

Towards an Ecological View of Contrastive Rhetoric Research between English and Chinese

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Abstract

Enormous studies have been done for the contrastive examination of English and Chinese rhetoric and a thorough investigation of these studies help identify four major themes repeatedly discussed, that is the traditional Chinese rhetoric forms Ba Gu Wen (eight-legged essay), and Qi-Chen-Zhuan-He, and the inductive reasoning and collectivism/Confucianism. This paper presents a critical and systematic review of these linguistic and cultural approaches to English-Chinese contrastive rhetoric studies. It argues that these approaches are inherently limited and an ecological view of contrastive rhetoric research between English and Chinese needs an expanded framework by incorporating linguistic, socio-cultural and cognitive factors.

Key words: *contrastive rhetoric research, Chinese and English rhetoric, linguistic explanation, cultural explanation, ecological view of rhetoric*

Introduction

In his seminal work on the examination of discourse organizations in approximately six hundred foreign students' English compositions, Kaplan (1966) claimed English writing is characterized by directness and deductive reasoning while other language, such as Oriental and Arabic favour indirectness and inductive reasoning. Meanwhile, he attempted to link the differences in discourse organizations between English and other languages to different cultures and thought patterns. This research was pioneering and valuable by directing ESL teachers and students to look beyond grammar and sentence-level difficulties and setting example for examining intercultural organizational patterns. More importantly, this study initiated a new research area, namely contrastive rhetoric which has expanded enormously during the past half century. After nearly half of century of development, contrastive rhetoric has become an independent area of research by itself (Matsuda, 2003) and has been one of the most studied areas within second language writing research (Connor, 1996).

After Kaplan's (1966) work, numerous studies have been conducted to investigate and compare discourse patterns between English and Chinese. A careful examination of those studies reveals that they explain differences or similarities between English and Chinese discourse organizational structures predominantly from four themes within the linguistic and cultural categories. To be specific, the linguistic explanation refers to the influence of Chinese traditional rhetoric forms Ba Gu Wen (eight-legged essay), and Qi-Chen-Zhuan-He, and the cultural thought patterns to the inductive reasoning and collectivism/Confucianism for the indirectness in Chinese writing and Chinese EFL writers' English writing. This paper aims to provide a critical review of the four themes and controversies in these studies, and calls for an ecological approach to English-Chinese contrastive rhetoric research by incorporating linguistic, socio-cultural and cognitive factors.

Current Approaches to Interpret Contrastive Rhetoric Studies between Chinese and English

A thorough reading of contrastive rhetoric studies between English and Chinese helps identify two main approaches repeatedly discussed which are classified into linguistic and cultural categories in this paper. The linguistic approach holds that Chinese writing and Chinese EFL writers' English writing

have been influenced by Chinese traditional rhetoric forms as Ba Gu Wen (eight-legged essay) and Qi-Chen-Zhuan-He and the cultural approach claims that Chinese preference for inductive reasoning and the influence from Confucianism and Collectivism account for the differences between English and Chinese rhetoric. This section will focus on the review of the main tenets related to the two approaches and controversies in these studies. Of course, the two approaches are not mutual-exclusive and some studies will be dealt with under two approaches.

Linguistic Approach

Ba Gu Wen (Eight-legged essay)

Ba Gu Wen is probably the most widely discussed traditional Chinese rhetoric. Starting from the ancient Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), the Ba Gu Wen (eight-legged essay) was the required form of essay writing in the imperial civil service examination. It is notorious for its rule-like format requirement, namely eight parts in the essay (see Table 1).

Table 1. Names and functions of each part of Ba Gu Wen (based on Elman, 2000, p. 394; Kirkpatrick, 1997, pp. 232-233)

Parts	Meaning	Function
<i>Po Ti</i> 破题	Breaking/opening the topic	This should reveal the candidate's knowledge of the source of the essay title and should be written in only two sentences.
<i>Cheng Ti</i> 承题	receiving the topic	This comprises four or five sentences and includes the reason why the sage (Confucius) made the statement quoted in the essay title.
<i>Qi Jiang</i> 起讲	beginning discussion	This is the real beginning of the essay. Here the candidates can use their own words, rather than discuss and quote the sage.
<i>Qi Gu</i> 起股	initial leg	This section consists of two paragraphs-the beginning legs-one parallel to the other in rhetorical structure. These paragraphs build up the philosophical content of the essay without exhausting it
<i>Xu Gu</i> 续股	transition leg	This is the prelude to the main theme of the essay-where the first two lines are parallel to the second two lines, and these are the "minor legs."
<i>Zhong Gu</i> 中股	middle leg	This is the main part of the essay-the central legs-and contains the main points the candidates want to raise. Parallel structure is used.
<i>Hou Gu</i> 后股	later leg	This develops the ideas expressed in the <i>Zhong Gu</i> or main part and represent the latter legs.
<i>Da Jie</i> 大结	conclusion	Here the candidate brings the composition to a close.

