

Appraisal Resources in Chinese College Students' English Argumentative Writing

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Abstract—Appraisal system is the new development of Halliday's interpersonal function, which is a very important parameter in argumentative writing since its purpose is to influence and convince readers. Directed by appraisal system, with UAM corpus tool for annotation and statistics, this paper carried out a comparative empirical research in interpersonal meaning on Chinese and American students' 64 English argumentative essays. The study found that the overall use of appraisal resources in Chinese English majors' essays fell far behind American college students, with the only exception of affect resources. In the attitude subsystem, it shows that Chinese college students have a poor vocabulary, colloquial expressions, subjective logic and other problems; in the engagement, students from the two countries have an abundant use, which may be relevant to argumentative writing itself; although graduation resources are the nucleus of appraisal system, they are least used by the two groups of students, probably caused by the reason that graduation meaning are often covert in the text. The study contributes to revealing a comprehensive difference of appraisal resources between Chinese and American college students' argumentative writing, and the teaching of writing in such genre will also be benefited.

Index Terms—systemic functional linguistics, interpersonal function, appraisal system, appraisal resources, argumentative writing

I. INTRODUCTION

Second language writing is not only a great challenge in second language learning, but also a hot research topic (Casanave, 2004; Hyland, 2003). In the late 20th century, studies on the writing of English as a second language gradually developed, and, with its own theories, objects of study, research methods and research teams, it slowly became an independent discipline that carried the clear study scope (Hyland, 2003, 2009; Kroll, 2003; Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2008; Silva & Matsuda, 2012). Currently, the study of second language writing covers the following four areas (Archibald & Jeffery, 2000; Atkinson, 2003; Matsuda, 2003a, 2003b): (1) second language writing as process, including cognitive model, strategies of writing planning, learner's individual differences and the stages in writing process; (2) second language writing as product, including text analysis, error correction, comparative analysis, rhetoric analysis, and corpus analysis; (3) second language writing context, including social structure, register analysis and the investigations in knowledge, motivation, needs and other individual differences; (4) second language writing teaching, including the learning process, learning strategies, language development, classroom teaching, writing tests, and web courseware development. These four areas cover almost all fields in second language writing research, incorporating topics such as automatic scoring system (Lu, 2010; Warschauer & Ware, 2006), genre writing (Hyland, 2004b, 2007), cooperative writing (Dobao, 2015; Storch, 2005), grammar correction (D. Ferris, 1999; D. R. Ferris, 2011), writing motivation (Sasaki, 2011), writer's characteristics and differences (Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Shin & Riazantseva, 2015), writing planning (De Larios, Murphy, & Marin, 2002), reader response (J. Liu & Hansen, 2002), writing assessment (Hamp-Lyons, 1990), writing context (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Manchón, 2009), writing teaching (Hyland, 2007), mother tongue transfer (Wolfersberger, 2003), interlanguage fossilization (Han & Odlin, 2006) and so on. In recent years, the focus of ESL writing research is in four areas: genre theory, cooperative writing, grammar correction and individual differences, among which grammar correction has always been a hot topic. In addition, academic writing, corpus-based approach (Aull, 2015; Romero-Trillo, 2014), writer's identity (Ouellette, 2008; Ricento, 2005), as well as cooperative writing based on Wiki (Caruso, 2014; Chao & Lo, 2011; Elola & Oskoz, 2010), have gradually become research focus in recent years.

Over the years, in the field of second language learning, Chinese researchers paid more and more interests in second language writing. As each area is going deeper in the study, Chinese scholars have achieved fruitful research results (Guo, 2009; He, 2014; L. F. Wang, 2005). Chinese second language writing research started late than western world, closely following their research methods and research approaches. After 20 years of development, apart from following foreign studies, Chinese second language writing research also has some of its distinctions, for example it focuses on the following fields: textual and linguistic features of second language writing (Cheng, 2009; Qi & Tang, 2007), factors affecting second language writing, second language writing teaching and second language writing test. Generally speaking, Chinese second language writing research follows a multiple approach, with more scientific and practical

studies and various research methods, and putting particular emphasis on writing teaching (see Figure 1). Although the current second language writing research in China enjoys a rapid development and achieves fruitful results, there is much uneven distribution in the studies: (1) since most researchers come from universities and other educational institutions, so the overall emphasis is on writing teaching, composing 42% of second language writing research (Guo, 2009); (2) most of the participants of empirical studies have been restricted at the university level, only a few involves high school students and almost none includes primary participants; (3) other problems such narrow research areas, heavy repeated studies, heavy quantitative methods, few qualitative researches and restricted variables controls in quantitative studies (Xu & Nie, 2015).

