christianism the two important religions in the world will never allow such proposition. Even in China or India, it is [(shime?) = same] social aspect could be linked with overpopulation. Every people have the right to go to school, to be healthy. It is necessary for governments to build enough schools, hospitals and some more infrastructures to make easy their populations' life. An overpopulation could increase the unemployment rate, which can create crime and insecurity.

The population is increasing and more raw material is necessary. People will need energy to live with ease. People will need enough food and housing and all facilities that can give our society any sense. This overpopulation's consequences can increase the needs. Pollution will be linked to this overpopulation and our environment is being destroyed every day to get more space and more source of energy.

The economy will be concerned by this. Population implies economy and economy implies population. If resources do not grow like population somewhere it will have a mishap. The GDP (Gross Domestic Investment) and GNP (Gross Domestic Product) will suffered about this overpopulation. In the political domain, the GDP and GNP are essential for the classification of each country in the world.

Propose to limit the children of a family is surely unfair in one hand, but in the other hand could be a factor of equilibre politic, social and economic. In fact it can avoid social trouble which may result to destroy the human environment and avoid some other problems such famine and space.

Yandé 1: Example of Prejudice in Senegal

There have always been different kinds of injustice and discrimination everywhere in the world. In my country, Senegal, the non-education of girls because of their sex can be considered as discrimination. Most Senegalese people think that it's no use for a girl to go to school. But that idea should be given up, since there is no reason why a girl cannot study and succeed.

Indeed, the rate of Senegalese women who had not been at school is very high. While almost all the boys are getting educated, girls stay at home most of the time. It's a really sexist idea because the only reason they give: "She is a girl, she does not need to

go to school. She should stay at home, help her mother, learn how to cook and take care of a family." Most of the time, you will hear from Senegalese men: "School is not for girls; it's for men." Almost half of the few girls who go to school stop at the middle of Moreover, the boys kept asking us what we were doing in that class. According to them, that was not a domain for women.

People should stop having such a point of view because it's revolting for women. fu addition, that's the best way to make them feel unconfident and have a certain complex of inferiority. Why can't a female think like a male? Is it proved that boys are more clever than girls? The answer is "No" because experiences have shown that women have the ability to do things as well as men. Sometimes, they do it much better.

In my opinion, women should fight for their right to be educated. Boys and girls should have the same right to learn. And girls who are already in school should do their best to have good results. That's the only way to win the challenge and prove to people (men) that they can make it even if they are girls. Also, I'll suggest that the Senegalese government establishes programs to encourage more parents to send their daughters to school. That will make girls improve their talent and capacities in order to succeed later in their professional life.

In Senegal, there is a very low rate of girls attending school. The reason is that most of the men believe that girls cannot succeed because they are females. Nevertheless, something should be done to change the situation. Women should fight for education because it's a right. Also, the government should encourage and help them in their fight. Then, it will be an important step for the development of the country.

Yandé 2: Advantages of Being Male or Female

Since the creation of the Human Being, there have always been differences between males and females. Those differences are most of the time subject of discussion. So, what are the advantages and disadvantages of being male or female? I'll mention as advantages for females the happiness of maternity, the females' sensibility and, their "particular power." For men, I'll talk about their strength and, the fact that they don't feel the pains of motherhood. Talking about disadvantages, we have the exclusion of

224

women because of their sex.

The disadvantages for men are their violence and their complex of superiority. The first advantage of being female is the ability and the happiness of having children. It's a gift from God that have been given to women. What's more wonderful than having a baby for a woman? Moreover, experiences have shown that children are closer to their mother than they are towards their father. We can explain that because women are the ones who mostly take care of them.

In addition, women are more sensitive than men. They always listen to their heart while men often use their head. Women are most likely to be expressive of their feelings than men. Also, most of the greatest decisions come from women
The questionnaire I did shows that most people agree that a man should follow his wife's decisions and suggestions because females usually have good ideas.