Success in the imperial civil service examination promised fame and fortune which rendered Ba Gu essay writing an extremely high-stake writing activity. "If a candidate could not follow these strict rules of length, balance, and complementarity, then this essay was judged inferior. One misplaced character, or one character too many or too few, in building a clause in one of the legs of the essay could result in failure." (Elman, 2000, p. 395). This strictly formulated writing has been taught and practiced in China for several hundred years until the end of Qing dynasty (1644– 1911). However, due to the long-lasting existence in Chinese history and enormous social-cultural significance, some (such as Cai, 1993; Connor, 1996; Kaplan, 1966; Matalene, 1985) held that Ba Gu Wen rhetoric pattern still influence contemporary Chinese writing and native-Chinese speakers' English writing in many ways. First, Ba Gu Wen rhetoric pattern is thought to cause indirectness in Chinese writing. The above table shows that the introduction of the main thesis of the writing doesn't appear until in the second part Cheng Ti 承题 which introduces the topic and prepares the main theme in the essay, followed by a

preliminary exposition of the theme in the third part *Qi Jiang* 起讲 and a series of arguments in the following four parts *Qi Gu* 起股, *Xu Gu* 续股, *Zhong Gu* 中股, *Hou Gu* 后股. They argued that this delayed presentation of the main idea makes the Chinese writing indirect to native-English speakers.

Second, *Ba Gu Wen* is regarded to contribute to Chinese preference for paired phrases and structures in Chinese writing. *Ba Gu Wen* required a rigid formal parallelism both propositionally and syntactically (Elman, 2000, p. 391). Arguments in the four parts *Qi Gu* 起股, *Xu Gu* 续股, *Zhong Gu* 中股, *Hou Gu* 后股 build upon each other and advance in a complementary manner. Meanwhile, within each part, propositions are organized through parallel sentences and sections. Throughout the whole essay, balanced clauses (*tui-chu* 对句) and balanced pairs of characters (*shu-tui* 属对) are also required (Elman, 2000, p.391). This strong commitment to formal parallelism is regarded as redundant and repetitive for Western readers.

Third, *Ba Gu Wen* is held responsible for Chinese preference for analogy and allusion to history. The topic for essay writing in the imperial civil service examination was normally the quotation from traditional Chinese masterpieces such as Four Books and Five Classics. Candidates were expected to respond to the quotation with Confucian contents through their understanding of these classic readings. You (2010) vividly described this practice in the *Ba Gu* essay writing.

"In the essay, the students were not expected to articulate unique thoughts about the universe that different from neo-Confucian philosophy. Instead, they should exemplify their ethos, or 'correct' voices, through skilful manipulation of Confucian concepts, commentators' interpretations, and historical events within an expected structure --- like skilled ballet dancers who express their feelings and emotions through performing formal steps gracefully"(p.25)

This requirement to quote classic work makes Chinese writing less individual, critical and original.

Just as mentioned above, as a writing format practiced for hundreds of years, *Ba Gu Wen* is alleged to form some of the rhetoric habits for Chinese writers, such as preferences for indirectness, paired phrases and structures and allusion to history (see Kaplan, 1966; Matalene, 1985; Connor, 1996; Cai, 1993; Shen, 1989, etc.). However, some scholars (such as Mohan & Lo, 1985; Kirkpatrick 1997; You, 2010) disagreed with that claim and suggested that *Ba Gu Wen* was not in use for over a century and its influence upon contemporary Chinese writing should be minimal. Kirkpatrick (1997) is one of the most fervent supporters who believe that *Ba Gu Wen* is not possible to exert influence upon contemporary Chinese writing due to its difficulty to learn, rejection in modern China as an imperial association and the increasing adoption of western thoughts and models.

