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FLOWERY INDUCTIVE RHETORIC MEETS CREATIVE DEDUCTIVE ARGUMENTS BECOMING TRANSNATIONAL RESEARCHER-WRITERS

Michael Singh and Dongquing Fu

ABSTRACT

Sometimes students from China are characterised as writing inductively, using flowery prose. The proposition explored in this paper is that having higher degree research (HDR) students from China develop their critiques of stereotypes of "Asian students" provides useful insights into where existing supervisory pedagogies might be reworked to enhance their capabilities for writing scholarly arguments. Using evidence from a textbook used by students studying English as a foreign language in China this paper documents the different models of deductive argumentation they are taught. Certain writing conventions for constructing arguments—theses—are required in learning to produce research and to become a transnational researcher-writer. This paper opens up to exploration of the question of what can western supervisors and their Chinese students do.

INTRODUCTION

Our interest is in exploring ways to legitimise Chinese students' use of their intellectual heritage in their studies in Australia. The issue that concerns us is how Chinese students might bring this knowledge to bear in their own education and help in the internationalisation of Australian education. This paper opens up to further exploration the nature, reach and contemporary relevance of what Chinese students are taught about writing arguments in China for undertaking research higher degrees in Australia. In doing so, it develops a preliminary exploration and characterisation of the concept of an "argumentative Chinese transnational researcher." Typically, the production of research theses involves foregrounding their substantive content, by eliminating any "background" or "contextual" information (Collins 2006; Diangelo 2006). For a student from China doing research in Australia can bring with it the dawning of being entangled in stereotypes about the "Chinese learner" (Clark & Gieve 2006).

This paper explores the proposition that the internationalisation of research education might benefit from supervisors and research students cooperating in the joint investigation of the context in which they are working together. In doing so it explores the pedagogical possibilities for extending and deepening the argumentative capabilities of Chinese HDR students by drawing intellectual resources from their own educational culture into an international dialogue. That is, it furthers our research into the problem of forming transnational researcher-writers capable of engaging in scholarly disputation (Singh & Fu, in press). The debates over the negative representations of Chinese learners, and Asian students more generally have been useful in enabling this study. For the second author, a HDR student from China, this opportunity enabled her to engage these stereotypes to enhance her transformation into a transnational researcher-writer.

Twelve hundred years ago, the Chinese essayist, Han Yu wrote: "师者，所以传道、授业、解惑也." This statement means that it is desirable that a teacher be the kind of person who can propagate ideas, impart professional knowledge and resolve doubts. In terms of the contemporary relationship between a Chinese HDR student and her supervisor it speaks to the new to create ideas, engage in the production of knowledge and open up spaces of doubt. This paper suggests that supervision directed to forming and informing an argumentative Chinese HDR student may help both in challenging imaginings of students from China as uncritical, unfocused and rote learning plagiarists. After a brief explanation of the research method used, evidence is presented indicating what some students in China are taught about argumentative writing. The first section of this paper we review a selection of the research debating representations of students from China as plagiarists, uncritical thinkers or rote learners.

DEBATING "THE CHINESE WRITER"

This section opens the space for reconceptualising the capabilities of Chinese HDR students for writing scholarly arguments. According to Bator (1980) Aristotle and Carl Rogers had offered distinct approaches to composing argumentative texts, a point that has been subjected to considerable debate. The Aristotelian tradition of argumentation was developed for use in the law, politics and religion. It was based on the principle that people are capable of making logical, reasoned arguments that use sound means of persuasion. The Rogerian strategy is based upon the

assumption that people hold on to their beliefs about who they are and what the world is like because other beliefs threaten their identity and honour. With the internationalisation of education the Aristotelian assumption of argumentative texts are composed within a homogenous educational culture is being challenged, inviting exploration of other traditions of scholarly writing and disputation. Bator's (1980) insights suggest that the production of carefully reasoned, logically arguments according to one model may pose challenges for international students from different educational cultures, with perhaps different traditions of scholarly disputation. In this sense, their international education poses challenges to the educational beliefs, values or identity they have acquired.

Mayor's (2006) research into International English Language Testing System (IELTS) indicates that there are recurrent features in the writing of candidates from Chinese language backgrounds. These include a high level of interpersonal reference, combined with a strong dialogic involving the use of significantly more interrogatives and imperatives than a similar sample of Greek candidates, along with a range of other grammatical devices which perform a hortatory function, calling for a mental or physical response on the part of the individual reader or collective. These features gave the Chinese candidate's English medium writing a polemical tone.

Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006) found that postgraduate students who speak English as a second language experience difficulties in their thesis writing. This was due, in part, to a lack of a negotiated understanding between them and their supervisors about the nature of the writing required. It was also caused by their supervisors' lack of appreciation of the causes of students' problems. More sophisticated understandings suggest that ensuring that overseas students are explicitly taught about key aspects of the local western educational culture is important (Stephens 1997). The better informed they are about this, the more at ease they may feel "about operating within it, and did not feel that their own values or cultural practices were compromised" (Egege & Kutieleh 2004: 81).

It would seem that little attention has been given to the study of Chinese writing in the west. Students in China are taught to write. In the United Kingdom, Edwards et al. (2007) found that while university teachers are uncertain about the written English of Chinese postgraduate students they were willing to find solutions to this problem. Students in China are taught to memorise exemplary texts so that they can use them as models for writing their own articles by imitating their structure or style. This is not the only method for teaching writing in China. Further, it is not intended to encourage students' to summarise or paraphrase other people's intellectual work without due acknowledgement (Le Ha 2006; Sowden 2005).

Pedagogically, the purpose for memorising good writing is to develop students' appreciation of, and familiarity "with effective rhetorical styles and useful writing techniques to be used in their own writing in the future" (Liu 2005: 237). To give some insights into features of Chinese writing Meng (2007) has set out to characterise the nature and functionality of Chinese idioms known as Chengyu.

Our interest is in using Eurocentric educational research to enable us to explore spaces for introducing other knowledge traditions into western supervisory pedagogies. In this paper we want to point to the possibilities of research writing conventions as having cultural particularities or being contextually relevant and not necessarily universally the same. We are interested in exploring further the possibilities for using theoretical concepts derived from Chinese intellectual culture as a way of promoting internal/external intellectual engagements across cultures as suggested by Sen (2005). We would want to see this expended to other knowledge traditions.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research approach used for the project reported in this paper parallels the work of Koo (2007). She undertook a study of two Chinese Malay students attending university in Malaysia to examine their acquisition and use of their multiple languages in their studies. By means of semi-structured interviews she found that they used a combination of English, Bahasa Melayu and a Chinese language as part of their learning strategies. The documents she collected revealed that these students undertook academic writing in Bahasa Melayu, read in English, and often engaged in group discussions in one or more of these languages.

This paper is the result of a developmental, cooperative approach to research and postgraduate pedagogy. For the purpose of the work reported here the first author conceptualised this research project, including its methodology; reviewed the literature; collected documentary evidence in China; and undertook the drafting and editing of this paper. The second author was responsible for explaining the data set by developing the analytical points and providing interpretive commentary in the evidentiary section, as well as processing edited versions of the text. The supervisor worked in a collaborative, dialogical process with the research student to jointly extend their capabilities for scholarly argumentation. The order of the authors' names on this paper reflects the nature of the contribution made by each.

To explore the possibilities for developing the argumentative capabilities of a Chinese HDR student, methodological insights were drawn from Sen's (2005) approach to studying the argumentative tradition in India. Sen (2005) demonstrates the argumentative propensity present in Indian intellectual culture through evidence of scholars asking questions about, and raising doubts about knowledge claims. He explores the roots and resilience of scepticism and dialectics in India, and shows the extent of heterodoxy present in its intellectual heritage. The rules for conducting debate are seen as important to public reasoning and for giving voice to issues which might otherwise be overlooked.

Sen (2005: 161–190) examines the close and extensive intellectual relations that India and China have long had, and suggests lessons for both in the world today. His central argument is to reject the European claim to the west being the exclusive source of analytical reasoning and critique. Sen (2005: 3) discusses the contemporary relevance of the argumentative tradition in India, noting its mass of arguments and counter "arguments spread over incessant debates and disputations". Intellectual disputation is relevant to the modern world not only because democracy "is intimately connected with public discussion and interactive reasoning" but also because "silence is a powerful enemy of social justice" (Sen 2005: 13, 39).

