

**Donghong Liu and Keith Lloyd (Eds.). *Rhetoric and Composition Studies*, CCNU Press, P. R. China (2020). 218 pp.**

Composition is inextricably linked to rhetoric. Composition-Rhetoric, a discipline which emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s in North America, embodies a modern view of rhetoric that places writing centrally in rhetorical work. Emphasizing the function of rhetoric as an underlying theory of composition, this field has drawn more and more attention from the academics in China in recent years. Nonetheless, until now, most textbooks on English writing in China have tended to focus merely on rudimentary composition training rather than on composition research and instruction. A book on the theory and practice of teaching English writing is very much needed by English majors and teachers who teach English writing in China.

In this regard, *Rhetoric and Composition Studies* is a timely and crucial book. This book was co-authored by Donghong Liu, Professor of English from Central China Normal University and Keith Lloyd, Professor of English at Kent State University. Both of them have published many research papers in journals, including those enjoying international recognition, and are influential in their academic fields. The main research directions of Prof. Liu are rhetoric and composition studies, pragmatics and second language acquisition. The research interest of Prof. Lloyd lies in fields such as comparative rhetoric, feminist argumentation, and argumentation theory.

Unlike textbooks that merely center on traditional rhetoric classics or those that only emphasize second language acquisition, this handbook is an ideal combination of rhetoric and composition. It embraces the origin, development, leading theories, main conceptions, and some cutting-edge perspectives reflecting recent research in the composition-rhetoric field. Therefore, as the first book rigorously introducing composition-rhetoric in China, it can be hailed as a pioneering book which familiarizes the reader with the basic methods and theories associated with researching and teaching writing. Scholars, teachers, and graduate students will benefit from exploring the diverse topics, contexts, and approaches reviewed.

Structurally, this book is comprised of ten chapters in total. The first chapter prepares readers with a conceptual understanding of rhetoric. The differences between modern English rhetoric and ancient rhetoric as well as the five canons of rhetoric are specifically introduced in this chapter. Chapter Two outlines the history of Western rhetoric. Some valuable ideas proposed by well-renowned scholars in this field such as Kenneth Burke and Chaïm Perelman are referred to as well. In all, the first two chapters provide a basic framework of rhetoric.

Chapter Three reviews the history and development of Composition-Rhetoric. Four schools of thought about writing, including Classicists, Positivists, Expressionists and New Rhetoricians, are illustrated in the chapter in terms of their respective views of language, truth, the role of writing, and the function of rhetoric. Moreover, a brief explanation is offered here as to the four aspects of the “recursive” writing process as well as the way in which these four aspects are taught and encouraged in the writing classroom.

Chapter Four touches upon writing style and figures of speech. It begins with the five virtues of style, followed by a brief overview on different levels of words, varieties of sentences and the tone of style. Ways to achieve an appealing style are also discussed, such as the use of strong verbs, and the avoidance of redundancy. Then the chapter goes on to the definition and

classification of figures of speech. Various kinds of figures of speech are thoroughly listed with enriching examples.

Chapter Five and Chapter Six specifically cover the popular theories on argumentation and provide a theoretical framework, thanks to which readers are likely to have a clue about the analysis and evaluation of arguments. Chapter Five covers the three rhetorical appeals to persuade the audience and the diversified kinds of fallacies regarding to argumentation, each illustrated with a specific example. Chapter Six presents some seminal theories on discourse structure, including Toulmin's rhetoric model of argumentation, Van Eemeren's argumentation structure and rhetorical structure theory advanced by Mann and Thompson. Affording the reader access to the inner workings of argument and raising awareness about an argument's linguistic nuances, each theory renders arguments more coherent and transparent than traditional logic.

In Chapter Seven, the authors address the origin of contrastive rhetoric, approach to text analysis used by Kaplan, methods of analysis in contrastive rhetoric and more importantly, the comparison between traditional contrastive rhetoric and critical contrastive rhetoric. It is worth mentioning that this chapter particularly discusses the criticisms that contrastive rhetoric has faced, from ideology to pedagogy, allowing readers to have a rough idea of those conflicting ideas.

Chapter Eight is unfolded centering around two concepts—"intercultural rhetoric" and "translingual writing". The authors introduce the three maps proposed by Connor with the intention of illustrating in which way develops the concept of "intercultural rhetoric". It is pointed out that the research methods in intercultural rhetoric emphasize identifying a construct of interest and functions which cuts across different traditions, different from those starting with the discourse features adopted by researchers in traditional contrastive rhetoric. The latter part of this chapter deals with translingualism, which deconstructs Standard English and views it as an ideological construct. A model advocated by Canagarajah is offered here to illustrate translingualism and differentiate it from the other three models of literacy acquisition. Additionally, explanation is given as to language deviation and errors caused by L1 transfer from the translingual view.

Chapter Nine shifts the attention to comparative rhetoric, including its concept and the major practices involved in doing it. Serving as an approach to studying rhetoric in non-western cultures, comparative rhetoric is apt to be confused with contrastive rhetoric. This chapter offers four major practices of doing comparative rhetoric summarized by Hum and Lyon. The main part of this chapter is supported by previous comparative rhetoric research especially on Chinese argumentation and from the perspective of Chinese face which to some extent involves sociolinguistics, thus making readers, especially those in China, better understand the current situation of composition-rhetoric studies and giving readers a direction or a field which they can try to dive into.

The last chapter is devoted to the main conceptions in composition research and instruction, with special attention given to the cognitive and social factors involved in writing. The authors identify three major approaches to researching and teaching of writing in the framework proposed by Hyland, which focuses on texts, writers and readers respectively. It is worth mentioning that the third approach, reader-oriented approach demonstrates a shift from cognitive issues to larger social issues, which is referred to as "post-process" or "social turn" in composition studies. For graduate students, this chapter provides a compass to navigate the

multiple theoretical and methodological approaches to composition studies as well as their pedagogical implications in teaching writing and/or L2 writing.

In sum, this book serves as an accessible guide to teaching and studying rhetoric and composition and provides a useful theoretical framework for future research in the field. It could be used as a textbook for graduate level courses on rhetoric and second language writing. Nearly every chapter has “Reading for discussion” and “Questions and exercises” at the end in which the reflection and review questions provide readers with many opportunities for thought-provoking discussion. And the section on “Further reading” at the end of each chapter makes each chapter a valuable starting point for further study on the discipline engaging writing, thinking, and argument.

Overall, this book is highly recommended to those who are interested in the multiple theoretical and methodological approaches to Composition-Rhetoric research, those who want to stay informed about future directions in composition studies, and those who wish to use more effective strategies in L2 writing instruction.

### **Acknowledgements**

The paper is one of the research results of the project “Training the critical thinking and research competence of the postgraduates in the English department: Based on course instruction” (project number 2020JG03). Thanks go to Central China Normal University.

Yue Ding  
Central China Normal University, China

Qiong Gan\*  
Central China Normal University, China  
(Corresponding author. Email: ganjoey@163.com)

Received: 1 September 2021; Accepted: 1 December 2021; Published: 1 March 2022  
<https://doi.org/10.46451/tc.20220105>

**Qiong Gan** teaches in the English Department at Central China Normal University. Her research efforts have focused on translation theories and practice, and rhetoric and composition studies. She has published more than ten important papers in these areas.

**Yue Ding**, a postgraduate in the English Department at Central China Normal University, majors in Applied Linguistics.