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TEXTUAL AWARENESS IN ARABIC AND ENGLISH
OR
"WHY ARE AMERICAN READERS SO DUMB?"

I. Questions to consider:

A. Are you able to give a conference presentation or write an academic paper in a language other than English? How might your response to this question influence your understanding of the challenges of learning to master English (or any auxiliary language) for academic purposes?

B. What have you observed about the writers you've worked with whose first language is Arabic with respect to challenges they face when trying to write academic prose in English? To help focus our discussion of this topic, I'd ask you to skim the draft below, which an undergraduate from Saudi Arabia brought to the Portland State Writing Center. As you read, spend some time thinking about the aspects of American academic writing that the student has mastered. In other words, rather than seeing only the problems with the text, spend some time thinking about which aspects or features of the text we might build on in offering the student advice. Finally, ignore spelling problems like using *miss* for *mess*. Focus, instead, primarily on larger rhetorical issues. Feel free to make notes to yourself as you read.

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Human Cloning

God Almighty has crafted the universe, and the creation of human beings apart from other creations as distinguished by its ability to innovate and patent. Therefore, we find that human beings since the creation of the universe in the process of development from one stage to another. It may not be such a good development or change in itself, but as a result of human ambitiousness.

In fact, there is a thirst in human being is always urging them to investigate the truth and access to knowledge no matter what the consequences are.

13 Science has always been a great benefit if used for the benefit of
14 mankind and the public needs. However, it has the devastating impact if used
15 for the personal purposes.

16 If miracles were given birth in the past, they are more and faster in our
17 time which did not occur in the human mind, and it was not even a dream in
18 the very long past lives. Moreover, it has been our destiny to witnessing many
19 miracles in our lives from radio and television, and computers to the internet
20 through the end of the enormous biological revolution "Genetic Engineering
21 Evolution" that took place in the world of plant, and as narrow in the animal
22 world, and then entered the world of human through the modern science of
23 human reproductive cloning.

24 Human reproductive cloning came to the public when Dolly, a sheep,
25 was cloned in Scotland in 1997. This news quickly spread around the world
26 causing both excitements at the possibilities which cloning techniques could
27 offer for the world; as well as concerning about the ethnical, social and legal
28 impactions of human reproductive cloning. This famous Dolly was not created
29 as a result of convergence between sheep's male and female as is usual with
30 God's creation of humans and animals. But they took the egg of the sheep in
31 question and get rid of the nucleus, and they brought a cell of a living sheep,
32 and they put it in the place of the nucleus, so it divides and multiplied then it
33 went in the process of normal fetal growth until the sheep Dolly was born.
34 Therefore, many international organizations, such as the World Health
35 Organization, the International Council of Nurses, and governments were
36 concerned about the impact of human reproductive cloning on human health,
37 dignity and human rights. However, I believe human cloning should be
38 prohibited due to the religion stands of human cloning, morality and the
39 human nature.

40 First of all, I would like to discuss how religions view human
41 reproductive cloning. Islam welcomes the science and scientific research, and
42 believes that it is a duty to offer the nation what excels in every area of science
43 that the nation need, so integrated with each other, but only self-sufficient in
44 every branch of science and applications, and in each specialization of
45 disciplines, so as not to be dependent on other nation. But the science in Islam,
46 like the work, the economy, politics and war, all must follow the values of
47 religion and ethics, Islam does not accept the idea of separation between these
48 things and between religion and morality, as if many people
49 in other countries say; let's free science, and called for a free economy, and
50 call the policy of free, and called the war a free, no religion or morals, you will
51 in these matters narrow this growth and improvements of movement. Islam
52 rejects this view of science that has affected the economy and politics, and
53 believes that everything in life must be subject to the guidance of religion and

54 the word of God, thus making the word of God supreme, and it is logical to
55 address the humans, his creation. The almighty Creator, God, is the word of
56 truth, goodness, justice.

57 Moreover, the Catholic Church prohibits human cloning, regarding it is a
58 violation of natural moral law (Catholic Medical Association, 2000). In
59 summarizing the view of the Christianity toward human cloning, they believe
60 that since the human is a creature, there should be a creator, and the Bible is
61 teaching us to believe that the rights and authority must be held by the God. In
62 addition, human cannot determine the issues of life and death through the
63 rights of abortion to the end of euthanasia. Finally, depending on the Bible,
64 God alone is the only one who has the authority over human, humans should
65 not put themselves in the position of God.