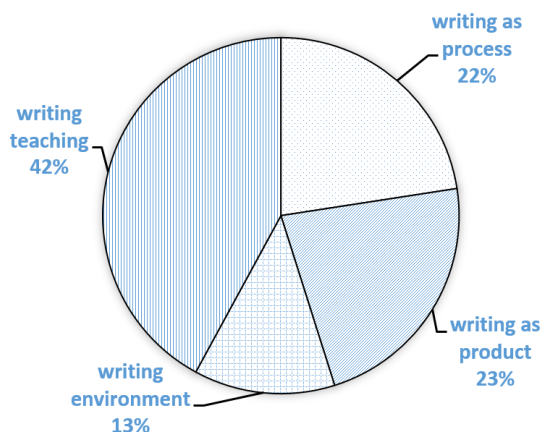


Figure 1 Chinese second language writing research (see Guo (2009))

Throughout Chinese and western studies in this area, it can be found that few scholars carried out comprehensive exploration on linguistic features in second language writing texts based on appraisal system, overlooking language resources that express second language writer's identity, attitude, affect and the relationship of inter-subjects. Especially when writing argumentative essays, the proper use of appraisal resources helps to enhance author's explaining and commenting on related events and issues, promote author's stance, attitude and starting new conversation, mediate and negotiate between different stances and topics, and thus plays an important role in influencing and convincing readers. The appraisal meaning is a great interpersonal resource. "It is the nucleus of any discourse meaning, and any discourse analysis of interpersonal meaning must involve evaluation" (Thompson & Hunston, 2000). This posed a difficult challenge for second language writers and currently there is only a few limited studies in the literature explored the issue (Lee, 2008; Liao, 2011). Most investigations of interpersonal meaning in writing is still confined to academic discourse (Coffin & Mayor, 2004; Gotti, 2009; Hood, 2004, 2006, 2009, 2010; Hunston & Thompson, 2000; Hyland, 2004a; Thompson, 2001; Thompson & Ye, 1991; Ventola & Mauraanen, 1996).

Myers (1989) pointed out that the primary function of writing is interactivity; apart from expressing ideational function that reflects the real world, it also constructs interactive discourse that negotiates and establishes social relations, in doing so making an alliance with readers. Built upon appraisal system (Martin & White, 2005), this research attempts to reveal evaluation features in Chinese college students' English argumentative writing through an empirical comparative study with American college students' argumentative essays.

II. APPRAISAL SYSTEM

Since the creation of systemic functional linguistics (SFL hereafter), its research has been based on lexical grammar, treating clause as the carrier of "exchange", "realization" and "information", exploring text's ideational, interpersonal and textual functions. SFL studies achieved a broad and in-depth investigation of language, however it overlooked the study of semantics of evaluation of interlocutors. In the early 1990s, Martin paid his attention to this blank, proposed appraisal system on the basis of SFL theories, and extended the SFL's interpersonal meaning research (Li, 2002a, 2002b; Martin & Rose, 2003; Martin & White, 2005; Rothery & Stenglin, 2000; Z. H. Wang, 2001; Zhang, 2004). Martin and White (2005, p. xxiii) commented on it: "appraisal system is about evaluation, that is, it is the various negotiated attitudes, all kinds of emotional intensities involved and the means of demonstrating values and aligning readers in the discourse". Broadly speaking, the evaluation can be considered as the interpersonal meaning covered in the texts, and it is the resources used to realize the stance and proposition (Hood, 2010). Appraisal, in the first place, is the realization of interpersonal meaning, in other words, the evaluation can be seen as the way to establish interpersonal solidarity between speaker/writer and listener/reader (Li, 2004). In discourse analysis, appraisal does not only concern people's comprehension of rhetoric functional of evaluative lexis in the text (Z. H. Wang & Ma, 2007; Zhang, 2004), but it also takes care of the relationships between interpersonal meaning and social relations (Hu, 2009; T. T. Liu & Liu, 2008; Martin & White, 2005), making it a social-oriented system. Halliday (2008, p. 49) noted that the study of evaluation in lexis complemented his interpersonal studies; Martin further mentioned that the appraisal system is not a theory, but a

language description system based on systemic functional grammar (SFG) (Huan & Wu, 2015).