For the purpose of the research reported in this paper we have selected a textbook that is widely used in China (Ding et al. 2005). Therefore, it is necessary to say something about the character of the three main kinds of textbooks used in China. One type of textbook is those written by foreigners, which are used in English and professional courses in universities and selected schools. Educators wanting to experiment with these textbooks, have to deal with students who are used to those written by Chinese authors. The second type of textbook is jointly authored works. These are popular supplementary materials for use in primary and secondary schools. Building on the advantages of western and Chinese educational methods, these textbooks provide a good grounding for students who intend to study overseas. The third and most widely used kind of textbooks are those written by Chinese authors. These textbooks are designed to meet the requirements of the curriculum set by the Ministry of Education. These textbooks which are used for at least five years ensure that students in the same grade all across China received the same knowledge. Problems with this textbook regime include the lack of potential to accommodate students' needs and the rate at which knowledge becomes dated. For the purposes of the data analysis presented in the next section a textbook from the latter category has been used.

ARGUMENTATIVE TEXT STRUCTURES

Chinese learners are sometimes represented as unfocussed writers (Clark & Gieve 2006; Liu 2005). Rather than contesting the limitations of these claims, this section takes them as an opportunity to point to the complexities of the issues involved. It opens up the space for considering the pedagogical moves for enabling Chinese students to become transnational researcher-writers capable of engaging in scholarly disputation (Marton et al. 2005). To do so, it is useful to examine cross-cultural difference in text structures ranging from letters to scholarly arguments. The use and positioning of topic sentences are illustrative of this issue:

> In many English [language] texts or paragraphs, the topic sentence, which represents a general statement or the central idea of the text or paragraph, precedes the supporting sentences, which express supporting information or details. This is especially true for argumentative writing. … The first sentence, or the topic sentence, gives a general statement. All the sentences following it represent supporting facts or details (Ding et al. 2005: 309, 310).

The topic sentence in Chinese texts does not always appear at the beginning of a paragraph; it could appear in the middle or at the end. While each paragraph focuses on a certain topic, the placement of the topic sentence in the paragraph can differ. This is sufficient to make it possible for readers to identify the key point. A text structure that moves from thesis to facts is typical of the deductive mode of argumentation preferred in English-speaking countries such as Australia. Here deduction refers:

> to reasoning from the general to the particular or reasoning in which the conclusion about particulars follows necessarily from the general or universal premises. … deductive argumentation means that the main thesis, or the central idea, is presented at the beginning of a text [or paragraph] and that information supporting it is conveyed after it (Ding et al. 2005: 311).

In argumentative writing Chinese students may use deduction as much as induction. They may begin with examples that provide the details leading up to an argument. Induction is the opposite of deduction: a number of known facts are presented and then a conclusion is drawn. In this way examples are used inductively to illustrate a key point. In inductive argumentation the supporting evidence is given before the thesis is stated:

> In Chinese we can find Chinese argumentative texts [paragraphs] developing from facts or details to the thesis or conclusion, or texts of inductive argumentation. (…) the facts are given first, which pave the way for the conclusion … we can find much more cases of inductive argumentation in Chinese than in English (Ding et al. 2005: 311–313).

Induction is a commonly used approach in Chinese argumentative texts. Chinese teachers have their students solve a problem by having them list the facts first. Then, by making their own observations, comparisons and analyses they can inductively draw a conclusion. In contrast, deductive argumentation and reasoning, is preferred in Australian higher education:

> deductive argumentation reflects the direct style, while inductive argumentation reflects the indirect style. In deductive argumentation the central information normally represented by the topic sentence precedes the supporting information conveyed by supporting sentences. … In inductive argumentation facts or details precede the conclusion which is the central information conveyed in a paragraph or text (Ding et al. 2005: 313).

The four common approaches that Chinese students learn to use in writing argumentative texts are induction, deduction, comparison and analogy. However, students favour using induction and comparisons, because they prefer to give examples and then draw a conclusion or make comparisons. Students of English as a foreign language in China are instructed that they:

> should remember that when one produces a piece of argumentative English, one had better start with a general statement or the thesis and then move to supporting facts or details if there is no good reason to do it the other way round (Ding et al. 2005: 313).

Having students provide a topic sentence at the beginning of a paragraph helps them to indicate the proposition to be explored and makes clear the logical structuring of their argument. Another benefit of providing the topic sentence first is that it gives the reader the starting point for the argument. To learn write arguments in this style, Chinese students are given different models for writing. First, there is persuasive model of writing as developed by Aristotle (Bator 1980):

I. Introduction: In this section, one tell one's audience or readers what he is going to talk or write about and tries to arouse their interest in the topic and establish a good relation with them.

II. Narration and explication: In this part, the facts, key words and themes are specified and described.

III. Proposition and partition: In this section, one expounds the central theme and provides arguments in proper order, and then talk or write about the sub-themes respectively.

