

# **Comparing Stance in Chinese EFL learners' English and Chinese argumentative essays of a shared topic**

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Writers' stance can be communicated by various linguistic means in both English and Chinese. Previous research (Camicciottoli 2004; Neff 2004; Xu 2007; Liang 2008) shows that L2 learners of English, even for advanced learners, are not capable of taking their stance appropriately in English. This study takes a contrastive approach to examine the stance markers in 122 pieces of Chinese learners' English and Chinese argumentative essays of a shared topic "Is the Internet a blessing or a curse?" Each learner was asked to write an English essay first and then the other one in Chinese. An annotation scheme of stance marking categories (epistemic, deontic, attitudinal and textual) was devised to manually annotate the 122 parallel texts. The results show that the overall occurrences of stance markers in the 61 English texts are considerably correlated ( $r = .592$ ) with those in the 61 corresponding Chinese texts. Namely, in terms of stance marking, Chinese learners' English essays share the tendency of their Chinese essays. A closer look at individual stance categories specifies that epistemic, attitudinal and textual markers are correlated with their Chinese counterparts at  $r = .306$ ,  $r = .578$ ,  $r = .444$  respectively, with attitudinal the highest. This coincides with Xu (2007) in that Chinese learners of English tend to be unduly involved with personal judgments and attitudes in academic writing. The follow-up concordance analysis of the texts reveals that Chinese learners of English tend to use similar semantic stance types in two languages on the one hand, and employ lexical and phrasal items, which are literal translations to each other, on the other. The apparent alignment in semantic types and lexical realizations of stance sheds some light of cross-linguistic influence of Chinese on learners' English writing.

## **Chapter 1 Introduction**

In everyday verbal communication, a considerable portion of our lexicon is used to make judgements and

evaluations or to show empathy. For instance, by saying '*This picture is fantastic*, the speaker intends to show his/her appreciation or flattery. Likewise, this part of linguistic repertoire also finds expression in Chinese learners' essays. The next two paragraphs taken from one Chinese learner's essay demonstrates how s/he takes his/her stance linguistically.

*Because* everything in this world has two sides, *I think* Internet has too.

*First*, Internet has a *good influence*. It *provides* the newest information. Its speed is *faster* than anything else. If you *want* to know as many information as you can, you *should* use Internet. ...

By means of the words in italics, no matter which word class they belong to, either verb or noun, single word or multi-word expressions, it is reasoning to see the writer is to show his/her own opinion or judgement on the topic, i.e. internet, in the aspects of its effect on people, what it can offer, the actions people will or should take, and the like.

Certainly behind every expression there has to be a person who creates it, and whose voice resonates from it (Maynard, 1993: 257). From the two examples above, it is safe to say that words and speech are personally involved. Just as Tokieda (1941: 18) noted: Language, which is most easily misconceived to exist as an 'objective' entity, must be understood to be the most 'subjective' and the most 'mental, psychological as well as emotional' existence. This is also echoed by Maynard (1993: 3):

Verbal expressions used in everyday verbal interaction are known to simultaneously convey at least two integrated but distinguishable types of information. First, we describe the objects and events of the world in a propositional construction, and second, through the manner of presenting the proposition, we personalize the discourse as we express and reveal ourselves.

Maynard appeared to be after Holmes (1983: 100, cited in Neff et al., 2003) who pointed out that the devices used in expressing propositions serve at least two simultaneous functions: the expression of certainty/doubt concerning the proposition but also the speaker/writer's attitude towards the audience.

'Stance' in the present study refers to one's opinion or attitude toward a proposition or an event, and the like. It involves the speaker or writer's personal judgement, assessment, and sometimes the way of persuading listeners or readers, drawing upon his own knowledge, beliefs, and/or immediate perception.

'Stance marker' has the same meaning with Maynard's (1993) 'linguistic signs', by which The information conveyed in the propositions or events are often coded, with some devices functioning primarily, but not necessarily exclusively, for an objective description of the world, and others for the language user's self-expression.

The starting point of the present study concerns the possibility of reaching some cross-linguistically significant conclusion through the comparative study in the area of stance marking in two languages, English and Chinese. The expression of writer stance involves:

- Epistemic stance: Appeal to assessment of the degree of likelihood concerning of the described situation;
- Deontic stance: Arguments regarding the necessity or desirability of the situation obtaining;
- Attitudinal stance: Judgement on the existing things around the topic; as well as
- Textual stance: Well organized texts to enhance rationality and logicity.

The primary aim of this paper is to explore whether correlation exists in the expression of these categories in argumentative essays in English and Chinese, with 9 subcategories of stance markers (certainty, evidentiality, likelihood, necessity/obligation, permission/possibility/ability, causation/effort, affect, evaluation, and textual stance markers) devised as the means for comparison.

The present study will first discuss the previous related studies to present a general picture of this field. Then the data and research method will be introduced, followed by the discussion of the results and some implications in teaching and learning.

## Chapter 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Concepts related to stance

Various definitions have been made in the literature with regard to the field or subtypes of stance. Stance was proposed by Biber et al. (1999) in their book *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*, referring to speakers or writers' personal feelings, attitudes, value judgements, or assessments. The term of 'writer stance' involves, among other things, the communication of assessments and value judgements concerning the described situation by appeal to evidence, expression of degree of certainty or likelihood, as well as arguments regarding the necessity or desirability of the situation obtaining (Biber et al., 1999: 966-972). According to Biber (2006), stance expressions can convey many different kinds of personal feelings and assessments, including attitudes that a speaker has about certain information, how certain they are about its veracity, how they obtained access to the information, and what perspective they are taking.

Hyland (2005) seemed to support Biber. He proposed the term 'metadiscourse' and evaluated writer stance as an attitudinal dimension and includes features which refer to the ways writers present themselves and convey their judgements, opinions, and commitments. It is the ways that writers intrude to stamp their personal authority onto their arguments or step back and disguise their involvement.