Obviously, one of the basic points in Martin and White's system is the discourse semantics, the attitudinal meaning (affect, judgement and appreciation) expressed by interlocutors in communication events. They also give the other participant, reader/listener, a special status, taking the communicating as a process of meaning negotiation between the two subjects. Whether it is the expression of appraisal meaning or the dialogue between subjects indicates differences in the value of interpersonal influence and language capacity and the vagueness or clearness in the focus of semantic types. Martin and other SFL scholars elaborated appraisal resources as categorizations, grouping them into three evaluation subsystems: attitude, engagement and graduation (Martin & White, 2005).

Attitude system is a means of expressing emotion, referring to the meaning resources people use to intersubjectively evaluate participant and process with reference to the value system of emotional response and cultural restriction; it includes three subsystems, namely affect, judgment and appreciation. Affect is emotional and is the response to behaviors (directed to the self). It is about people's positive or negative emotions, such as pleasure/pain, confidence/fear, interest/boredom and so on. It is the nucleus of the attitude system that affects judgement system and appreciation system. Judgment is ethical and is the evaluation of the behavior (directed to the others). It can be divided into two categories: social esteem and social sanction; social esteem is often oral without written terms and evaluate people's personality and behavior according to three parameters, i.e. normality, capacity and tenacity; social sanction is often in accordance with written terms, such as state's laws or Vatican regulations, and judges people's personality and behavior according to two parameters, i.e. veracity and propriety. Appreciation system is aesthetic in that it evaluates things, whether it is perfect, beautiful and so on. It is the evaluation of product and process, including natural objects, artificial goods, discourse and abstract structure. Its reference parameters are also with aesthetics, incorporating reaction, composition and valuation.

Engagement system treats language as a "dialogue", which is about how the evaluator builds alliance relationship with the evaluated. Language use in this sense is a kind of interactive activity, a process of interaction between people. Specifically, engagement could be divided into monogloss and heterogloss. While monogloss refers to that the speaker completely ignores other voices in the discourse, heterogloss, divided into contract and expand, implies that the speaker recognizes other sound and chooses to enhance or eliminate certain voice. The semantic space of heterogloss provides with speaker more freedom to quote or assimilate others' words. Heterogloss is further composed of contract and expand, and the former consists of disclaim and proclaim, the latter includes entertain and attribute.

In appraisal system, the most important feature of attitude is the gradability as affect, judgment and appreciation involve varying degree of affirmation and negativity. Gradability is also the general characteristic of engagement system, whose subsystems indicate how much the speaker/author are involved in the discourse. Therefore the graduation system is the nucleus of appraisal system, in which it determines attitude and engagement. Graduation has two axes: the intensity or the quantity and the typicality or the certainty. The former is called the force, mainly referring to the gradable lexes; and the latter is called the focus, referring to non-gradable lexes. Ultimately, the complete appraisal system is as follows (Figure 2):

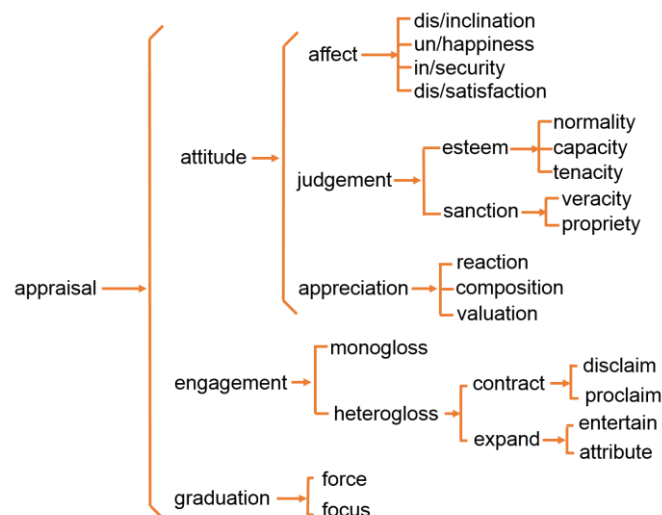


Figure 2 Appraisal system

Three main functions of appraisal can be summarized as: (1) to express the speaker's or writer's opinion, reflecting the personal and social value system; (2) to establish and maintain the relationship between the speaker and the listener and between the author and the reader; (3) to organize discourse. An obvious feature of evaluation is to transfer author's views and feelings to the reader. Affirming writer's mind is one thing, what's more important is that appraisal stands for the public value system, which tends to be built by each evaluation, and this value system, in turn, becomes part of the ideology inherent in discourse. Therefore authors' stance shows the social ideology generated by discourse. The second