IV. Proofs: In this part, one argues further for one's central idea and provides proofs to support central idea. This is usually the major part of the speech of writing.

V. Refutation: In this section, the opposing ideas are refuted and their drawbacks displayed.

VI. Digression: Sometimes before one reaches conclusion, he can talk or write about something irrelevant to the central theme.

VII. Conclusion: One sums up what he has said or written, mainly in parts I and IV (Ding et al. 2005: 314–315).

Chinese students learn three basic elements on developing this style of argumentative writing, namely the argument, an explication of the argument and demonstration. The argument provides the author's viewpoint, position or opinion on the topic. Examples of evidence are then provided to substantiate the credibility of the argument. The demonstration or discussion section illustrates key points from the argument. A second model of persuasive writing comes from Carl Rogers (Bator 1980), and is particularly valuable when discussing challenging topics or dealing with rival claims:

I. Introduction
II. Fair statement of opposing position
III. Statement of the contexts in which that position may be valid
IV. Fair statement of your own position
V. Statement of the contexts in which your position is valid
VI. Statement of how readers would benefit from by at least moving towards your position (Ding et al. 2005: 315).

Students are taught that this style of argumentative text typically contains three main parts. First, the introduction stakes out the topic or argument to be discussed. The second part, the discussion, is where evidence relating to the topic is analysed. The writer usually explores the argument from several different perspectives. The last part of the text, the conclusion, tells the reader what we have come to know as a result of the analysis and emphasises what has been achieved in addressing the topic. The end of the paper echoes the beginning. This draws the reader's attention to the focus of the whole text with respect to a given argument. A third model of persuasive writing is that used by researchers working in the social sciences in Australia and elsewhere:

I. Introduction: This is the first important section of an academic paper. In this section, the area of investigation is specified and the question why the investigation in that area is needed is answered. The research findings related to that area of investigation is surveyed.

II. Methods: In this section, the methods used in the research are described. Who are the informants? How are the data collected and analytically treated? What hypothesis are (sic) formulated?

III. Results: This section may be divided into two sub-sections – the findings and the discussion. In an academic paper the findings may be presented by tables and/or figures. In the discussion section, the researcher tells the meanings of the findings.

IV. Conclusion: This section sums up the findings and the discussion.

V. Reference list: Here all the material cited in the academic paper is listed (Ding et al. 2005: 315–316).

Our elaborated version of the above structure might be represented thus:

I. Introduction: This is the first important section of an academic paper.

II. Research problem: The area of investigation is specified and the reason why an investigation in that area is necessary is answered.

III. Literature review: The research findings related to that area of investigation are surveyed.

IV. Methods: Who are the informants? How is the data collected and analytically treated? What hypothesis or research question is formulated?

V. Findings: The evidence may be presented as direct quotations from primary sources, tables and/or figures.

VI. Discussion: The researcher explains the meanings and value of the findings.

VII. Conclusion: The findings and discussion are summed up.

VIII. Reference list: All the material cited in academic paper is listed, and cross-checked against the in-text citations.

Several points are worth noting here. First, there are differences in how students are taught to construct arguments between and within educational cultures, irrespective of whether they are learning to write deductive or inductive arguments. Second, there are students in China who are actually taught to recognise and learn these cultural differences in writing and argumentation as part of their English language studies. Third, Chinese students understand that an important reason for learning to use these argumentative structures is to improve a text's readability. As Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006) suggest, the difficulties such students experience in learning to write a thesis – a scholarly argument – maybe minimised by the supervisor and the HDR student developing a shared understanding of the differences in writing conventions and the problems these cause – as well as the opportunities they present. This may be preferable to the HDR students tending to attribute any sense of their limited proficiency in advanced argumentation in English as the reason for their difficulties (Le Ha 2006; Sowden 2005). Students in China learn a range of styles of writing to speak top readers, two of which are considered in the next section.

WRITING STYLES FOR READERS

There are differences between narrative and descriptive texts in Chinese and English. Importantly, Chinese students are taught and like to use ornate description in their writing. They bring this skill to their English writing:

> When one compares English and Chinese narrative and descriptive texts, one can easily find that the Chinese ones are very often more flowery or ornate than the English ones (Ding et al. 2005: 316).