On the one hand, Searle (1983, cited in Matoesian, 2005) and Lyons (1982, cited in Matoesian, 2005) focused on a narrow aspect of writer stance by 'intentionality' and 'subjectivity' respectively. While 'intentionality' mostly addresses how the writer organizes the text in an integral and complete way to fulfill his/her own intention, with much emphasis at the textual level, 'subjectivity' is briefly the speaker's commitment to the truth of and/or attitude toward propositional content. In the same vein, 'evidentiality' according to Clift (2006) stands for the resources of the author's statement and how he is certain about what he states. It is actually a kind of representation of the speaker's epistemological coding of the source and reliability of information or knowledge. Hedging, by Vold (2006) is the mitigation of claims, often seen as a rhetorical device used to convince and influence the reader. It is an argumentative strategy considered to be crucial to the writer of scientific texts.

On the other hand, White (2001) use ‘appraisal’ to refer to any way of language use to evaluate, to judge, to adopt stances, and to build up textual personas by the author. While this broad characterization is interesting, however, it is unclear how far these resources are actually employed in particular registers and to what extent they can be seen as comprising core semantic features in given contexts of use (Hyland, 2005).

The terminologies above refer not only to the author’s personal beliefs, knowledge or evaluation on the described situation, but also to the ways in which the author organize what he states to convince others. In other words, some of the definitions are made at interpersonal level, just as Hyland (2005) pointed out: ‘...academic writing has gradually lost its traditional tag as an objective, faceless and impersonal form of discourse and come to be seen as a persuasive endeavor involving interaction between writers and readers’, some at textual level to make clear the line of reasoning.

By combining the two levels, this present study defines the cover term ‘stance’, as the writer’s attitudes, personal feelings or emotions, judgement or evaluation on the proposition. It expresses how the writer commits to the truth of the proposition, what beliefs he possesses, what kind of attitude he holds, as well as how he applies language in organizing the text to persuade or involve the readers, thus contributing to his reasoning in the argumentative essays with his own design or logic.

## **2.2 Categories of stance marking (epistemic, deontic, attitudinal, textual)**

Biber et al. made three major semantic distinctions conveyed by stance markers. They are (1) epistemic stance, marking certainty (or doubt), actuality, precision, or limitation, and the source or perspective of knowledge; (2) attitudinal stance, marking attitudes and evaluations; personal feelings or emotions; and (3) Style of speaking stance, presenting speaker/writer comments on the communication itself (1999: 972-975). This distinction is far-reaching, by way of which fruitful follow-up researches have been made, but not without problems.

First, the category of style-of-speaking is vague and ambiguous. Since it shows speaker/writer’s comments on the communication itself, such as the adverbials *honestly*, *quite frankly*, *with all the respect*, and the verbs *swear*, *argue*, it may also be categorized into the *attitudinal stance*, which or even sometimes into *epistemic stance*. The latter two are also able to show the way something is said.

Second, in semantics, we have epistemic modality (Saeed, 2003) by which the speaker is signaling degrees of knowledge (modality here is a cover term for devices which allow speakers to express varying degrees of commitment to, or belief in, a proposition. It is only part of the research topic in the present study.), while the epistemic stance markers in the researches by Biber et al. (1999) show the degrees of certainty, which draws on the author's knowledge about it. Therefore, the epistemic stances in the present study and the epistemic modality share the same function and stand at the same level.

What corresponds to epistemic modality is deontic modality, where the verbs mark the speaker's attitude to social factors of obligation, responsibility and permission. Deontic modals, like epistemic modals, signal a speaker's judgements but while with epistemics the judgements is about the way the real world is, with deontics it is about how people should behave in the world. Broadly speaking, epistemic modality signals the level of knowledge or degree of certainty or possibility of a given state of affairs, while deontic modality concerns the necessity or obligation that such state of affairs will obtain (Reilly et al., 2005). So it will be reasonable to have a category of deontic stance marker that communicates the social information of obligation and permission. This is in conformance with Lyons' notice that logicians have been primarily concerned with the necessary or contingent truth of propositions whereas linguists have generally focused on the differences between epistemic and deontic modality (Lyons, 1977, cited in Reilly et al., 2005).

Argumentative texts tend to present a theme or argument and reflect the logical structure of such an argument (Reilly et al., 2005). Once the setting has been established, writers propose a thesis to defend, argue for the grounds, and formulate logical conclusions. In arguing for the grounds, writers can present statements, evaluations or hypothesis for which they themselves accept responsibility or they can attribute these to other sources (Neff et al., 2004). Any rhetorical strategy or the textual organization used in the argumentation can in a certain extent represent the writer's logical thinking and the kind of position or stance he is taking. So, the present study also takes into account the textual markers that contribute to the argumentation.

To sum up, the present study will add two new categories to the semantic distinctions by Biber et al., thus the categories of stance markers for comparison come to be:

- Epistemic stance markers, marking the author's certainty, evidentiality and likelihood;
- Deontic stance markers, marking the writer's position on necessity/obligation,

permission/possibility/ability, and causation/effort;

- Attitudinal stance markers, presenting the writer's evaluation/estimation and personal feeling and emotion (that is, affect); and
- Textual stance markers, marking the text organization that will help the writer to make explicit his act or discourse being performed, thus contributing to the argumentation.

Together, these features convey the level of personal involvement of the writer with the text, as well as his or her moral evaluation, degree of certainty, and/or emotional perspective and response to the content of the text. In sum, this collection of lexical items collaborates to reflect the writer/speaker's stance. These will be further recounted later.

### **2.3 Contrastive studies of English and Chinese stance marking**

As mentioned above, investigations on stance have been carried out under different labels in the recent years. The previous studies covered widely, ranging from stance development (Reilly et al., 2005), stance taking and supporting capabilities (Chandrasegaran & Kong, 2006), to comparing stance marking devices either between native speakers and non-native speakers, or across different registers.