66 On the other hand, the Jewish view toward human cloning is totally the
67 opposite from Islam and Christianity. Jewish are saying that cloning does not
68 belong to creation and does not generate a new knowledge, rather is uses
69 existing information. Also they think that people are responsible to improve
70 and build a perfect world. If cloning is used for 'good matters' it should not be
71 forbidden (Cohen, 1999;Lipshutz, 1999). However, it is important to note that
72 although Jewish law does not forbid cloning, Jewish ethical theorists do not
73 recommend it.

74 Second, morality is the second reason to fight against reproductive
75 human cloning. Rationality is the fundamental difference between humans
76 and animal. Since humans have not only physical bodies, but also a spirit,
77 thoughts, and moral standers and codes of conduct being human. Imagine that
78 clone produced through a transfer of DNA with a body that does not have its
79 own personality and way of living and thinking. This person will be like an
80 empty shell with no soul in it. The cloning technology takes the body as an
81 object without concerning about the soul. If this technology is allowed to
82 proceed, it will continue its negatives effects until we approach the point that
83 humans would be a product that can be remade on a large scale.

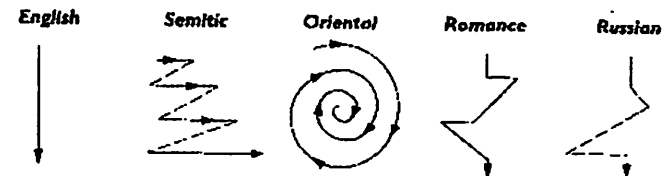
84 "We should not as a society grow life to destroy it, and that's exactly
85 what's taking place," (President Bush, 2001). President Bush classified human
86 cloning as "morally wrong", and the White House announced that President
87 George Bush is deeply disturbed by the efforts of human cloning. Said
88 spokesman Scott McClellan: <<The President believes, like most Americans
89 that human cloning is very disturbing and strongly supported the adoption of
90 legislation prohibiting. Many other countries around the world also rejected
91 the researchers that are being made by scientists on the human cloning.

92 The last point, human nature will be lost with human cloning. Who can
93 exactly know what the relationship between the cloned from the original is.
94 Human cloning can change the basics of life. The life that is going by a couple

95 since thousands years can approach the point where there is no need for the
96 man since women can have as many cloned children as they can. However,
97 who knows if all women from different classes can afford to cloned children in
98 the future if this technology continues to proceed. It is just going to miss up
99 the world and the family since Fathers could become "twin brothers" to their
100 "sons"; mothers could give birth to their genetic twins; and grandparents
101 would also be the "genetic parents" of their grandchildren. Human dignity
102 prohibits this miss. "Fukuyama" said, "According to the Decree by the Council
103 of Europe on Human Cloning, the instrumentalisation of human beings
104 through the deliberate creation of genetically identical human beings is
105 contrary to human dignity and thus constitutes a misuse of medicine and
106 biology" (Human Dignity 2002)

107 In conclusion, most religion perspective to the idea of human cloning,
108 ethnical view and human dignity are the three most reasons that I believe to
109 be against the idea of human cloning. I believe the negatives of human cloning
110 are much more than the positives. Life basics will be lost since there is no
111 need for the other gender to have children. Finally, if this technology
112 continues to proceed, it is going to make a big miss in the world.

II. HOW APPLIED LINGUISTS AND ESL TEACHERS INITIALLY THOUGHT ABOUT THIS QUESTION.
(Kaplan, 1966).



Based on an analysis of 598 student essays collected in 1963-1965.

Today, this perspective is seen as overly simplistic for several reasons, including;
1) its view of the structure of English texts (the original focus was paragraph structure),
2) its view of the structure of texts written in other languages,
3) its efforts to make claims about rhetorical preferences in other languages based on texts written in English, and
4) its focus on "thought patterns" rather than text features. Obviously, writing is a cognitive act, but it is much easier to analyze and interpret text features than to

make assumptions about thought patterns, given our limited understanding of language and cognition and our current inability to map anything that might be termed "thought patterns."

III. RETHINKING THE ISSUE IN TERMS OF THE RESOURCES WRITERS DRAW ON WHEN THEY COMPOSE:

- A. The language itself (grammar and lexis) as well as its poetic or rhetorical resources (assonance, alliteration, the nature of the sentence, the way punctuation works, etc.)
- B. The rhetorical tradition associated with the language and culture (the nature and functions of interpretation/argument, particular tropes that are valued or devalued, etc.)
- C. The implicit or explicit training writers received as writers (explicit instruction, explicit or implicit use of models to emulate, texts read, etc.)
- D. For multilingual writers (and for monolinguals who grow up in subcultures other than the dominant one), we would expect to see transfer—both positive and negative—from their knowledge of other cultures and traditions.