function of appraisal is to establish and maintain relationships between writers and readers, and this function is studied in the following three areas: manipulation, hedging and politeness. The manipulation is to use appraisal to control the reader, persuading him to go in an independent way of experiencing things. For example, in advertisement discourse, the actual use of the person is not in line with the first, second and third person in syntax. The third function of appraisal is to organize discourse. The author not only tells his reader what happens, his own points of views, the start of text, the coordination of arguments and the end of interactions. Hunston and Sinclair (2000) believed that evaluation tended to occur at the boundaries of discourse in written discourse. In dialogue, such organizing function is very obvious.

Although currently studies on appraisal system have become one of the focuses in SFL, most of its application are still confined in the field of academic discourse, followed by empirical researches on the genres of the media, legal language, narrative texts, historical texts, education language, etc.. However, there are still few studies to explore argumentative writing, except Lee (2008, 2014) and Wu and Allison (2003, 2007)'s preliminary efforts in the direction.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

The corpora used in this study is from Chinese and American college students' English argumentative texts. The selection on argumentation genre is mainly based on the following considerations: different with narrative and expository's description and illustration on objective world, argumentation asks students to explain and comment on some events or issues according to certain topics, to represent writer's opinions, attitudes and positions, and to play the role of influencing and persuading readers. Therefore students' ability in expressing appraisal resources is easily identified. Based on the idea, the researcher collected 32 English argumentative essays of Chinese English majors in his own class. In order to match the text length, style and writer's age, the researcher collects another 32 argumentative writings from the native corpus LOCNESS (The Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays) for a comparative empirical study.

By comparing appraisal resources between Chinese and American college students' English argumentations, this study attempts to reveal Chinese college students' evaluation patterns in argumentative writing, uncover how they express their opinions, attitudes and positions, how they open or press dialogic space, and how to achieve the purpose of influencing and persuading readers.

A. *The Participants*

32 college sophomores in English majors from the Yangtze Normal University are involved in the study, including 11 boys, 21 girls, aging 19-21 years old. Basically they have an English learning experience of 8 years, and have all passed CET-4 and CET-6 (College English Test Band 4 and 6).

B. *Research Question*

Employing appraisal theory, this research seeks to find the differences in interpersonal meaning between Chinese and American college students, and therefore provides a guiding reference for Chinese students' argumentative writing. The study tries to answer the following question: what are the differences and features in appraisal resources in argumentative writings between the two groups of students?

C. *Corpora*

The research corpora comes from two sources: the one is 32 argumentative essays from native corpora LOCNESS, a total of 8300 words; the other is another 32 argumentative writings in the same genre of college sophomores in English major from Yangtze Normal University, a total of 8150 words. LOCNESS corpus contains a total of 324,304 words, consisted of three parts: (1) the United Kingdom pupils' writing corpus; (2) British college students' writing corpus; (3) American college students' argumentative writing corpus. This study chooses American college students' argumentative writing corpus as a contrasting corpora, which includes dozens of topics such as government duties, social welfare, religion, environment, resources, legal system, sports, gun control, news media and higher education. In order to match the comparability in two corpus and meet Chinese English majors' writing abilities, the study picks higher education as argumentative writing genre and selects a similar size from the two corpora.