#### **2.3.1 Stance marking by NS and NNS**

Within the framework of the International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE) project, Petch-Tyson (1998) compared the EFL output from four different languages and cultural backgrounds to that of native English-speaking students in terms of the features of (writer/reader) W/R visibility, and found that all the learner writers have used almost all of the features much more often than the control NS writers and that they focus more on interpersonal involvement. It seems reasonable to say that the learner writers are much more overtly present within the discourse than the NS writers. This is to a certain extent echoed by Vold (2006), who concluded that the factor of language is most important compared to the factor of discipline or gender.

Neff et al. made several researches comparing features of argumentative texts written by native English speakers and EFL learners:

The SPICLE<sup>1</sup> team (Neff et al., 2003) investigated how these writers construct stance by examining their use of devices of evidentiality. The results showed that the EFL writers either overuse or underuse modal verbs, and that they use a narrower range of verbs, many of which carry a higher pragmatic import for stance taking. Similarly, another study (2004) suggested that high writer visibility due to the overuse of *I* may be a characteristic of novice writing instead of resulting from EFL students' inexperience in constructing stance in English. Further study of the discourse strategies indicated that the transfer of discourse conventions from the mother tongue to the EFL English texts, are most unlikely to rule out entirely in certain circumstances.

Developmental factors were also measured (Neff et al., 2006). What related to the present study most was that the project consisted of a cross-sectional comparison of argumentative essays by Spanish university students of English, writing 30 essays both in Spanish (L1) and English (EFL), later matched for the same writers and same topics, and by 30 American university student essays with the same topic. It was intended to bring to light any significant typological or cultural differences, especially regarding the interpersonal relation established by the writers with their readers.

### **2.3.2 Stance marking across different registers**

In addition to the language aspect, register differences in the field of stance marking have also been examined. It is important to be aware of register differences, because results from one register cannot automatically be transferred to other registers. Every register has its own terminology and also, it seems, its own preferred rhetorical strategies. Stance markers are important elements in the rhetorical organization of a text, as proved by Biber et al.'s (1999) survey: overall, stance markers are common in all four registers (news, fiction, conversation and academic writing). The study of stance markers across registers can tell us something about the argumentative strategies used in different registers.

For the reason that nearly any word could be analyzed as reflecting an evaluation, making it hard to identify a closed set of words used to convey specific attitudes and evaluations, Biber (2006) extended previous research restricted to grammatical devices that express stance, in two ways: (1) it compared and

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<sup>1</sup> SPICLE is the Spanish team which contributed texts of Spanish university writers to the International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE), Centre for English Corpus Linguistics, Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium.



contrasted the use of a wide range of lexico-grammatical features used for the expression of stance, rather than focusing on a particular feature, and (2) it described major patterns of register variation within the university, comparing the marking of stance in academic versus 'student management' registers, within both speech and writing. The results showed that stance is overtly marked to a greater extent in the spoken registers than in written registers, with epistemic stance expressions (as well as attitudinal expressions) much more common in speech than in writing.

Hyland (2005) analyzed the research article corpus and found out the disciplinary differences, that is, writers in different disciplines represented themselves, their work and their readers in different ways, with those in the humanities and social sciences taking far more explicitly involved and personal positions than those in the science and engineering fields.

From the above review, we can see previous studies in this field were carried out to compare stance expressions either between native speakers and non-native speaker learners or across different registers within one single language, rather than compare the IL themselves in the same register, that is, make comparison across languages within one register. Research can hardly be found on the correlation between writing in a L2 and writing in one's L1. Distinguishing between these two dimensions is a useful starting point from which to explore whether and how stance expressions are correlated in English writings and their Chinese counterparts written by the same learner writers and what these can tell us of the assumptions and practices of cross linguistic influence. This is what this paper sets out to do below. Following a conceptual framework, I coded the stance markers in both English and Chinese essays, investigated whether correlation exist between them, and discussed what these correlations tell us in light of the cross linguistic effect.

## **2.4 Conceptual framework**

The four categories defined in Chapter 1 are all the ways of language use to represent how the writer argues for his ground in the levels of content and text organization. Each category has rich meaning and functions and can be subcategorized as follows.

### **2.4.1 Epistemic stance markers**

Epistemic stance markers thus mark to what extent one can rely on the information which is being conveyed by the proposition, differing in the degree of certainty, precision, and limitation. Writers must weigh up the commitment they want to invest in their arguments based on its epistemic status and the effects this commitment might have on readers' responses (Hyland, 2005). As Bybee et al. (1994: 179) pointed out that epistemics 'applies to assertions and indicates the extent to which the speaker is committed to the truth of the proposition'. This study divides epistemic stance markers into three subcategories, certainty, evidentiality, and likelihood.

#### 2.4.1.1 Certainty stance markers

Certainty stance markers are used to convey certainty, for example when the nature of the argumentation allows the author to make strong claims or draw clear conclusions. In such cases, they serve to give an accurate picture of the level of certainty. Inferred certainty indicates 'a strong sense of probability' and it 'strongly implies that the speaker has good reason for supposing that the proposition is true' (Bybee et al., 1994: 180). Certainty stance markers parallel 'Boosters' in Hyland's (2005: 108) research: '*Boosters*...allow writers to express their certainty in what they say and to mark involvement with the topic and solidarity with their audience. They function to stress shared information, group membership, and engagement with readers'. This function is illustrated by the following examples extracted from the present corpora:

- (1) Although sometimes Internet is used by evildoers, *in fact*, Internet itself is good.
- (2) *There is no doubt* that like TV. Internet benefit people hugely with the Internet.
- (3) 不可否认的,网络的广泛应用, 确实给我们的生活带来了很大的方便。