Qi-Chen-Zhuan-He rhetoric pattern

Another influential Chinese rhetoric strategy for expository and persuasive writing is the four-part organizational pattern *Qi-Chen-Zhuan-He* which imposed great influence upon the formation of *Ba Gu* essay writing (Kirkpatrick, 1997). The four-part *Qi-Chen-Zhuan-He* literally means beginning-elaboration-transition-conclusion respectively. *Qi* 起 is the opening section with the introduction of theme; *Chen* 承 elaborates on the main point with supporting materials; *Zhuan* 转 is the turning point to deviate momentarily from the discussion; *He* 合 is the conclusion part.

English compositions written by Chinese EFL/ESL students were often found to show the influence of the four-part organization pattern (see Cai, 1993; Fagan & Cheong, 1987; Liu, 2008, etc.). The following example cited from Cai (1993, p.10) illustrates how an Chinese ESL student organized paragraphs with the four-part pattern.

[Qi] We are dependent, for understanding and for consolation and hope, upon what we learn of ourselves from songs and stories. [Cheng] From this statement, we can know that through songs and stories, people realize themselves, humanity, and their societies. The literacy – the mastery of language and the knowledge of books – is the essential factor that enlarges people's knowledge, and improves mutual realization of people, and then creates smooth society. [Jun] From kindergartens to colleges, form homes to offices, we learn how to interact with someone and how to realize ourselves and our

societies. The literacy helps us to accustom and realize them. [He] Hence, 'literacy is not an ornament, but a necessity.

The first sentence opens up the discussion (Qi) and serves the topic sentence. The following two sentences move forward with the discussion and elaborate on the topic (Cheng). However, the fourth sentence seems to deviate from the topic (Zhuan) and talks about something not so pertinent to the topic under discussion. The final sentence returns to the topic and winds up the discussion (He). What makes the writing sound indirect to native English-speakers is the momentary turn in the Zhuan section. Cai (1993) claimed that this four-part structure is still a quite prominent pattern in Chinese rhetoric and influences Chinese ESL/EFL students' English writing.

Some studies seem to confirm Cai's (1993) proposal. After examining English writing by 60 Chinese ESL ninth graders in Singapore, Fagan and Cheong (1987) found that these students have the problem of following English three-part structure, introduction-body-conclusion and more than half of their English writing show the trace of Qi-Chen-Zhuan-He. In his Chinese EFL students' writing exercises for TEM4 tests, Liu (2008) also found that the Chinese traditional rhetoric pattern Qi-Chen-Zhuan-He was common in his subjects' English writing.

However, many other studies (such as Liao & Chen, 2008; Mohan & Lo, 1985; Taylor & Chen, 1991; Liu, 2005; Yang & Cahill, 2008) have pointed out that as far as discourses structure is concerned, Chinese writing is no way different from English writing and similarities are more apparent than differences. Liu (2005) found that suggestions given by online writing instruction materials in both China and USA all advocate a three-part global structure. Yang and Cahill (2008) found that most (66.7%) of selected ancient Chinese texts in the senior high school Chinese textbooks published in 2002 demonstrated a deductive and linear rhetoric pattern and thus no evidence to the claim that Chinese ancient writers prefer indirectness. Liao and Chen (2009) found though the selected 3 Chinese textbooks in Taiwan accept the use of Qi-Chen-Zhuan-He structure for essay organization but they don't advocate to use Zhuan to present irrelevant or tangential viewpoints.

Cahill (2003) challenged the widely-held view on the function of Zhuan, the third part in the four-part *qi-cheng-zhuan-he* structure which represents a "turn" and indicates the 'nonlinearity' and 'indirectness' of Chinese language. He contended that rather than being what contrastive rhetoric has described as a "subtheme, a digression, an incidental or unrelated element, or more vaguely as a 'circular' move" (ibid, p.186), the *zhuan* in Chinese serves to introduce a new perspective, or provide a contrasting example or illustration, or introduce an opposing perspective or counterarguments which at most "suspends the logical flow for dramatic effect, with the suspension unambiguously resolved in the concluding" part (ibid, p.186).

In short, by far there isn't a wide census upon the nature of Zhuan in the four-part Qi-Chen-Zhuan-He and its influence upon Chinese writing.

