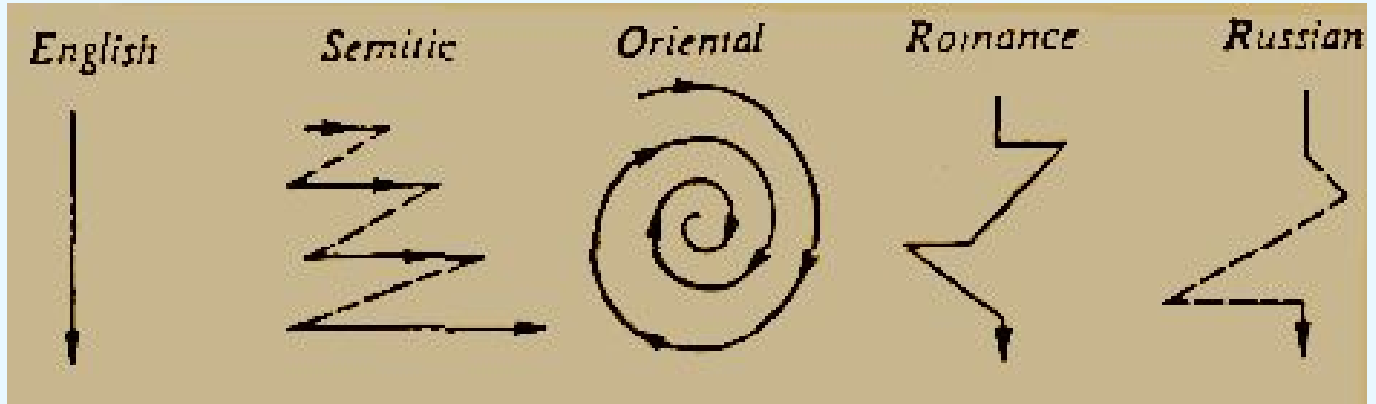


ORGANIZATION OF INFORMATION

Cultural Styles



The linguist **Robert Kaplan** pointed out that each culture has its own particular way of organizing written information. He believed that the style of organization reflected a particular culture's patterns of thought. Kaplan wrote a very influential article called "***Cultural Thought Patterns in Intercultural Education***"; he made people look at the connection between different cultural patterns of thinking and how this pattern was reflected in the way the culture organized information in writing. The article pointed out that even when people wrote in a second language, they would often use the same system of organization they had learned in their native language.

Kaplan represented the different patterns of organization in five diagrams. The manner of organization in **English** is shown as a straight line as a straight line, indicating that Anglo cultures present the main idea of their communication right away -- at the beginning of the communication. They follow the expression of this main idea with points that support it.

Semetic cultures layer differing ideas side by side, leaving it up to the reader to make the connection among them.

Oriental presentation slowly and carefully approaches the main point, carefully setting down all the points that led up to it.

The **romance** languages approach the main point directly, but indicate the complexity of the issue at hand by bringing in related points.

What do you think of Kaplan's diagram? Do you think he was right about the different cultural writing styles?