D. *Data Processing*

The research corpora was annotated by UAM software with a delicacy of four levels, covering all major branches of the appraisal system. In the analysis, each academic term was replaced by a coding system, for example ATT-AFF refers to affect subsystem, ATT-JUD refers to judgement subsystem, ATT-APP is for appreciation, ENG-MON is for monogloss, ENG-HET is for heterogloss, GRA-FOR stands for force, and GRA-FOC stands for focus. See the table below for each code:

TABLE 1
ENCODING OF APPRAISAL SYSTEM

SUBSYSTEM OF APPRAISAL		CODE
ATTITUDE	affect	ATT-AFF
	judgement	ATT-JUD
	appreciation	ATT-APP
	monogloss	—
ENGAGEMENT	heterogloss-disclaim	ENG-DIS
	heterogloss-proclaim	ENG-PRO
	heterogloss-entertain	ENG-ENT
	heterogloss-attribute	ENG-ATT
GRADUATION	force	GRA-FOR
	focus	GRA-FOC

E. Data Analysis

The study is corpus driven and integrates quantitative and comparative research methods to uncover features of appraisal resources in Chinese and American college students' argumentative writings. Quantitative research is used for statistics and analysis of the corpora while comparative study is mainly used to highlight differences between the two groups in various appraisal subsystems. The study follows these steps:

- (1) run statistics for each annotated appraisal item in Chinese college students' corpora;
- (2) illustrate each statistic in Chinese college students' argumentative writing;
- (3) run statistics for each annotated appraisal item in American college students' corpora;
- (4) illustrate each statistic in American college students' argumentative writing;
- (5) carry out comparative analysis of the configuration of appraisal resources in Chinese and American college students' argumentative writing.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In order to answer the research question, the study will investigate appraisal resources of Chinese and American college students' argumentative essays from its three subsystems, attitude, engagement and graduation respectively. Table 2 lists the students' raw data and the percentage of evaluation, which is calculated by dividing the total number of words by the number of words containing appraisal meaning. As can be seen from the table, Chinese students' argumentative writing is slightly shorter in length than American college students', but the use of appraisal resources is much less than the latter, occupying 10.29% and 14.76% in turn. One cause for this distinction lays in the difference of appraisal resources between native speakers and second language learners. The result is consistent with some other research findings, such as Bednarek (2009), Hyland (2004c) and Lee (2010).

TABLE 2
APPRAISAL DISTRIBUTION IN CHINESE AND AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS' ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAYS

	NO. OF TEXTS	TOTAL WORD ACCOUNT	APPRAISAL EXPRESSION FREQUENCY	APPRAISAL FREQUENCY RATIO	SIGNIFICANCE
CHINESE STUDENTS	32	8321	857	10.29%	0.00
AMERICAN STUDENTS	32	9261	1367	14.76%	0.00
TOTAL	64	17582	2224	25.05%	

To investigate the details of appraisal differences between the two groups of students, each parameter of evaluation system was analyzed (see Table 3). As it can be seen from the table, in argumentative writing Chinese college students use more affect than American college students (57 and 48 respectively), while the latter uses more other 8 appraisal resources than the former. One significant difference between the two groups lays in entertain, and American students are far ahead. A second significant difference is reflected in affect resources and Chinese students are in the lead. This shows that in argumentative essays Chinese college students are good at expressing affect, but weak at judgment and appreciation resources; American students are superior in all other dimensions except in affect evaluation. Also another point should be noted that Chinese students relatively intend to use contracted resources while American students are more inclined to use expanded discussion.

TABLE 3
STATISTICS ON APPRAISAL RESOURCES IN CHINESE AND AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS' ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

APPRAISAL RESOURCES	CHINESE STUDENTS	AMERICAN STUDENTS	LOG-LIKELIHOOD RATIO STATISTIC	SIGNIFICANCE	
ATTITUDE	ATT-AFF	57	48	21.19	0.00
	ATT-JUD	42	85	3.57	0.03
	ATT-APP	72	87	5.79	0.01
ENGAGEMENT	ENG-DIS	192	239	12.66	0.00
	ENG-PRO	32	60	2.07	0.12
	ENG-ENT	126	380	77.96	0.00
	ENG-ATT	30	37	1.88	0.14
GRADUATION	GRA-FOR	298	409	7.52	0.01
	GRA-FOC	8	22	4.33	0.03
TOTAL	857	1367			

A. *Affect Resources*

Table 4 reflects Chinese and American college students' attitude resources in argumentative writing. In attitudes system, students from the two countries have the most in appreciation resources, 72 and 87 respectively; Chinese students use judgement least (42) while American students use affect least (48); the significant difference of the two group is shown in affect resources. The three subsystems of attitude will be successively discussed in depth.