Cultural Approach

Inductiveness (Indirectness) vs. Deductiveness (Directness)

In his seminal work, Kaplan (1966) formulated what constitutes an inductive (indirect) and deductive (direct) rhetoric patterns in writing. According to Kaplan (1966), evolved from Anglo-European cultural pattern, the English thought patterns are dominantly linear in its development and English speakers prefer a deductive reasoning by beginning with a topic statement, followed by a series of subdivisions of that topic statement each supported by specific examples and illustrations and proceeding to develop and relate the central idea to prove or argue against something. Contrary to this thought pattern is the so-called inductive reasoning which presents a lot of examples before arriving at a central statement at the end of the paragraph. Through examining about six hundreds of ESL students' English compositions, Kaplan (1966) claimed that Oriental writing, including Chinese, Korean, is characterized as being inductive or indirect and its paragraph development looks like "turning and turning in a widening gyre" and "the subject is never looked at directly" (p.10).

Chinese rhetoric preference for indirectness is said to be related to the Confucian concept of Zheng Ming (正名) which literally means "rectification of names" (Bloch & Chi, 1995, p. 259) or "call things by

their proper names" (Shen, 1989, p. 463). By Zheng Ming, each member of the society should act according to the expected role and position in the hierarchical and conflicting social system. During the process of rectification, social harmony is achieved. This pragmatic nature of Chinese rhetoric encourages indirectness by stating the conditions of composition before articulating the main thesis. This Confucian thought pattern underlies the traditional rhetoric traditions as Ba Gu Wen and Qi-Chen-Zhuan-He (Bloch & Chi, 1995; Wu & Rubin, 2000).

Following Kaplan's (1966) line, many studies (Cai, 1993; Matalene, 1985; Fagan & Chen, 1987; Chen, 2001a, 2008; Shen, 1989; Xia, 2007; Cortazzi, & Jin, 1997) held the view that Chinese writers prefer inductive approach to writing. Cortazzi and Jin (1997) stated that due to the influence from traditional Confucian thinking, Chinese students "more naturally" use the inductive discourse patterns in their English writing. Chinese speakers tend to provide much more background information before coming up to the main point in the hope of establishing rapport with listeners. In their writing, according to Cortazzi and Jin (1997), Chinese writers also tend to foreground the background information by showing the whole before parts, stating reasons before results and illustrating causes before effects which make their writing inductive and indirect for English readers.

The widely cited work by Matalene (1985) made a strong case about the indirectness of Chinese rhetoric and English writing by Chinese EFL students. Using one Chinese English-major's English composition and a speech given by former Chinese premier Deng Xiaoping, she concluded that "to be indirect in both spoken and written discourse, to expect the audience to infer meanings rather than to have them spelled out is a defining characteristic of Chinese rhetoric" (p.801). Echoed similarly with Matalene (1985), Shen (1989) expressed her struggle between her old Chinese self and constructing her English new self during the process of English writing in America. She described Chinese writing as developing ideas gradually and systematically from "surface to core" (p.462) like "bush-clearing" and the "peeling of an onion" (p.463). Chen's recent studies (2001, 2008) also found the evidence of Chinese EFL students' preference for inductive pattern in their English writing. He found (2001) that 53.72% out of the 363 English essays show the evidence of inductive structure. Though Chinese EFL students' preference for inductive pattern decreases as their English language proficiency improves, the tendency is still strong (Chen, 2008). After examining the 120 pieces of English and Chinese newspaper argumentative articles, Xia (2007) found that more than half (66.7%) English newspaper articles use deductive patterns while the majority of (73.3%) Chinese ones use inductive patterns.

Other studies (Liao & Chen, 2008; Mohan & Lo, 1985; Taylor & Chen, 1991; Liu, 2005; Yang & Cahill, 2008; Chien, 2007; Zhu, 2000, 2008), however, found the opposite. They (L. Liu, 2005; Mohan & Lo, 1985; Taylor & Chen, 1991; Zhu, 2000, 2008) argued that as far as overall discourse organization is concerned, Chinese writing is not much different than English writing and normally it also follows the three-part introduction-body-conclusion linear development. Chien (2007) found that most of her Taiwanese university participants report in the questionnaire their preference for direct way of writing and the examination of their writing shows that they do employ a deductive pattern in their English essay writing. What's worth noting here is Yang and Cahill's (2008) study which might provide more reliable evidence due to their sound research design and analytical framework.