Chinese readers like narratives that are full of flowery descriptions. Chinese students' writing is expected to be understandable as well as rhythmic and replete with beautiful images. Teachers suggest that students use a quotation from a beautiful poem or classical text in their writing. After more than ten years of such study, it becomes a habit shaping students' expectations for reading and writing:

> Normally, one expects to find the more frequent use of adjectives and adverbs, the modifying elements in language, in descriptive writing than in narrative, expository or argumentative writing. … A general rule of English writing is to write with nouns and verbs, since they are the most forceful words. Adjectives and adverbs are used only when necessary. … frequent use of adjectives and adverbs is bad and their indiscriminate [sic] use is even worse (Ding et al. 2005: 318).

A text full of verbs and nouns can be dull. Laws and policies are written in this style; people seldom like reading such texts. Students learn to write texts that convey information and also express striking images so as to make the reader feel comfortable and enjoy reading. Consider the difference between cooking in the West and China for example. A Westerner takes the materials to be boiled or roasted as the most important ingredient, adding sauces afterwards to make the dishes more delicious. However, a Chinese cook begins with the sauces, marinating the meat before it is cooked. Not to use sauces in this way is not to know how to cook; at least in China. The adjectives and adverbs in Chinese writing are like the sauces in Chinese food. Chinese authors write to convey their meaning, just as we eat to keep hunger at bay. Good cooking is meant to feed the senses with colour, smells and tastes; good writing is meant to express feelings that give readers pleasure. Chinese students learn to make effective use of adjectives and adverbs, similes and metaphors:

> The frequent use of similes and metaphors is a conspicuous stylistic feature of … many Chinese texts, especially descriptive ones. Even though similes and metaphors are ways of life and both Chinese and English speakers use them in many situations, English speakers use them less frequently than the Chinese people. … A descriptive text that contains many similes and metaphors may set up many vivid images in the Chinese reader's mind but may sound unnatural or even absurd to English speakers (Ding et al. 2005: 318–319).

These techniques are used to make the writing visual and create feelings, this is especially beneficial for readers who may not familiar with what is being discussed. For instance, one can write "He/She is a dedicated teacher." However, a more vivid image is, "Good teachers are like candles, burning themselves to brighten others." Junior school students use this sentence to praise their teachers as well as other literary techniques. Let us now consider two ingredients Chinese students learn to use in their writing, namely the traditional use of Chengyu and hyperbole in structuring Chinese texts (Kirkpatrick 1997).

Chengyu

Four-character expressions, or Chengyu, are frequently used in Chinese texts. Where used properly Chengyu:

> are regarded as the [sic] refined expressions in Chinese, since many of them are derived from the rich Chinese literary tradition. If they are used appropriately that can add the touch that brings to life the text containing them. In contrast, the English speaking people value highly freshness and creativeness. A phrase or expression might be viewed as vivid, colourful and expressive when it was just created. However, its repeated use ever since their [sic] creation will cause it to lose its freshness and attraction and become a cliché. Cliché are [sic] normally viewed as illustrations of bad English and should be avoided (Ding et al. 2005: 319).

Chengyu are widely used in Chinese writing because as vivid metaphors they can express even more meaning than a typical sentence. However, as Meng (2007) argues the use of Cheng Yu has not been widely studied as part of the debates over Chinese students writing strategies when studying abroad. Here we provide a brief description of these idiomatic expressions in order to suggest the potential significance of rhetorical value in scholarly argumentation.

As an idiomatic phrase, Chengyu has a long history with their language crystallised over the centuries. It is a concentrated expression of rhetorical meaning. Generally, Chengyu are taken from ancient classics, famous histories and folklore because of their distinctive images and strong national appeal. English and Chinese have some similar images and metaphors, such as "一箭双雕" which is the equivalent to, "to kill two birds with one stone".

However, due to differences between English and Chinese geography, environment, habits and beliefs, some Chengyu can only translated by using analogies. For instance, "画蛇添足" which means "when you draw a snake, you draw four feet on it", is used to describe a person who does something counter-productive. However, this Chengyu is "translated" it into English as, "to guild the lily" so as to make the point that some people can do quite useless things.

There are other Chengyu that are not possible to understand by such analogous translation because of cultural differences. For example, the Chengyu "粗枝大叶" which means "sturdy tree trunks and large leaves," is used to describe a person who is crude and careless. In addition, some Chengyu have their origins in history or geography such as the names of particular people and places. While a literal translation will not help in understanding them, the addition of explanations means loosing the refined characteristics of Chengyu. Thus, while "毛遂自荐" means to volunteer one's service, literally, 毛遂 is the name of a person from ancient China. This history is known by most educated Chinese. However, to explain this story to a foreigner, which is useful for enhancing their knowledge of an unfamiliar history, this detracts from the character and reason for using the Chengyu. Such are the ironies of cross-cultural communications.