TABLE 4
STATISTICS ON ATTITUDE RESOURCES IN CHINESE AND AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS' ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

	CHINESE STUDENTS	AMERICAN STUDENTS	LOG-LIKELIHOOD RATIO STATISTIC	SIGNIFICANCE
ATT-AFF	57	48	21.19	0.00
ATT-JUD	42	85	3.57	0.03
ATT-APP	72	87	5.79	0.01
TOTAL	171	220		

As shown in Table 5, affect vocabularies used by Chinese college students is much more than American college students, and both groups realize affect primarily by verbs and nouns. Chinese students express affect mainly by verbs, and use relatively less nouns and adjectives, while American students use a balanced word class to express affect with just a very subtle variation. This shows that Chinese English majors as second language learners have a restricted vocabulary than native speakers.

TABLE 5
STATISTICS ON AFFECT VOCABULARIES IN CHINESE AND AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS' ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

CHINESE STUDENTS	AMERICAN STUDENTS
worry (14)	fear (6)
want (8)	want (5)
need (7)	believe (5)
believe (6)	hope (3)
hope (5)	need (3)
afraid (5)	help (2)
fear (3)	afraid (2)
insist (2)	refuse (1)
burden (1)	
...	...

* Each original verb includes its variants; each noun covers its singular and plural forms

Next, the judgement lexical resources are investigated. American college students have more than twice vocabularies than Chinese students in judgement. Therefore there is a big shortage for Chinese students in this area. At the same time it can also be seen in Table 6 that although the two groups of students write on the same topic, there is a big difference in judgement vocabularies, a sign of their distinctions in social and personal values.

TABLE 6
STATISTICS ON JUDGEMENT VOCABULARIES IN CHINESE AND AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS' ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

CHINESE STUDENTS	AMERICAN STUDENTS
good (6)	promising (5)
successful (4)	free (4)
strong (4)	challenge (3)
better (3)	hopeful (3)
bright (2)	responsible (3)
useful (2)	right (2)
hard (1)	helpful (1)
bad (1)	Bright (1)
...	...

Then appreciation resources in the two groups of students are being discussed. This is the most used resources of the

students in attitude system, illustrated in Table 7. The main means of expressing appreciation is by adjectives, but the two groups of students have different focus on words. In judging things, Chinese students are more inclined to express their importance and strength while American students focus on their necessity and novelty. This may be related to the genre of corpora itself, the higher education, which reflects the differences between the two groups on their educational values.

TABLE 7
STATISTICS ON APPRECIATION VOCABULARIES IN CHINESE AND AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS' ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

CHINESE STUDENTS	AMERICAN STUDENTS
important (23)	necessary (15)
powerful (6)	new (11)
strong (6)	challenging (10)
clear (5)	peaceful (7)
creative (5)	creative (4)
innovative (4)	powerful (4)
all-round (3)	effective (3)
better (3)	open (3)
...	...

It can be seen from above statistics on attitude system, Chinese and American college students have significant difference in attitude in their argumentations. Chinese students tend to use affect and appreciation resources, and American college students lay particular stress on judgment and appreciation resources. Furthermore, in lexical richness Chinese students still have a long way to catch up.

B. Engagement Resources

An important role of argumentative writing is to explain and discuss propositions involved. Engagement resources reflect writer's subjectivity or objectivity in the, open dialogic space, and make the discourse more negotiable. Therefore engagement plays an important role in argumentation. The distribution of engagement resources in Chinese and American college students' argumentative writing is shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8
STATISTICS ON ENGAGEMENT RESOURCES IN CHINESE AND AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS' ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

	CHINESE STUDENTS	AMERICAN STUDENTS	LOG-LIKELIHOOD RATIO STATISTIC	SIGNIFICANCE
ENG-DIS	192	239	12.66	0.00
ENG-PRO	32	60	2.07	0.12
ENG-ENT	126	380	77.96	0.00
ENG-ATT	30	37	1.88	0.14
TOTAL	380	716		

From Table 8, the two groups of students make a full use of various engagement resources, but Chinese students use far less quantity than American students. In the four parameters of engagement system, significant differences between the two groups are shown in disclaim and entertain while there is no evident distinction in proclaim and attribute. The details will be discussed below.

Table 9 is the statistics of disclaim in the two groups of college students. It is the most used resources in engagement by Chinese students. As can be seen from the table, the students from two countries have a similar vocabulary, in which adversatives are most abundant, followed by negative words and concessive expressions in that order. This demonstrates that both groups are good at uniting readers and negotiating an alliance with them.