In their investigation, three types of writing are examined, namely English writing from English-speaking American university students, Chinese writing from first-year Chinese university EFL students and English writing from third-year English-majors. Following the approach introduced by Tirkkonen-Condit and Lieflander-Koistinen (1989), they determined the degree of directness or indirectness through the location of thesis statement and topic sentence in the text. If the thesis statement is in the first one-third of the text, it is then regarded as in the beginning. If the thesis statement is in the second one-third of the text, it is regarded as in the middle of the text. It will be regarded as at the end of the text if it appears at the last one-third of the text. The location of the topic sentence in each paragraph is also determined in this way. The length of the text is measured by the number of T-units. The study then found that Chinese EFL students also prefer directness in both English and Chinese writing, but American students' writing is more direct. They also pointed out that Chinese writing manual all instruct students to write in a direct way.

Collectivism vs. Individualism

English writing by Chinese writers has long been accused of lacking critical stances or personal voice and this difference between Chinese and English writing is often traced back to the different influence of collectivism and individualism upon written discourse (Kaplan, 1966; Matalene, 1985; Shen, 1989).

Matalene (1985) stated that as being collective, Chinese stay together in groups and are expected to behave in an accepted way to “prevent friction, to allow each member to preserve dignity, and to save face” (p.795). Thus, according to Matalene (1985), Chinese writers tend to appeal to tradition and authority of past and rely on accepted and fixed patterns of expression to “achieve social harmony and to express the views of the group” (p.795).

Shen (1989) presented a vivid narration of her struggling process of learning English composition in America. She recalled that in the collectivist China, she had to always subordinate personal identity “I” to the collective body “we” as being “timid, humble, modest” (p.462). After accepting idealism in American individual-centred culture, she put on a new English “I” who are “confident, assertive, and aggressive” (p.462). She claimed that due to the influence of collectivism, to quote or appeal to ancient and modern authoritative figures is the most forceful and persuasive way to prove one’s viewpoint in the writing.

Carson and Nelson (1994) stated that as collectivism is a cultural pattern in China, Chinese belong to groups of some kind and the major function of the group is to maintain group cohesion and harmony. Collectivist ethic is reflected in the process of education and socialization. They held that in Chinese schools which represent a kind of social group, teachers encourage their students to say what is socially shared and accepted rather than express something individual and personal. In American university writing conferences, Chinese students are normally found not be able to respond critically and constructively and instead they take harmony-maintenance or face-saving strategies which might not be helpful for writing development.

In short, collectivism is regarded as the representative cultural pattern in China and each Chinese belongs to certain groups in which they are required to act to maintain social harmony. What collectivist thinking reflects in the Chinese writers’ writing is their being less critical, individual and personal but more reliance on past wisdom and appeals to authoritative figures.

Wu and Rubin (2000) conducted an innovative and interesting study by examining to what extent textual features are influenced by the writers’ level of collectivism or individualism. In this study, 40 Taiwanese university EFL students and 40 first-year US students participated in this investigation. The two groups are thought to represent collectivism and individualism cultures respectively. Students’ writing was coded based on a set of categories which are alleged to indicate collectivist or individualist world views, such as indirectness, personal disclosure, use of proverbs and other canonical expressions, etc. Though there are differences between Taiwanese students’ English and Chinese writing with American students’ English writing, such as Taiwanese students’ Chinese writing shown a relative indirectness, expressions of Confucian principles of humaneness and collective virtue and a greater reliance on proverbs and other canonical expressions and their English writing characterized by little self-disclosure and low level of assertiveness, there is no significant covariate effect between measured collectivism and expressions of collectivist world view through textual features. They then suggested that instead of being influenced by collectivist or individualist world views, those differences might be related to cultural conventions and school trainings.

Limitations in the Linguistic and Cultural Approaches

Undeniably these linguistic and cultural explanations have contributed a lot to our understanding of the relationship between English and Chinese rhetoric and Chinese EFL writers’ English writing behaviors, however, there are some inherent limitations in the linguistic and cultural approaches.