IV. TRAINING

Education in Saudi Arabia and its likely influence on the essay at the end of this handout

- Focus on religion: Worth (2009) quoted a professor from the most prestigious university in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia who stated that 75% of what her 13-year-old daughter studied in public school related to religion. The professor added, "We are all in favor of religion, but we don't have to make all our children into clerics."

Religion plays a role in education and culture in other countries of the Arab world but not to the extent it does in Saudi Arabia.

- Focus on memorization
- Focus on correctness of form
- Notions of intellectual property and, hence, plagiarism vary from those found in the US, as is the case with most cultures

V. THE RHETORICAL TRADITIONS

1) "Islamic sciences" (the Arabic trivium): grammar, rhetoric, and commentary early in the Islamic period—all developed as part of the codification of the Qur'an and the spread of Islam. Since the 18th century, influenced by contact with European languages because of colonialism, the increasing influence of science

and technology, etc. In some cases, the contact has led to adoption/adaptation; in others, it has led to definition in contrast to these potential influences.

2) The Western tradition, where the trivium was logic, grammar, and rhetoric Arose out of Greek democracy for male landed elite
Became a tool in the service of the Roman Empire, which adopted Christianity as its official religion around 330, and later the (Catholic) Church
Developed national variants across the countries of the West, particularly during the Renaissance, as national vernaculars underwent the process of standardization and replaced Latin; played a crucial role in the Protestant Reformation
Shaped by Enlightenment and the rise of science (17th-19th centuries)
In the 20th century, focused greatly on issues of language, especially language as representation (including the limits of such representations) and language as action

VI. THE LANGUAGE, ITS RESOURCES, AND ITS RHETORICAL TRADITION

Some translations from Arabic, which is diglossic, of course. In diglossic situations, the written language (that is, the language associated with literacy and schooling) is vastly different from the variety of the spoken language used in daily life. No one speaks the 'high' variety, the variety that is written, natively; it is learned in educational contexts, whether sacred or secular.

1) A fairly literal translation of a paragraph from Qasim Amin's (1900) *The New Woman*, an early work in Arabic critical of the situation of women in Arab society. (Ziadeh, 1984, pp. 34-37).

A fairly literal translation:

And on the whole, woman, from the time of her birth until the day of her death, is a slave because she does not live by herself and for herself, but she lives with man and for man only. And she stands in need to him for everything that concerns her. Consequently, she does not go out unless escorted by him, and she does not travel unless under his protection, and she does think except in his [way of] reasoning, and she does not see except with his eyes, and she does not hear except with his ears, and she does not want except with his desire, and she does not do [anything] except by means of him. And she does not make a move unless he is the source for it. So she, therefore, does not count as a free human being but rather she is [merely] something appended to him.

It is important to note that in certain ways, this style of writing is comparable in some ways to the especially formal style we find in Bertrand Russell's "What I Have Lived For" (1956):

Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind. These passions, like great winds, have blown me hither and thither, in a wayward course, over a deep ocean of anguish, reaching to the very verge of despair.

I have sought love, first, because it brings ecstasy -- ecstasy so great that I would often have sacrificed all the rest of life for a few hours of this joy. I have sought it, next, because it relieves loneliness -- that terrible loneliness in which one shivering consciousness looks over the rim of the world into the cold unfathomable lifeless abyss. I have sought it, finally, because in the union of love I have seen, in a mystic miniature, the prefiguring vision of the heaven that saints and poets have imagined. This is what I sought, and though it might seem too good for human life, this is what -- at last -- I have found.

With equal passion I have sought knowledge. I have wished to understand the hearts of men. I have wished to know why the stars shine. And I have tried to apprehend the Pythagorean power by which number holds sway above the flux. A little of this, but not much, I have achieved.

Love and knowledge, so far as they were possible, led upward toward the heavens. But always pity brought me back to earth. Echoes of cries of pain reverberate in my heart. Children in famine, victims tortured by oppressors, helpless old people a hated burden to their sons, and the whole world of loneliness, poverty, and pain make a mockery of what human life should be. I long to alleviate the evil, but I cannot, and I too suffer. This has been my life. I have found it worth living, and would gladly live it again if the chance were offered me.