Usually, the name "power" is one of the factors used to qualify the male sex. But, people are aware of the fact that females do have their "particular power". First women are awesome and charming creatures and that's what makes their "particular power". All women are delicate so, they have the privilege to be treated with more understanding and tolerance.

One advantage for men is that male is synonym of strength. That's why usually a man is the one in charge in the family. So, a husband has the responsibility of being protective towards his wife and children. In the questionnaire seven people agree that a husband has more responsibilities than his wife.

Moreover, men have less biological problems than women. They don't feel the pans of being pregnant and having babies. Psychologically, some husbands are anxious when their wives are giving birth. But, it's known that in that moment the woman suffers more. You have to be a woman to see how painful it is to give birth. It's so painful that some women cannot stand it and die.

However, next to the advantages of being male or female, we can notice disadvantages for both sexes. For women, the first disadvantage is that female is considered as the weak or lower sex. In many cultures, male children are preferred over female ones. For most men, female is synonym of submission. According to them, men

225

should command and women should obey. That's why some husbands use to let their wives do all the housework by themselves and we know that men can do the housework and take care of children as well as women. Women should complain to be considered inferior and not to be helped.

Unfortunately, a lot of men are violent. They are abusive of their strength and use it to hurt women. So, a lot of women are oppressed because of their sex. There are some who ill-treat their wives. And I think that a man should never have a reason good enough to beat a woman.

Also, men are so sure of their strength that they think that the world has always belonged to them (five boys agree with that in the questionnaire). That shows that men in general have a certain complex of inferiority. And it's not surprising that they use to occupy and exclude women from economic an political power. They should give to women an access to educational and employment opportunities. Sometimes, some people forget that females are also brave and ambitious. And even though they don't believe it, there are jobs where women are better at than men. They should accept that women are their equals.

Most people agree with the fact that males and females are born with different needs, desires and capabilities. Men have their roles and females, theirs. God has given to both of them some advantages and disadvantages. But despite that, it should not exist a lack of understanding between men and women. They should complete each other since that's the best way to stay together. It's a great thing that women can give birth and men can take care of them with their children. And, instead of ill-treating women, men should respect them. They should also let them express themselves and have more access to education and employment.

Aly 1: Population policy

Introduction:

Nowadays, one of the biggest global concerns is how to tackle overpopulation. Birth rate control programs appear to be the solution of choice of most researchers in the field of demography, health and nutrition, and other related areas. But the implementation

of such programs stands to be a crucial ordeal to overcome, interwoven with religious controversies, customs, believes, and the theory of those economists who put forward that the measure of a Nation's development lies in the number of its population.

Now, in order to answer the question as to whether the enforcement of a birth rate control program limited to two children is worth doing or not, let us put under close scrutiny three main aspects:

The religious issue,

The relationship between such a program and a Nation's economy and welfare,

Its impact on health and nutrition.

Development:

Once the idea of birth control was raised, unaware religious personalities who made a misinterpretation of a passage almost found in all the holly books of the major religions, evoked one of God's recommendations in which He asks mankind to procreate thus increasing the number of believers to worship. Currently, in several parts of the world, wrong behaviors have replaced the good deed and religious practices have declined just because the overwhelming increase of their populations. In those places, the primary biological needs such as feeding oneself, are so intense that a great number of the inhabitants are more focused in making ends meet than worshiping, resulting in a decrease in their faith in God. What is more, a plethoric number of children including both males and females in a small house, develops promiscuity which at times results in the practice of incest, the top sin a person can ever

make. Presently, sensed religious people have understood the importance of implementing such programs to avoid the behaviors listed above and it is now commonplace to see religious personalities in the media in favor of birth rate control.