Generally, the linguistic approach holds that the negative transfer from L1 rhetoric results in L2 writers’ difficulties. However, this assumption is problematic in at least the following two aspects. First, the difficulties encountered by ESL writers in their L2 writing are not necessarily caused by L1 rhetoric patterns. Second language acquisition has been regarded as a process of creative construction and the evolving system constitutes the interlanguage continuum (Ellis, 1985). The interlanguage system is

distinct from both the L1 and L2. L2 writers' writing in L2 is just the evolving interlanguage system which is different from L1 writing and is not always native language influence (Odlin, 1989, p. 27).

Secondly, cross-linguistic transfer is not necessarily negative and unitary but also could be positive and bidirectional (Kubota, 1998; Uysal, 2008). Through examining the English and Japanese writing produced by the same group of students, Kubota (1998) found no negative transfer of culturally unique rhetorical patterns and positive correlation between English and Japanese organizational scores. After examining her Turkish participants' writing in both Turkish and English, Uysal's (2008) study confirmed the bidirectional transfer of rhetorical patterns.

The danger of the cultural approach is that they have always been tempted to attribute differences between ESL/EFL writing and Anglo-American writing to the differences between national cultures (such as Indrasuta, 1988; Kaplan, 1966; Koutsantoni, 2005; Loi & Evans, 2010). Though it is true that our thinking and behaviours are doomed to be influenced by the cultural community we live in, we find the strong and obvious link between contrastive textual analysis and global cultural differences too simplistic an approach. Just as Tirkkonen-Condit (1996, p. 259) has long pointed out that we need to "avoid explaining all variation by crosscultural differences", there are many other factors working beneath textual differences.

Attributing ESL students' L2 writing problems and difficulties to L1 rhetoric might also face the danger of serious stereotyping and overgeneralizing (Leki, 1991, p. 127) and also risk being ethnocentric by privileging English writing and rhetoric over other languages and rhetoric (Matalene, 1995). Meanwhile, this approach tends to treat L2 writers from certain language and cultural background as a group and infer their difficulties to L1 rhetoric interference instead of looking at L2 writers as individual because "the manifestation of transfer can vary from one learner to the next" (Odlin, 1989, p.30).

Conclusion

Enormous English-Chinese contrastive rhetoric studies have been carried out during the past few decades and four major themes in these studies have been identified, namely Ba Gu Wen (eight-legged essay), Qi-Chen-Zhuan-He structure, inductiveness versus deductiveness and individualism/Confucianism. These studies have contributed to our understanding of the problems and difficulties in English writing by Chinese writers, however, these factors "are by no means the only factors" and meanwhile no sufficient evidence to show that they are the most salient ones either (Matsuda, 1997, p. 48).

Conner (1996) has pointed out a decade ago that "the traditional contrastive rhetoric framework is no longer able to account for all the data, and an expanded framework is needed" and a broader framework should "consider both cognitive and sociocultural variables of writing in addition to linguistic variables" (P.18). Current contrastive rhetoric now tends to pay particular attention to the process of writing and increasingly takes a "context-sensitive" approach to interpret cross-cultural rhetoric studies (Connor, 2004).

Carson (1992) suggested long ago that despite examining ESL students' final product, it is important to examine the process of literacy development which might enhance and complicate ESL writing. According to Carson (1992), L1 literacy education will indirectly influence foreign language education and will also influence ESL students' L2 learning. Specifically, Carson (1992) held that the knowledge of ESL student writers' L1 literacy background will help build effective strategies in ESL writing classroom.

Apart from L1 literacy and L2 educational background, the writers themselves also play a central role in written production and their experience and knowledge about L1 and L2 writing has an equally important role in text formation (X. Liu, 2010; Victori, 1999). Holyoak and Piper (1997) echoed similar sentiment by that current contrastive rhetoric has overlooked the role of writers themselves "in the process of their interpretation of rhetoric and their writing problems and difficulties" (p.123). By exploring student writers' past experience in L1 and L2 writing instruction and their perceptions of their writing problems and difficulties, we can answer the question of why and how students write in this way.

Therefore, writers themselves need to be taken as an important subject of study by itself in contrastive rhetoric.

As reviewed in section 2, Chinese-English contrastive rhetoric is still predominantly text-based while paying little attention to the context in which it comes into being. The heavy reliance upon linguistic and cultural explanations neglects other important elements such as L1 and L2 educational context and writer's own roles in the process of textual production as well. What we need therefore is a more ecological view of Chinese rhetoric and Chinese EFL writers' English composing behaviours by considering linguistic, socio-cultural and cognitive factors.

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