There are, of course, crucial differences between the two texts despite their reliance on repetition at various levels. *An important point, however, is that because of their experience, educated Anglophones perceive Russell's text as being especially formal, even artificial, because of what we might term its high-flown style, which is very poetic in an artificial way.* Westerners transfer these values as

they read texts from other cultural traditions—the use of a great deal of structural parallelism = poetic discourse.

2) Literal translation of an article, "The British Elections" from a May 1997, London-based political magazine the name of which translates as *The World*; it would be much like *Time* or *Newsweek*. (Source, including translation, from James Dickins *et al.* (2002), pp. 25-26). I've altered the translation so that it resembles something we're more used to in terms of punctuating the text into sentences. *There is no sentence-internal punctuation whatsoever in the Arabic original.*)

The rule of the Conservatives was distinguished by its clearer and more principled striving for the values of Western capitalism and by their adoption of a gradual, total programme in order to separate the state and the society; and the start of the project of gradual relinquishing of/by the state of/from the task of social care and the clearing of the way in front of the movement of investment and capital by means of the reduction of taxes. And Thatcher set off from an unyielding philosophical-ideological conception with which she fought the unions and broke their power; then she transferred the public properties of the state in the great companies and converted them to the private sector, and opened the door in front of the citizens to buy their shares; and the policy of privatization covered more than twenty large companies, including the iron-steel company and the gas company and the electricity and the telephone and the oil and the airports. She also gave the renters of government houses the right to buy and own their houses, and [she undertook] other measures in which she forced the state to give up its properties to the benefit of the citizens, and/so the result was that Britain in the eighties witnessed an economic movement and a relative revival, and the inpouring of foreign capital, and the conviction of the British voter came into being of the tangible, direct benefits of the rule of the Conservatives.

When questioned, Anglophone readers often note that the passage from Qasim Amin and from this article remind them in some ways of particular books from what is sometimes termed the *Ketuvim* or "Writings" of the Hebrew Bible, that is, the Jewish scriptures, a version of which Christians call "the Old Testament." What do these two texts teach us about notions like "sentence" in Arabic?

VII. TOPICAL STRUCTURE ANALYSIS OF THE PASSAGE BY QASIM AMIN.

(Topical structure analysis is a method of analysis developed by Lautamatti (1978) building on the work of the Prague School of Linguistics' discussion of topic/comment structures.)

Note that the topic (here, also the grammatical subject of the sentence) remains the same throughout the paragraph, something that generally wouldn't happen in an English-language text constructed by a native speaker. Further, in English, even when the topic remains the same throughout a stretch of discourse, (introductory) subordinate clauses would likely break up what would otherwise seem like syntactic and topic structure repetition.

And on the whole,

woman

from the time of her birth
until the day of her death,

is a slave

because	she does not live by herself and for herself,
but	she lives <i>with</i> man and for man only.
And	she stands in need to him for everything that concerns her.
Consequently,	she does not go out <i>unless</i> escorted by him,
and	she does not travel <i>unless</i> under his protection,
and	she does think <i>except in</i> his [way of] reasoning,
and	she does not see <i>except with</i> his eyes,
and	she does not hear <i>except with</i> his ears,
and	she does not want <i>except with</i> his desire,
and	she does not do [anything] <i>except by means of</i> him.
And	she does not make a move <i>unless</i> he is the source for it.
So	she, therefore, does not count as a free human being
but rather	she is [merely] something appended to him.

VIII. AN ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT FROM *THE WORLD* SHOWING REPETITION INCLUDING SOME CASES OF TOPIC STRUCTURE REPETITION.

The rule of the Conservatives was distinguished by its clearer and more principled striving for the values of Western capitalism and by their adoption of a gradual, total programme in order to separate *the state and the society*;

and the start of the project of gradual relinquishing by the state of the task of *social care and the clearing of the way* in front of the *movement of investment and capital* by means of the reduction of taxes.

And Thatcher set off from an unyielding philosophical-ideological conception with which she fought the unions and broke their power;

then she transferred the public properties of the state in the great companies and [she] converted them to the private sector, and [she] opened the door in front of the citizens to buy their shares;

and the policy of privatization covered more than twenty large companies, including *the iron-steel company and the gas company and the electricity and the telephone and the oil and the airports.*

She also gave the renters of government houses the right to buy and own their houses, and [she undertook] other measures in which she forced the state to give up its properties to the benefit of the citizens.

and/so the result was that Britain in the eighties witnessed *an economic movement and a relative revival, and the inpouring of foreign capital,*

and the conviction of the British voter came into being of the tangible, direct benefits of the rule of the Conservatives.