It is true that a hundred of people can perform a better job than a dozen but only if the performance of each individual within both groups is the same. But if a Nation has a big population of malnourished, sick and infected people, the outcome of their total production would result in a negative balance. Whereas, a limited but healthy and productive population will end up with a positive balance in which everybody can take

advantage - the welfare of the group as it were- proving once more Adam Smith's theory which states in other words that the overall welfare of a Nation corresponds to the sum of all of its individuals' welfares.

The health and nutrition status of a group is better controlled if the food supplies and health facilities match the number of its population. If there is a discrepancy, then occurs starvation and diseases forcing people into adapting themselves to the prevailing situation. This adaptation is most of the time biased and gives birth in several cases to robberies, corruption and misbehavior. How many times one can see in the media, a strike or politics-related riots in overpopulated developing countries, showing the " strikers" rushing and breaking into food stores and then leaving with bags of goods? In addition, an overcrowded house is most of the time the nest of pathogenic microbes and parasites leading to impaired sanitary conditions, the first step of endemic diseases.

Conclusion:

The analyses carried on the major aspects underscoring a society's status that is religion, economy, health and nutrition issues, have clearly proved that the implementation of a birth rate control program in most overpopulated regions of the world is mandatory to insure a good standard of living and welfare and above all, to restore man's faith and dignity as the superior animal.

Ermon 1: Secondary School

Maurice Delafosse is the secondary school where I studied. It was located at the center of the capital. It includes two disciplines (technology and economy) and a department of general studies. So the first day I set foot in that school affected me a lot, and it was a great excellence.

My first day in that school was full of joy because I left the primary school three months later and I was experiencing a new kind of education with new instructors. The first class there was English. The instructor was a gentleman, twenty seven years old. He was helpful and skilled with a wide spread knowledge and he often expressed himself with an humoristic tongue. However the school seemed to be a new environment for all

the new students.

A week after the beginning of the class we started meeting each other. My classmates were gentle and courteous. And we often helped each other because it was a public school, and sometimes we were confronted to a lack of materials, and those who had not enough money to buy books were helped by others so that to maintain the relationship between the students. After all it was a mixture of different social classes.

Besides these facts, that institution had a soccer team which played an important role in the activities of that school it reinforced the bridge between the students and every Saturday, we met each other at the stadium to support the players who were involved in the scholastic soccer games, the team had its own hymn which was sang at the beginning of each game, and it helped to glorify the players.

The experience that I gained in that school was interesting, it has helped to apprehend the sense of life and how to appreciate a person without prejudgment. So learning is also a way by which a person can discover his fellows.

Ermon 2: Population policy

World growth is inevitable and it is expected to reach about nine(9) billion in 2050. In order to control this increase, it's prominent to materialize an innovative policy which should adjust the political and socioeconomic trend in concert with the nations involved in this plan, without ignoring beliefs and values. Senegal need to address implications of changes in coherence with its cultural and religious context.

Demographic increase in Senegal will result in a growing of working ages, however there will be a continuous need to increase and develop infrastructures in terms of education, health and employment. All african countries are facing these same problems of population because of their low Gross National Product (GNP).

With reference to the economic stategies, a great population might be a potential provider of consumers and profits for the free-market. Globalization is a new trend in this new millenium, planned and sustained by

some institutions such as the international monutary fund and the World Bank which dictate their policies to afric an countries.

The regulation of population growth is a plan of such organizations. With a population of 9 million inhabitants Senegal is not obligated to adopt these plans. Beside these facts, the cultural and religious background is contradictory to this policy: poverty and misery which result in promiscuity, abortion and sexually transmitted diseases are the consequences of our dependency upon foreign countries and a lack of morality.

In senegal we need to reduce the illiteracy rate, and establish a policy of sensibilization and stop child pregnancy. Therefore the greatest challenges to human welfare are to solve the problematic disparities between developed and less developed countries and erase poverty so that to manage devastating misadventures related to poverty.

Modou 1: Discrimination in Senegal.