#### 2.4.1.2 Evidentiality stance markers

Evidentials primarily indicate sources of knowledge. They show the source of the information or the evidence of what the writer proposes, which offers the reader high reliability and objectivity. It refers to the speaker or writer's expressed attitudes towards knowledge, more specifically, to how they obtain and evaluate knowledge (Marin-Arrese et al., 2004). Chafe (1986) identifies three areas: the reliability of the information or the probability of its truth, the modes of knowing or the ways in which knowledge is acquired (belief, induction,

hearsay, deduction), and the sources of knowledge (language in the case of hearsay, evidence in the case of induction, hypothesis for deduction). The evidentiality stance markers in the present study can be illustrated in the following:

- (4) Tell you a *true story* first:...
- (5) *According to* a recent survey in some big cities in China, more and more graduates have been successful in the past at finding jobs online.
- (6) 根据媒体报道而今上网人数现已突破一亿。的确,尤其是最近两年,上 INTERNET 的人数突飞猛涨,就那我身边的同学来说吧,如果你在学校里找不着某人的话,一般他们都在网吧。

#### 2.4.1.3 Likelihood stance markers

This kind of stance markers shows a distance between what the writer proposes and what the real world is, both of which are not exactly the same but own some kind of similarity. It allows writers to open a discursive space where readers can dispute their interpretations. Authors use these markers in order to be polite or modest or even to be precise. By marking statements as provisional, they seek to involve readers as participants in their ratification, conveying deference, modesty, or respects for colleagues' views. This function can be illustrated in the following:

- (7) Through the Internet, the world *seems* smaller than ever.
- (8) *In many cases*, whether the final effect of Internet is good or bad to our life, one thing is certain that Internet itself is neither good nor bad.
- (9) 那么你几乎 [Epi-Lik] 可以坐在家中而知天下事,省却了出门买报纸、杂志之烦...

#### 2.4.2 Deontic stance markers

This kind of stance markers tells the readers about the speaker's attitude toward social information of

obligation, responsibility and permission. Unlike epistemic stance markers, deontic markers tell people what they should do in the world. This means that the use of deontics is tied with all sorts of social knowledge: the speaker's belief systems about morality and legality; and his estimations of power and authority (Saeed, 2003).

#### 2.4.2.1 Necessity/obligation stance markers

By necessity/obligation stance markers, the writer holds the idea that some kind of action or event is necessary or is a must to perform according to his belief or estimation. This kind of markers instructs the reader to perform an action or to see things in a way determined by the writer (Hyland, 2005). They are signaled mainly by a modal of obligation addressed to the reader as illustrated in the present study:

(10) The problem is we *should* consider how we can control it, so that it won't control us.

(11) 在网上我们不必去图书馆就能查找到我们所需要的资料。

#### 2.4.2.2 Permission/possibility/ability stance markers

By these markers, the writer predicates or supposes that some events is allowed or potentially capable, to happen. The paraphrase in terms of 'possible that' is an accurate one (Li, 2004). These markers suggest 'I give the permission', indicate 'Somebody has the ability', and express possibility in a more general sense (Palmer, 2001: 10, cited in Li, 2004). Take *might* for instance. It is normally a tentative alternative form to *may* with present time reference and merely indicates a little less certainty about the possibility (Quirk et al., 1985: 223, Palmer, 1990: 58, cited in Li, 2004). According to Palmer (2001:184), the most likely interpretations are, on the one hand, 'It is tentatively possible that it is not very important' and, on the other, 'It is possible that it would be nice'. Others can be exemplified as:

(12) It will make our life more convenient, draw our life and the world close. When we use computers more and more widely, I think Internet will be better and better to our life.

(13) 人们可以在网上购物，网上拍卖。甚至可以足不出户。通过网络在家中工作。

#### 2.4.2.3 Causation/effort stance markers

These markers show the results and consequences caused by something (usually the ‘internet’ in this study) or some actions. They also represent the efforts or the activities that need to take in order to get the required results according to the writer’s belief. To pointing out what kind of results will take place and how people should behave in the established setting has the potential to arouse readers’ awareness and involve them together as part of the present community, thus these markers will smooth the argumentation and help the writer better understood. See the following examples:

- (14) Internet offers us more useful information on one hand, and it provide us some unhealthy things on the other hand.
- (15) The problem is we should consider how we can control it, so that it won't control us.
- (16) 它节省了大量的时间和精力。
- (17) 网络缩短了人与人之间的距离,它使这个世界变得越来越小。

#### 2.4.3 Attitudinal stance markers

Attitudinal stance markers show explicitly what position the writer is taking and share the function with Hyland’s ‘Attitude markers’:

Attitude markers indicate the writer’s affective, rather than epistemic, attitude to propositions, conveying surprise, agreement, importance, frustration, and so on, rather than commitment... By signaling an assumption of shared attitudes, values and reactions to material, writers both express a position and pull readers into a conspiracy of agreement so that it can often be difficult to dispute these judgements. (Hyland, 2005: 108-109)

In argumentative essays, the writer makes every effort to persuade the readers or get through his attitude toward the topic, while unavoidably expressing his own attitude.

##### 2.4.3.1 Affect stance markers

Quite often, the writer involves his own feeling or emotion in the process of arguing, which is realized

by the emotional adjectives or verb, and rhetorical strategies such as metaphor and personification. This is a good way to involve the readers, shorten the distance and build solidarity between writers and readers, thus make the text much more human and convincing. E.g.

(18) I don't worry it may lose, when I write to my friend, he or she can receive it in a few seconds.

(19) I like Internet, so I think its is good to our life.