TABLE 9
STATISTICS ON DISCLAIM VOCABULARIES IN CHINESE AND AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS' ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

CHINESE STUDENTS	AMERICAN STUDENTS
however (29)	but (28)
but (24)	however (27)
while (24)	not/no (21)
still (18)	although (15)
even (10)	yet (13)
not/no (8)	still (12)
cannot (7)	against (8)
although (7)	cannot (7)
never (6)	even (7)
without (5)	does not (6)
...	...

Table 10 shows the distribution of entertain lexes in students from the two countries. It is an engagement resources that frequently used by Chinese students, and the most used engagement of American students. College students mainly use modal verbs, modal adjuncts and adverbials to make the proposition negotiable. A point to be noted is that Chinese students use more positive words, such as will, can, if, etc., while American students take all possibilities of the results

and use lexes like would, may and should to make the proposition more flexible, realizing a better interpersonal function.

TABLE 10
STATISTICS ON ENTERTAIN VOCABULARIES IN CHINESE AND AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS' ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

ENTERTAIN RESOURCES	CHINESE STUDENTS	AMERICAN STUDENTS	LOG-LIKELIHOOD RATIO STATISTIC	SIGNIFICANCE
will	42	86	2.16	0.08
can	20	14	10.99	0.00
if	15	37	3.87	0.03
should	7	13	0.27	0.61
could	7	13	16.65	0.00
would	7	84	99.41	0.01
must	7	12	0.61	0.32
may/maybe	3	20	11.03	0.02
whether	3	10	0.45	0.49
perhaps	1	7	6.74	0.00
...				

Table 11 is the statistics of proclaim in Chinese and American college students' writing. Students from the two countries have a relatively low usage in this resource, in which Chinese students tend to use certainly, of course, clearly, etc. while American students are more devoted to inevitably, obviously, in fact, etc.. Though the total number of American students' proclaim lexes is more than twice than Chinese students, it can be seen in Table 11 each word has a relatively low frequency, which once again reflects the fact that American students have a rich vocabulary than Chinese students.

TABLE 11
STATISTICS ON PROCLAIM VOCABULARIES IN CHINESE AND AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS' ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

CHINESE STUDENTS	AMERICAN STUDENTS
certainly (8)	inevitably (5)
of course (4)	obviously (3)
clearly (3)	in fact (3)
surely (3)	apparently (2)
obviously (3)	of course (2)
apparently (2)	certainly (2)
in fact (2)	be easy to see (1)
...	...

Table 12 shows Chinese and American college students' attribute vocabularies, which is the least used resource in engagement system. In argumentative writing, in order to make more objective and more convincing arguments, the author often borrows evidences or propositions from the third party, a way requiring the use of attribute. Therefore, words such as argue, believe and say have a higher frequency in Table 12.

TABLE 12
STATISTICS ON ATTRIBUTE VOCABULARIES IN CHINESE AND AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS' ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

CHINESE STUDENTS	AMERICAN STUDENTS
argue (5)	say (7)
believe (5)	believe (4)
say (2)	argue (2)
claim (2)	according to (1)
agree (2)	hold (1)
think (1)	claim (1)
insist (1)	agree (1)
...	...

* Each original verb includes its variants

C. Graduation Resources

Graduation subsystem is the nucleus of appraisal system in that it determines the attitude and engagement subsystems. Although the constitution of graduation is relatively simple, because of its importance it is necessary to carry out an in-depth analysis for it. Table 13 is the statistics of graduation in students' argumentative writing of the two countries. It shows from the table that American students use much force resources and slightly more focus resources than Chinese students. The two resources will be discussed in detail.

TABLE 13

STATISTICS ON GRADUATION RESOURCES IN CHINESE AND AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS' ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING				
	CHINESE STUDENTS	AMERICAN STUDENTS	LOG-LIKELIHOOD RATIO STATISTIC	SIGNIFICANCE
GRA-FOR	298	409	7.52	0.01
GRA-FOC	8	22	4.33	0.03
TOTAL	306	431		

First of all is the force resources, which is the most used by the two groups of students in graduation system (see Table 14). Chinese students use vocabularies such as very, much, many and a lot of most while American students write words such as many, all, more and very most. It can be seen that Chinese students use more quantifiers and, apart from that, American students also uses as many comparatives. These vocabularies effectively enhance the reliability of the proposition, so as to achieve the purpose of aligning and persuading readers in argumentative essays.