IX THE FUNCTIONS OF REPETITION (al-Jubouri, 1984)

A. Synonymous, commutative, and interchangeable: *their hopes and wishes*

An example closer to home for Westerners: what Biblical scholars terms "synonymous parallelism" from the Hebrew Bible in which the second statement is a reiteration or restatement of the first; thus, in the example below "righteousness" and "justice" are juxtaposed as (near) synonyms.

Let justice flow down like water

And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. (Amos 5:24)

It is important to note here that the intended audience of Amos's text would have understood Amos to be equating justice and righteousness with this juxtaposition, something modern readers would not automatically do—again, cultural expectations influence how we interpret texts we read or hear.

- B. Near synonymous in context: *practices and beliefs*
- C. Implicational: *uncivilized and old*
- D. First as more specific case of second: *particular state of mind and way of thinking*
- E. One modifies the other by restricting it or making it more concrete: *a spiritual power that allows them to be near to God and can help them fulfill their wishes*
- F. Graduation of meanings forming a semantic scale: *mind/eyes/ears/desires* (from Amin example above)
- G. Antonyms: *time of her birth until the day of her death* (from Amin)
- H. Freezes or collocations: (cf. 'ladies and gentlemen' in English)

In other words, repetition plays many functions in Arabic rhetoric, functions that the Anglophone reader will likely miss when they read Arabic-language texts or texts written in English by native speakers of Arabic.

X. RETURNING TO THE PASSAGE FROM *THE WORLD*

LITERAL TRANSLATION FROM ARABIC	ONE POSSIBLE TRANSLATION OF THE TEXT INTO AMERICAN ACADEMIC PROSE
<p>The rule of the Conservatives was distinguished by its clearer and more principled striving for the values of Western capitalism and by their adoption of a gradual, total program in order to separate the state and the society; and the start of the project of gradual relinquishing by the state of the task of social care and the clearing of the way in front of the movement of investment and capital by means of the reduction of taxes. And Thatcher set off from an unyielding philosophical-ideological</p>	<p>The rule of the Conservatives was distinguished from that of its Labour predecessors in three specific ways. At the philosophical level, it adhered directly to the principles of Western capitalism. More practically, it adapted policies by which the state gave up its prior role in providing a safety net for the less fortunate, thereby separating the state from society in crucial ways. These policies were made possible by reductions in taxes, which encouraged private capital investment. Motivated by strong philosophical and</p>

<p>conception with which she fought the unions and broke their power; then she transferred the public properties of the state in the great companies and converted them to the private sector, and opened the door in front of the citizens to buy their shares; and the policy of privatization covered more than twenty large companies, including the iron-steel company and the gas company and the electricity and the telephone and the oil and the airports. She also gave the renters of government houses the right to buy and own their houses, and [she undertook] other measures in which she forced the state to give up its properties to the benefit of the citizens, and the result was that Britain in the eighties witnessed an economic movement and a relative revival, and the inpouring of foreign capital, and the conviction of the British voter came into being of the tangible, direct benefits of the rule of the Conservatives.</p>	<p>ideological convictions, Thatcher fought the unions, breaking the power they had long held. She likewise privatized over twenty major companies involving the iron and steel industry, utilities, oil, and airports. Of course, privatization meant public ownership as citizens bought shares in these companies. Additionally, she gave those renting government-owned houses the right to buy them, and she found ways to force the state to give up its properties in order to benefit citizens. As a result, foreign capital poured into Great Britain, giving rise to an economic revival that convinced British voters of the tangible, direct benefits of Conservative rule.</p>
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1. What differences do you see between the two translations of the same text?
2. How is the text on the right different from the text on the left?
3. What differences do you see in terms of sentence structure?

4. What differences do you see in terms of rhetorical moves—strategic things the writer is doing to help the reader understand the form and/or content of the message?

XI. SOME PREDICTIONS WE CAN MAKE BASED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS ABOUT CHALLENGES SPEAKERS OF ARABIC WILL FACE WHEN WRITING IN ENGLISH

A. The Arabic notion of a sentence and a paragraph

B. Topical structure in Arabic texts

C. The preference for coordination (parataxis) and balance (in contrast to subordination (hypotaxis) and balance. Consider the claim below about how natively Anglophone academic readers interpret texts:

If we make every thought in the sentence equally important grammatically by stringing together coordinate clauses, readers will think they are equally important. (Becker, 2007, p. 82)

D. The preference for repetition

E. The assumption that presentation alone functions as proof

F. The use of metatextual markers to help their "dumb American" readers

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