(20) 可见，我们大可不必再冲网络发泄我们对那些糟粕的怒气。

删除的内容:

#### 2.4.3.2 Evaluation stance markers

Writer's attitude toward the topic is naturally proposed based on his evaluation. By these markers, the writer forms an idea or opinion about the value of the topic, or estimates the nature, ability or quality of it. Through the evaluation stance markers the readers will get clear directly about what kind of attitude the writer holds. Evaluation is a must in arguing for the ground but too much evaluation may cause problems. This will be further recounted in the following sections. Evaluation stance markers can be illustrated in the following:

(21) *Worse than all, harmful* things lead to *bad* tastes and a *distorted* viewpoint towards human life and even poison one's mind.

(22) 总之，网络还是以它无可匹敌的优越性存在于我们社会中，它的前景将是一片光明的。

#### 2.4.4 Textual stance markers

The way of text organization reflects the writer's line of reasoning in how to involve and finally convince the readers. Textual stance markers if well designed will certainly contribute to writers' arguing for his ground. The necessity and significance of study on them has been pointed out by Hyland (2001):

In comparison with stance, the ways writers bring reader into the discourse to anticipate their possible objections and engage them in appropriate ways have been relatively neglected in the literature...This process of audience evaluation therefore assists writers in constructing an effective line of reasoning and, like stance options, also points to the ways language is related to specific

cultural and institutional contexts.

This study mainly investigates two types, or components, of textual stance markers, text connectives and illocution markers (Kopple, 1985, cited in Xu, 2007: 38) as a single category instead of two respective subcategories.

#### 2.4.4.1 Text connectives

They help readers to see how texts are organized, or in other words, to see how different parts of texts are connected to each other functionally and semantically. E.g.

(23) *First of all*, there are too much rubbish on the net.

(24) *Above all*, Internet is good for people's life.

Other text connectives are *therefore, so, meanwhile, however/but, first, second, as for, in regards to, as I mentioned*, and the like. As to the Chinese counterparts, they can be illustrated in the following:

(25) 然而, 如今社会上不乏有这种现象, 就是...

(26) 更多的是, 网络获取信息的效率是其他设备所无法逾越的。

#### 2.4.4.2 Illocution markers

Illocution markers make explicit to readers what speech or discourse act is being performed at certain points in the text.

(27) *In a word*, Internet supply the important security to our life. It ties all kind of activities of our life.

(28) *At this point*, it is a waste of time to read the information.

Other illocution markers are *for example, especially, to sum up, like* (means *for example*), *as* (means *for example*), *totally speaking*, to name a few. In Chinese, we have illocution markers as:

(29) 总而言之, 人们当今的生活已离不开网络, 一个神奇的新世界已随着鼠标发出的两声“咔嗒”声展现在我们的面前。

(30) 举个例子: 我们能通过电子邮件了解到不在身边的亲人、朋友的最新情况。不管它们在

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世界的任何角落。

Both text connectives and illocution markers are used to design the text to make it clear and logic at the textual level. They contribute to the argumentation and help fulfill the author's intention. This study will investigate them as a whole instead of separating them as two subtypes.



## Chapter 3 Research Design

### 3.1 Research questions

This study focuses on the ways of language use in which Chinese EFL learners evaluatively position themselves and readers in the argumentative essays. For the sake of argumentation, a variety of expressions were used to mark the writer's personal point of view or judgement. Based on the corpora, the stance expressions in both versions of essays will be investigated, making an attempt to answer two questions:

- (1) Whether the use of stance markers in English argumentative essays is correlated with that in Chinese essays of shared topic by the same group of EFL writers in general?
- (2) Whether the use of stance markers of the four categories in English argumentative essays is correlated with that in Chinese essays of shared topic by the same group of EFL writers? If so, to what extent, and how, are they correlated?

Following the description of the present corpora, the stance markers in both English and Chinese essays will be coded and calculated. The analysis of the frequency of occurrences will provide evidences for the correlation and if so, the follow-up analysis of the frequently used stance markers will show the extent and how they are correlated.

### 3.2 Data collection

#### 3.2.1 Description of the corpora

The study was carried out using two highly comparable corpora consisting of 122 pieces of Chinese EFL learners' English and Chinese argumentative essays of a shared topic 'Is the Internet a blessing or a curse?' Each learner was asked to write an English essay first and then the other one in Chinese. Totally 61 learners participated in writing the essays. Thus one corpus is composed of 61 pieces of argumentative English texts, and the other one 61 pieces of Chinese texts.

### 3.2.2 Identification of stance markers

Languages exhibit different degrees of grammaticalization in the expression of the range of attitudes towards knowledge. In English and Chinese, we find a whole range of lexical elements for stance marking, including modal verbs, adjectives, adverbs, nouns, verbs and phrases. However, the grammatical form which the stance takes will not be considered in the present study. When identifying them from the text, two principles should be abided by: first, the stance markers should play the role of contributing to the argumentation; second, they are all proposed around the topic.

#### 3.2.1.1 Prototypical stance markers vs. Peripheral stance markers

For one thing, some stance markers in these essays express core and central meaning. They are the explicit expressions of the writer's judgement, assessment or point of view, thus contributing to the argument directly. For another, the peripheral markers do not express core or central meaning. Readers have to figure out which stance the writer has taken, or what exact meaning he wants to express. Anyway, it is not that difficult to figure out the writer's real meaning in the essays of the present corpora because of their relatively low English proficiency. These have been proved in the pilot study.

To further elaborate their distinction, see the following examples:.