In writing English scholarly texts EFL students in China are taught the importance of steering clear of clichés. This could mean avoiding the translation of four-character expressions—Chengyu—from Chinese into English which are already overburdened with an excess of familiarity. This seems like good advice when these are already well-worn equivalents in the latter language. In English their vividness has been exhausted by their repeated use. However, using translations of novel four-character expressions from China's rich literary tradition can bring freshness and colour to research papers written in English. Moreover, if used appropriately they can give a subtle expression to the author's voice, identity or experiential knowledge as a transnational researcher-writer (Collins 2006; Diangelo 2006). In addition to learning Chengyu, Chinese students also learn to use hyperboles in their writing.

Hyperboles

Having learnt to use and value hyperboles in China, Western academics may dismiss these:

> In Chinese descriptive writing, frequent use of hyperboles (over-statements) is allowed. … Few Chinese people would criticise [a piece of descriptive writing] for those hyperboles used in it. However, the English-speaking population view frequent use of hyperboles as bad. Perhaps, they may be more tolerant of them when coming cross (sic) them in literary texts, especially, poems. In normal descriptive English one does not expect to find so many hyperboles (Ding et al. 2005: 319).

Hyperboles are used to describe facts in a more colourful way. For instance, a Chinese student will not write, "I am very hungry", but "I am so hungry I will die" or "I am hungry I could eat a cow." These hyperboles help readers to know the emotional, physical or mental state of the author. However, this use of hyperboles does not bring smiles to all readers:

> If not excessive, the flowery style in Chinese descriptive writing is normally smiled upon by Chinese readers. However, English speakers prefer plain language representing fresh ideas (Ding et al. 2005: 319–320).

In a population of 1.6 billion people it seems hard to produce and gain recognition for fresh ideas. Nevertheless, the same idea can be expressed differently to give readers a novel sense. This is the art of language:

> A Chinese learner or user of English, unaware of this stylistic difference between Chinese and English may produce a description in English that sounds unnatural or absurd to native speakers. … While the Chinese version is all right to Chinese readers, the English version is dismissed by English speakers as containing too many hyperboles, conveying no clear message and sounding ridiculous (Ding et al. 2005: 320).

EFL students from China do meet some problems in writing. First, there is not much descriptive writing in English research papers. Second, induction and deduction are used differently in written texts. Third, the evidence used in research reports assists in understanding of the problem but can not be read for its rhythm or enjoyment. As Mayor (2006) argues, it is

important to recognise that some of these students are likely to have performed well in the Chinese educational system and may import valued Chinese writing practices into their English writing. Further, we would suggest that while Chinese students want to learn to use the models of writing found in English medium higher education, there is also the possibility for learning more about Chinese styles of writing that might be translated into English.

CONCLUSION

Chinese HDR students encounter many difficulties in their studies overseas, an important one is how to write in advanced English according to the requisite academic conversation. This is also a challenge for their supervisors. Many Chinese HDR students study academic writing for several years in China, and are qualified in the skills required to write a research paper. But this training seldom prepares them to write in advanced academic English in accordance to the rhetorical conventions used in Western research. This brings challenges to the various stages of their HDR studies when undertaken abroad.

There are differences in the structuring of Chinese and English scholarly arguments. Chinese students are taught to use many adjectives and adverbs in their writing. They use metaphors to create vivid images in their text; the use four character Chengyu can be important for some of them because of the density of meaning these capture. It is the knowledge of this Chinese intellectual heritage drawn from Chinese culture and history, which their Western supervisor lacks; this creates a space wherein the Chinese HDR student can make a useful contribution. Developing advanced writing habits in academic English and learning through the repetition involved in drafting and redrafting texts are among the challenges for Chinese HDR students studying abroad. They may benefit from supervisors who have the pedagogic capability to facilitate the student to make cross-cultural and multilingual contributions to knowledge that draw on Chinese and Western intellectual resources.

Following the Western argumentative writing approaches, Francis Bacon was a great essayist while Kong Zi was a master of traditional Chinese methods for argumentative writing. Had these two intellectuals the chance to meet they would have faced many difficulties in trying to understand of each others argumentative strategies, but this would have given them much to learn from each other. Given the opportunity for an Australian supervisor and a Chinese HDR student to exchange their ideas in

the expectation that they will learn from each other, they are likely to develop the capabilities for creating sound scholarly arguments.

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