TABLE 14

STATISTICS ON FORCE VOCABULARIES IN CHINESE AND AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS' ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING	
CHINESE STUDENTS	AMERICAN STUDENTS
very (25)	many (27)
much (23)	all (24)
many (14)	more (19)
a lot (12)	very (15)
all (10)	much (15)
always (10)	just (13)
just (9)	little (13)
some (9)	a lot (13)
best (8)	only (11)
great (6)	certain (11)
little (6)	a few (11)
...	...

Secondly, it is the focus resources, in which Chinese college students have obvious insufficiency and American students have a richer vocabulary (Table 15). In the detail, the Chinese students use more softened expressions, especially the negative form of real(ly).

TABLE 15

STATISTICS ON FOCUS VOCABULARIES IN CHINESE AND AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS' ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING	
CHINESE STUDENTS	AMERICAN STUDENTS
real(ly) (2)	real(ly) (4)
true(ly) (2)	around (3)
large(ly) (1)	true(ly) (2)
some (1)	anything (2)
about (1)	some (2)
...	somehow (1)
	any (1)
	something (1)
	...

V. CONCLUSION

Employed with appraisal system of SFL, the study made a comparative investigation on appraisal resources between Chinese and American college students' argumentative writings. The results show: there are significant differences in the distribution of affect, disclaim and entertain between the two groups of students, and the biggest distinction lays in entertain; except a slightly higher usage in affect resources, Chinese college students have insufficient vocabularies in all other 8 resources than American students. In attitude system, Chinese college students tend to use adverbs and verbs, which indicate a colloquial and emotional inclination, and shows a sign of shortage in indirect attitude resources. In engagement system, it is found that due to the nature of argumentation two groups of students have a lot of employment in this resource, in which disclaim and entertain are the most popular as Chinese students favor disclaim and American students prefer entertain. Students from the two countries use attribute vocabularies least and their abundance in disclaim resources shows both of them are good at aligning with readers. In graduation system, the two groups of students use force resources most and use less focus resources, and here again American college students' rich vocabulary is reflected.

The above research findings demonstrate the distinctions in appraisal resources between Chinese and American college students' argumentative writing, and also show that appraisal system can be successfully applied to the study of college students' writing. The study also indicates: in Chinese college English education there should strike a balance between students' input and output and enhance their abilities in expressing affect, attitude and judgement meanings; learning to analyze model texts helps to increase one's knowledge in writing; as for the teachers, in order to effectively improve students' influence and persuasion in argumentative writing, special attention should be paid in leading

students with interpersonal meaning in teaching argumentative writing; especially when preparing teaching materials. Integrated with Sydney School's genre-based pedagogy, appraisal system may provide effective guidance in teaching Chinese college students argumentative writing (Liao, 2011).

Although the present study contributes to specifying features of appraisal resources in Chinese college students' argumentative writing, and provide support for many similar follow-up studies, it still has some limitations. The first limit is reflected in the sample size of the study. Since the study just selected 64 essays on higher education from Chinese and American college students, it is far from a representative research whether it be on the variation of genre or the overall length of the texts. Therefore the study is limited in its universality. Secondly, there is a great difficulty in analyzing appraisal meaning in texts as the system is roomy and complex, and the judgement of such meanings is subjective. On the one hand, it is not possible at the present to include all appraisal resources and meanings. For this reason, the study investigated appraisal resources in lexical-grammatical level and overlooked semantic level. On the other hand, the application of appraisal system is not an easy work (Lee, 2008; Liao, 2011), not only in annotating sample texts but also in the explanation to students. Thus all of these constraints have limited the representativeness and inclusiveness of the study. However the contribution of the study to appraisal research still cannot be denied.

On the basis of current research, future studies on appraisal system should put the focus on broadening the research scope. It is a necessity for comparative investigation to join other participants, expand the sample size, and cover other genres, so as to make a more comprehensive and in-depth survey on appraisal resources of Chinese English learners. Furthermore, more application and empirical studies of appraisal system are needed to investigate the essential distinctions between second language learners and native speakers, so that Chinese foreign language education can be improved and developed.

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