(1)一提起数字技术人们就会想到电脑，而一提到电脑，自然而然也就会想到网络。在21世纪这样一个信息高速发展的时代里，网络扮演着越来越重要的角色。

(2)首先，网络可以快捷而有效地为我们提供大量信息。如果我们为了工作或学习的需要而想查找某一方面的信息，我们就可以利用网络很方便地搜寻到尽可能丰富的资料。譬如，通过访问各种网站，阅读网上报纸，我们便可了解到最新的国际讯息，娱乐资讯，各国风土人情，奇闻趣事。应有尽有的缤纷内容可以极大地丰富我们的知识，开阔眼界。

Example (1) comes from the first paragraph of an essay. The moment readers see the phrases underlined, they will understand that the writer is taking a positive stance to *internet*. That is, the writer is in favor of the internet. In (2), it seems that the writer is beating about the bush. He is talking about the features of information or searching information, and its effect on people rather than directly about the *internet*. Therefore, it is the reader's responsibility to figure out what is the writer's real meaning underlying his utterance, or which stance

he has taken toward the topic. But after a second thought, it stands reasoning that all these words are quite related to the topic. They are expansions around the topic which is the central attention of this essay and contribute to the argumentation indirectly, thus being considered to be peripheral stance markers.

#### 3.2.1.2 Internet, people and the effect

Because of the augmentative nature of the essays and the given topic, a main idea threading through the essays is that how the internet has effect on people. Therefore, the three dimensions, internet, people, and the effect, will unavoidably be touched upon. In other words, we can identify the stance markers while keeping in mind ‘What kind of *effect* does *internet* have on *people*?’ Any words that tell about the three dimensions will be identified as stance markers. Take the above examples for instance again, the adjective 越来越重要的 tells about the internet itself, the adverb 很方便地 tells about people and the effect, 尽可能丰富的, 最新的, 应有尽有的, 缤纷 are descriptions of internet. However, there is no clear-cut distinction among these three dimensions. One single word or phrase may contain more than one dimension above. Anyway, as long as they are descriptions of the three dimensions, they can be identified as stance markers, either peripheral or prototypical.

#### 3.2.3 Annotation and classification

Once a word or a phrase is identified as a stance marker, it will be annotated manually with the help of *AnnoTool*, and classified into one of the nine subcategories summarized in Chapter 2. To make it consistent and reliable, the procedures of annotation and classification have been performed twice. Some improper (redundant or wrong) coding has been corrected and inconsistent classifications been avoided.

*AnnoTool* is user-friendly software which can annotate the target stance markers once the categories have been established and put into its configuration item by item (see the following picture).

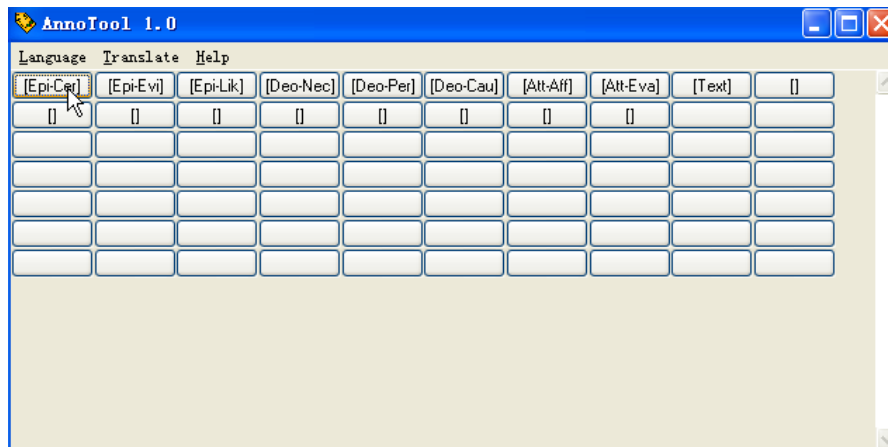


Figure 3.1 AnnoTool software for annotation of stance markers

### 3.3 Inter-annotator reliability

Evidently, the interpretation of a stance marker may vary from reader to reader. It is often impossible to decide whether a stance marker should be considered a real or a “conventional” marker. One cannot read the author’s mind. Therefore, the inter-annotator reliability has to be assured.

In the pilot study, the concept of stance has been discussed many times by Dr. Xu Jiajin and myself before it is finally defined. Although I proposed several versions of definitions according to my review of the previous literature and my own understanding of the present study, each of them had to be discussed by both of us until we finally reach agreement. What’s more, we had several rounds of discussion about in which circumstances and why each subcategory can be considered as a stance marker. The annotation of each text and classification of each stance marker has stood Dr. Xu’s careful examination. Once there is something wrong or opinions differ on a certain point, we will make it through discussions by referring to the literature. It was a long and sometimes depressing process, but productive and enriching.

## Chapter 4 Results and Discussions

### 4.1 Overall distribution of stance markers

After the classification, the frequencies of occurrences of each subcategory have been obtained by means of *Wordsmith*. The statistical software SPSS then help analyze the total and respective occurrences of stance markers of the four categories (i.e. epistemic, deontic, attitudinal and textual) to see if they are correlated. This can be seen from Table 4.1 as follows.

Table 4.1 Correlations of total occurrences of stance markers in English and Chinese writings

<b>Correlations</b>			
		All_En	All_Cn
All_En	Pearson Correlation	1	.592**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	61	61
All_Cn	Pearson Correlation	.592**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	61	61

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 4.1 shows that the stance markers in English and Chinese essays are significantly correlated with each other in general ( $r = .592$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). It seems that the use of stance markers in English writings, no matter what type of stance markers it is, epistemic or deontic, attitudinal or textual, is closely correlated with that in Chinese writings.

#### 4.2 Distributions of stance markers of each category

The correlations of each category from the analysis of SPSS, i.e. epistemic, deontic, attitudinal and textual, are shown as follows.