Allover the world, discrimination has been noted, whether it is with the minorities in America, the Kurds in Turkey or Black people in South America. In Senegal, there is discrimination between the castes system, which are hurting the young people. I really want to denounce and call an end to this practice. What really is this discrimination? How does it affect the young? How can we end it?

There are some ethnical groups in Senegal, which consider themselves superior to the other groups and are discriminating against them. This discrimination between castes is from a long past. There are two major castes in Senegal: the "Guers" and the "Guewel". These castes are traditionally based on the peoples' occupation. The royal family and people who had the most important occupations in society represented the higher class or the Guers. They were the richest and the most educated people. Thus they did not want to be mixed with the lower class people, who had the most difficult or manual job. A Guer could not marry or have a Guewel friend, because they were looked upon as inferior. The jobs were passed from father to son even if the son did not meet the criteria for the job. So the poor stayed poor and the rich stayed rich. This history is still

going on in Senegal but it is disguised nowadays and the young are having a very bad time with it.

Actually, young people in Senegal are suffering from the discrimination between the castes. They cannot understand or distinguish the differences among them, so very often they do have a friend or girl friend from the other caste. But, when it comes to marrying the girl friend or inviting your friend to your house that is when the problems occur .The parents generally don't accept that, they might ask their son or daughter to stop seeing their friend or they may ask them to break the friendship. The young Guewels are still being discriminated against getting good jobs. They usually don't get good jobs even if they graduated from a university with good grades, because their parent are not rich and they don't have anyone to act as an intermediate in obtaining a job. These discriminations must be ended.

To stop this depravity, certain solutions must occur. We must reeducate ourselves about what makes a person good or bad and whether it have to do with being part of a group or not. The young know that being a good person does not mean being a Guer or a Guewel, because they interact together and they find out that there is no difference among them. Generally, the young Guewels are better at school than the young Guers, because they work hard to show that they are not inferior. The young Guers respect them for that. So it is the young who must let their parents know the truth, that there is no difference between the two groups. They have to show them how much they are getting hurt from these discriminations. People, who have had some experiences from the outside Senegal, must bring their experiences to help solve the problems. For example, we can tell what the Americans did to improve the discrimination between races that existed in America.

The discrimination between castes based on one ancestor's job is really stupid and is hurting the country by dividing the young and all Senegalese people. Senegal is a poor country and needs to be developed. To attain this goal, we need to stick together and fight this. Everybody in Senegal must consider this discrimination as an enemy and bring it to an end.

Babou 1: Population policy

Nowadays, the entire world economy faces problems in this era where things changes too fast. To resolves economics difficulties, some organizations think that reducing global overpopulation will help a lot. However is it a good reason to limit the number of children at two?

In most African countries in the past , the main economic activity was agriculture. Few decades before, industrial activities was not known in our coutries.

In these countries, where there was no machines , people based on human labor to develop their economic activities. It was frequent to see a man who had twenty children. Usually these big families were the big land owners and had several farms or fields.

The need of developing economic activities in a non industrialized environment could explain the fact that people used to have many children to help them in their activities. Thus this traditional attitude continue to be hold by some people who still live in traditional era although we have reached an era of huge industrialization and information, an era where human labor tend to be substitute more and more by automatic systems.

However , these traditional practices still remain in most African countries where men are usually polygames. Even if we don't need most of the time human labor to fulfill our economics goals , people still have this attitude to have many children . Sometimes, it is really hard to someone who had a tradional value of having many children , to leave this tradition and often religions defends this position, what makes difficult the adoption of the resolution to limit the numbers of children at two.

But should we just look this traditional and religious side of the problem and ignore the economical aspect? It is very difficult nowadays to raise a children, it is time consuming and very expensive to take care of children, to give them a good education and a good health cover in this world constantly changing.

So the debate about should we adopt or reject the resolution of having no more than two children have to be sized and is personal. Everyone should look both economical and social aspects to make a rational decision.

232

Mor 1: Population policy

As far as I am concerned, I don't agree with international non governmental organization which (h)as proposed to world countries the policy that each family should have (no) more than two children in order to ease global overpopulation.