Table 4.2 Correlations of epistemic stance markers in English and Chinese writings

## Correlations

		ENtotal_Cer_ Evi_Lik	CNtotal_Cer_ Evi_Lik
ENtotal_Cer_Evi_Lik	Pearson Correlation	1	.306*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.017
	N	61	61
CNtotal_Cer_Evi_Lik	Pearson Correlation	.306*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.017	
	N	61	61

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.3 Correlations of deontic stance markers in English and Chinese writings

## Correlations

		ENtotal_Nec_ Per_Cau	CNtotalNec_ Per_Cau
ENtotal_Nec_Per_Cau	Pearson Correlation	1	.229
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.075
	N	61	61
CNtotalNec_Per_Cau	Pearson Correlation	.229	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.075	
	N	61	61

Table 4.4 Correlations of attitudinal stance markers in English and Chinese writings

## Correlations

		ENtotal_Aff_ Eva	CNtotalAff_ Eva
ENtotal_Aff_Eva	Pearson Correlation	1	.578**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	61	61
CNtotalAff_Eva	Pearson Correlation	.578**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	61	61

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.5 Correlations of textual stance markers in English and Chinese writings

**Correlations**

		ActualEnTex	ActualCnText
ActualEnTex	Pearson Correlation	1	.444**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	61	61
ActualCnText	Pearson Correlation	.444**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	61	61

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As is noted in Table 4.2, the use of epistemic stance markers in English corpus and in Chinese corpus is correlated. But the correlation is not much significant ( $r = .036$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This shows that when the Chinese EFL learners write English argumentative essays, the use of epistemic stance markers is indeed correlated with that when they write Chinese essays, although the correlation is not that statistically significant.

From Table 4.3 we may find the use of deontic stance markers in English writings is not correlated with that in Chinese writings ( $r = .229$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). They tend to use deontic stance markers independently in their English writings and Chinese writings.

Table 4.4 shows that the correlation is statistically significant between the uses of attitudinal stance markers in English writings and Chinese writings. That is, when EFL learners show their affect and evaluation on the topic under discussion in their English writings, they are likely to use the attitudinal stance markers in a quite similar fashion in Chinese writings ( $r = .578$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

As is seen from Table 4.5, the correlation of textual stance markers is significant between English and Chinese writings ( $r = .444$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). In other words, their way of organizing the argumentative essays or the flow of logic in arguing for the ground goes in a similar way.

#### **4.2.1 Distribution of epistemic stance markers**

Epistemic stance markers in the present study are intended to show meanings of certainty, evidentiality, or likelihood. Their correlations from the analysis of *Wordsmith* and SPSS are shown in the following.

Table 4.6 Correlations of certainty stance markers in English and Chinese writings

**Correlations**

		ActualEnCer	ActualCnCer
ActualEnCer	Pearson Correlation	1	.513**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	61	61
ActualCnCer	Pearson Correlation	.513**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	61	61

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.7 Correlations of evidentiality stance markers in English and Chinese writings

**Correlations**

		ActualEnEvi	ActualCnEvi
ActualEnEvi	Pearson Correlation	1	.199
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.124
	N	61	61
ActualCnEvi	Pearson Correlation	.199	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.124	
	N	61	61

Table 4.8 Correlations of likelihood stance markers in English and Chinese writings

**Correlations**

		ActualEnLik	ActualCnLik
ActualEnLik	Pearson Correlation	1	.161
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.215
	N	61	61
ActualCnLik	Pearson Correlation	.161	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.215	
	N	61	61



As is noted in the above tables, only the correlation of certainty stance markers in English writings and Chinese writings is quite significant ( $r = .513$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The correlations of evidentiality stance markers ( $r = .199$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) and likelihood stance markers ( $r = .161$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) do not have statistical significance. That is, Chinese EFL learners are likely to show their certainty about the proposition or some events in argumentative essays in a quite similar way in both English and Chinese writings. However, they tend to express evidentiality and likelihood independently.

#### 4.2.2 Distribution of deontic stance markers

The present study mainly investigates the deontic stance markers that show meanings of necessity/obligation, permission/possibility/ability, or causation/effort. Their correlations are shown in the following tables.

Table 4.9 Correlations of necessity stance markers in English and Chinese writings

		<b>Correlations</b>	
		ActualEnNec	ActualCnNec
ActualEnNec	Pearson Correlation	1	.207
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.109
	N	61	61
ActualCnNec	Pearson Correlation	.207	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.109	
	N	61	61

Table 4.10 Correlations of permission stance markers in English and Chinese writings

**Correlations**

		ActualEnPer	ActualCnPer
ActualEnPer	Pearson Correlation	1	.303*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.018
	N	61	61
ActualCnPer	Pearson Correlation	.303*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.018	
	N	61	61

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.11 Correlations of causation stance markers in English and Chinese writings

**Correlations**

		ActualEnCau	ActualCnCau
ActualEnCau	Pearson Correlation	1	.369**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	61	61
ActualCnCau	Pearson Correlation	.369**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	61	61

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the above tables, we may find the correlations of permission stance markers ( $r = .303$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and causation stance markers ( $r = .369$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) are significant, but except the correlation of necessity stance markers ( $r = .207$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) which does not have statistical significance. It seems that when Chinese EFL learners express the meanings of permission/possibility/ability, and causation/effort in English essays, they share the tendency of their Chinese essays. But this is not the case when they show necessity/obligation. They tend to use necessity/obligation stance markers independently in English writings and Chinese writings.

#### 4.2.3 Distribution of attitudinal stance markers

Attitudinal stance markers are of decisive importance in argumentative essays. They are the direct manifestation of the writers' attitude toward the topic. The present study divides attitudinal stance markers into

two subcategories, affect and evaluation. Their respective correlations are shown in the following.

Table 4.12 Correlations of affect stance markers in English and Chinese writings

		ActualEnAff	ActualCnAff
ActualEnAff	Pearson Correlation	1	.072
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.584
	N	61	61
ActualCnAff	Pearson Correlation	.072	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.584	
	N	61	61

Table 4.13 Correlations of evaluation stance markers in English and Chinese writings

		ActualEnEva	ActualCnEva
ActualEnEva	Pearson Correlation	1	.573**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	61	61
ActualCnEva	Pearson Correlation	.573**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	61	61

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above two tables tell that the correlation of affect stance markers does not have statistical significance ( $r = .072$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Chinese EFL learners tend to use affect stance markers independently in English argumentative essays and Chinese argumentative essays. But this is not the case in evaluation stance markers, which are most significantly correlated ( $r = .573$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The learners are likely to use evaluation stance markers in a same fashion in English and Chinese essays.