One of my three reasons is a familial one: the Senegalese family is large; we usually have two or three uncles, three or four a(u)nts and a lot of cousins and nephews. Besides every grandfather of my country is so proud to see his family growing up in number.

My second reason is economic: my country is not developed as many European countries or the United States to have less people in the field to develop our agriculture. We don't have a motorized agriculture as western countries; we still have an artisan one. That involves more hands, in other words we need more people in our fields.

My last reason is a political reason: I think that European countries, which an old population, are scared to be invaded by a labor coming from the third world. They don't want third world people in their countries. What is so paradoxical is that this policy of two children to each couple is not applicable to countries, which have an old population; on the contrary, they (should) have a policy, which encouraged people to have more children.

Khalil 1: Child Abuse

In my tribe (Bambara) there is a proverb as old as our existence: Celebrating the birth of a child is more important than remembering the greatest deed of an ancestor . What is meant by this proverb is that; even though your past may be lined with accomplishments, the continuation of life is even more special because children represent the binding dogma of tradition and culture. In this essay, I will attempt to discuss the fundamental rights of children and how often, their rights are abused because of their status.

"Who do you want, to live with? Stop picking your nose and answer me." I was nine years old when my father asked me this question. My parents were getting a

divorce, and they wanted me to choose a side. I stood there with my fingers in my nose and cried because I knew something terrible was happening with my family and I could not comprehend all of the emotions that were coursing through my body. I stood there frightened and confused. At that time, all I wanted to do was to be a little boy enveloped by the security of my parents. I said all of this, not to say that I was an abused child because I was not. My parents divorced and my mother remarried a man who treated me as if I was his biological offspring. I mentioned my childhood because every evening watching the news, with Elian Gonzales case, I am reminded of the day my parents wanted me to choose which person I would live with.

On the continents of Asia and Africa girls as young as eleven are given by their parents to be married to men up to four times their age. These pubescent girls are forced to undergo female genital mutilation, this technique partially or totally remove the clitoris. It is thought that, if girls on the eve of sexual maturity undergo this excision they would be less inclined to have sexual relations before marriage. After they are married, sex will not be for gratification but for procreation. Often this practice is wrapped in cultural and religious mosaic, and this people are more inclined to maintain this custom, The illustrious American writer Alice Walker wrote a book on this practice, and has formed an association to discourage this brutal and often a life threatening act.

Even though the Universal Human Rights Declaration stated over fifty years ago, that education was a fundamental right, it is estimated that more than forty million children are being denied their rights. This is child abuse because if a child is limited by his or her ability to read and write then, his life will more than likely be shackled to poverty and violence.

People should be aware of this situation, and respect children rights. As it is said in Mali, they represent the future of the nation.

Moise 1: Population policy

According, to economic studies, the population of a country must not grow faster than its economy. My Country is undeveloped has its economy growing by trhee percent per year. Therefore Controling the growth of the population is one of the challenge for

the government. Some non-governmental organizations propose to master the rising of population to limit to two the number of children per family. But this idea can have some political, economic, and social consequences in the country.

The most difficult part of the execution of this project will be to convince the population to limit their children because of their beliefs by majority in Islam. Back to the past, in Arabia where the holly Quran which is the book and direction for Muslims was reveled, people used to kill their children when they are girls. God told them to not kill them because He feed their children but not them. So in my understanding, people think that at all they do not have to control their children's birth and it will be a sin to limit them. The success of this program goes before by changing the beliefs of people.

One other aspect of this idea is economic. In Senegal, the two third of the population are farmers. And they need a lot of person to exploit their land because the agriculture is not industrial and uses people instead of machine. The tradition too requires the children to take care financially their parents whenever they start making money. So the fewer children the parents have, the less money they receive from them. But with the transformation of rural city to town, and nature of business, people start to think different.

The third aspect is the base of the family. Almost one half of the families are polygamy in country. Usually the co-wives in a family are in competition and they think about getting more whenever their children inherit their father. The mean they use to have more children. In the other hand, a man with a big family is well respected in the society and gets more responsibilities in the community's activities.

The problem of population is very complex because they require to change the behaviors of the public. Some country like Iran did it successfully in ten years while some other European country had done it in thirty years. But I think that the government should appoint some professionals in sociology with the help of the non-governmental organizations to change the way people believe and act because it is a necessity.

Codou 1: Power of Changing

Every body has dreams about something and hopes they will become reality one day. Not everything on earth is perfect, that' why they are so many things that need to be

changed. We all have a goal and want to accomplish it, no matter how long it will take.

If today I were given the power to change anything in the world, I would think first about my beautiful country (Senegal). But where would I start first, would I try to change the culture, the level of education or the mentality? Should I start with the culture, the education or the mentality because they're all very important?

During this writing, we will try to argue this subject while answering to all these questions.

Senegal is one of the prettiest countries in Africa. Located in the West Coast of Africa, Senegal has a good opportunity to communicate with different continents such as Europe (specially France) which is very close, America (USA) and Asia (Japan), because It's strategic geographical position allows the country to be able to trade with other continents and consequently develop its economy.

Unfortunately, in spite of all the opportunities of becoming a developed country, Senegal is still belongs to the third world countries, and the level of educations is still low and I sincerely believe that education occupies a very, important place in the development of a country.

This is why, if I was given the power to change something in Senegal, this is where I would start first.

As far as the culture is concerned, I'm not very worried because it's a greet and rich one.

The major problem that faces my country is the lack of education and this needs to be worked on. The Senegalese government has to help its population, fight this obstacle by sensitizing its people. Colonization has played an important part in changing Senegalese mentality. In fact, France has occupied Senegal in the 18th century .The French imposed their religion, language, mentalities, in general during that time and this had lot of effects in the country especially in the culture and mentalities of people.

So we have to create our own way of education based on our culture, our mentality, because the culture itself is not so bad. However, this creation should be appropriate to us.

This inappropriate colonization, which is really different from its culture, has made of Senegal a corrupted one what needs to be fought. Corruption also is a direct consequence of colonization, and we need to get rid of it. It can be a big handicap in the development of a country and it's the main reason why the Senegalese economy is not doing very well.

All the problems need to be solve, but if I had the power to change anything, I would start with the education because that is what can change mentalities, the more educated people are, the more they understand what the country needs to do in order to develop its economy. However that may be hard to do and ask for lot of courage and patience. Senegalese people need to be taught that colonization as a whole had not been bad. They should select the positive part and combine it with the positive parts of Senegalese culture.

Hoping that one day this dream will come true, have the power to change anything you want

Roughly, it is not a dream or a goal to see my beautiful land change, but it is a duty that I have to accomplish like a proud citizen. Therefore, I promise that I will change it soon because I made a difference between Senegalese and rich countries like USA.

I hope that I am not the only Senegalese who want to change it. We (young citizens of Senegal) will change those bad things in Senegal; make some new and good ideas by changing our mentality.

In summary , I say that it will be nice and cool to change something that you always dreamed about it.

It was very interesting to discuss about my dream
Therefore, anybody has to follow his goal it does not matter how it will happen and what it will cost.

Tijaan 1: Strengths and Weaknesses of your High School Experience

I graduated five years ago from a high school named Sacre Coeur located in my native country Senegal. There were strengths and weaknesses in my high school experience. Seriousness, friendships and sports were Sacre Coeur's strengths. As

weaknesses, I'll mention the decreasing teaching level, homework and finally, the hard course schedule.

Sacre Coeur was known as a very serious high school. Almost all the teachers were severe. The courses were strict and there was no joking. When a teacher was talking, we listened carefully to him, in silence. Nobody was allowed to speak or to write down something. First, you would listen and then you would write down notes. If you were caught eating or drinking something during the class, you were immediately asked to leave. That was how teachers controlled discipline in their class and they were sometimes rude to students. I did like that way of teaching because I knew that was the only way to make us work hard in order to have good results.

Also, the friendships at Sacre Coeur were another positive point I want to talk about. That high school was the place I used to spend most of my time. All the friends I had at that time were classmates. There were good relationships between the students. As we were sharing the same classes, teachers, homework, happiness and difficulties, it was as if we were all brothers and sisters. Apart from the school, I used to meet some of my classmates either to do our homework together or to go out and have some fun. I was

Moreover, the field of sports was well developed at Sacre Coeur. Sports were a leisure that was given a lot of importance. Physical Education was a required course for school used to organize football or basketball games. There were many tournaments between classes where the winner was rewarded. Every student participated by

However, it was said that the teaching level at Sacre Coeur was decreasing. Indeed, Sacre Coeur had been one of the best high schools in Senegal. Students coming from that school were among the best in all the national competitions. But every time, the results in the exams were better the year before. The decreasing level was explained by the fact that teachers were getting less pay by the school. So they were not encouraged to do their best in teaching.

Studying at Sacre Coeur was really too hard. Students did not have enough freedom to study. We were given too much homework. And we were obliged to get it ready for the next course; if not, we were given the mark zero. I didn't like that because it made the student feel like a slave in front of the teacher. You spent all night long doing

homework although, you had to get up early for the next ~o make a student be glad about doing homework and learning more, teachers should give them more freedom.

Another weakness of Sacre Coeur was the course schedule. It was forty hours a week. Classes used to start early in the morning at 8 AM and finish late at 6 PM, Students were not allowed to have a certain number of absences. Your parents were informed about your absences. They had to make an appointment to go and see the supervisor of the school. Then, they'll discuss with him to get you out of trouble. In class, if you were late by less than 10 minutes, you were sure to receive a remark from the teacher. If it was more than 10 minutes late, you had to take a ticket at the supervisor's office. Then, you had to wait for the next course and present the ticket to the teacher.

Sacre Coeur was a high school which most important strength was seriousness. Friendship was also another good point I noticed when I was there. Sports were well developed at Sacre Coeur.

However, it had weaknesses like the decreasing teaching level every year. The homework given to students by teachers was too long and the course schedule was hard. But those weaknesses didn't forbid Sacre Coeur to be still a good high school were a lot of parents used to put their children.

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Appendix 4: IRB

Oklahoma State University
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 3/22/02

Date   Friday, March 23, 2001   IRB Application No   AS00113

Proposal Title: A CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF EFL/ESL WRITING PROBLEMS: CASE STUDIES OF 5
SENEGALESE STUDENTS IN US COLLEGES

Principal
Investigator(s)

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Reviewed
and   Exempt   **Continuation**

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s) : Approved

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Signature   Friday, March 23, 2001
Carol Olson, Director of University Research Complian   Date

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modifications
to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval with the advisor's signature. The IRB office
MUST be notified in writing when a project is complete. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited
and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

VITA

Aymérou Mbaye

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: A CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF EFL / ESL WRITING PROBLEMS: CASE
STUDIES OF FIVE SENEGALESE STUDENTS IN US COLLEGES

Major Field: English

Biographical:

Education: Received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English, Dakar University,
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Advanced Diploma in Communicative Teaching of English, IELE,
Lancaster, March 1987. Received the M.A. in ELT degree, Lancaster
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Experience: EFL teacher in different public secondary schools in Senegal, 1980-
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Model teacher for the EFL Department, Graduate Teacher Training
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Writing Tutor, Writing Center, OSU, 1999. ESL Composition instructor,
English Dept., OSU, 2000-2001. ITA Program Assistant Director, OSU,
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Professional Organizations: ATES (Association of Teachers of English in
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