### 4.2.3 Distribution of textual stance markers

The textual stance markers manifest the way of argumentation, with the orientation of involving and persuading readers to the stance he has taken. In the present study, the category of textual stance markers, which is investigated as a whole rather than through respective subcategories, comes to be considerably correlated between the two versions of essays ( $r = .444, p < 0.01$ ). This may tell us that textual stance markers in both English and Chinese essays in the corpora function similarly and are applied without discrepancy.

## 4.3 Discussions

By using concordancing software WordSmith, we can get simply a list of all of the occurrences of a particular search term (the already coded stance markers in the present study) in a corpus, presented within the context that they occur in, usually a few words to the left and right of the search term, thus we are allowed to see in what kind of context the certain search term occurs.

### 4.3.1 Epistemic stance markers

Certainty stance markers, like 'Boosters' by Hyland (2005), 'can help writers to present their work with assurance while effecting interpersonal solidarity, setting the caution and self-effacement suggested by hedges assertion and involvement'. Epistemically, writers in the present study use stance markers in English with correlation to the use of stance markers in Chinese, especially when they express certainty.

From the frequent certainty stance markers (see Table 4.14), the most often used certainty stance markers in English writings are *really, as we all know, show/mean/prove/depends on, certainly/sure/true, etc.* These can be grouped into adverbials used in the initial place of the sentence, such as *generally speaking, generally, obviously, as we all know, of course, in fact, etc.*, verbs used as the predicates such as *show/mean/prove/depends on*, nouns(+ that complement clauses) such as *truth, fact, etc.*, adjectives(+that complement clauses) such as *true, certain, sure, etc.*, and other adverbs used flexibly in the sentences such as *clearly, really, certainly, usually, etc.* While in Chinese writings, the counterparts are 不可避免地/绝对/毫不例外/必/总, 当然, 确实, 证明/取决/意味着, etc. These can also be grouped into adverbials put in the beginning of the sentences such as 众所周知/ 我们每个人都知道, 毫不例外,

毫无疑问/不可否认, 当然, 其实, etc., verbs used as the predicates such as 证明/ 取决/ 意味着, etc., adverbs used in the beginning, middle or end of the sentences such as 根本/ 完全, 真正的/真的是/实在, 的确, etc. This can be illustrated with respective annotation forms by the following examples:

(1) Besides above, few people of course[Epi-Cer] are taking advantage of Internet to commit crimes.

(2) 其实[Epi-Cer], 任何事物都具有两面性, 网络也毫不例外外[Epi-Cer], 因此, 我们应用一分为二的观点来看网络。

By appeals to shared knowledge (Hyland, 2005), like the most frequently used as we all know, generally, 我们每个人都知道, 众所周知, etc., readers can only be brought to agree with the writer by building on some kind of implicit contract concerning what can be accepted, but often these constructions of solidarity involve explicit calls asking readers to identify with particular views. In doing so, writers are actually constructing readers by presupposing that they hold such beliefs, assigning to them a role in creating the argument, acknowledging their contribution while moving the focus of the discourse away from the writer to shape the role of the reader. This coincides with Hyland's (2005) research in that soft papers (in the present study linguistics) tend to use large amount of explicit appeals to collective understandings.

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Table 4.14 Frequent certainty stance markers in English and Chinese writings

EN		CN	
Stance markers	Freq.	Stance markers	Freq.
really	13	不可避免地/绝对/	
as we all know	13	不例外/必/总	24
show/mean/prove/depends on	13	当然	22
certainly/sure/true	11	确实	19
no doubt/undoubtedly/unquestionably	10	证明/取决/意味着	18
usually/generally speaking/Generally	8	毫无疑问/不可否认	17
clearly/obvious/obviously	8	其实	15
of course	7	的确	14
truth/fact/in fact	7	众所周知/有目共睹/	
always	5	我们每个人都知道	12
do/indeed	5	根本/完全	10
inevitable/inevitably	3	真正的/真的是/实在	10
no one can deny	3	自然	7
admittedly	3	不能不说/可以说/可谓	7
		显然/显而易见	5
		真理/事实	4
		一般情况下/总的说来/整个的来说	4

The frequently used markers impress us that the Chinese markers are to a strikingly high extent literally translated from English markers, or the other way around. What's more, they tend to use similar types of semantic stance, that is, the adverbials used in the initial place of the sentences, the verbs used as the predicates of the sentences, and some adverbs that can be used flexibly in the sentences.

#### 4.3.2 Deontic stance markers

##### 4.3.2.1 Permission stance markers

The meaning of permission is usually grammaticalized by modals such as *can*, *will*, *may*, *would*, *could*, and others like *able*, *unable*, *possible*, *enable*, etc. The modal *can* occurs most frequently. In most cases, *can* is used to indicate that someone has the possibility, or opportunity, or permission to do something, or that something is possible to take place. With its negative form or in questions, the meanings of doubt or surprise

about the possibility of something's being the case are expressed, as exemplified below:

- (3) ...it is a knowledge's highway. it can[Deo-Per] save, lots of time and money.

These verb phrases often occur with personal subjects, referring directly to the instructor's being permitted to do something. It also occurs with impersonal subjects serving the same general function of indicating possibility and ability. The modal *will* is the second often used marker to show permission and possibility. With the personal or impersonal subjects, it arouses future events or indicates intended facts about ability or capacity, or inevitable events that will happen or people will be experiencing, as in:

- (4) It will [Deo-Per]make or life more convenient, draw our life and the world close.

The modal *may* is the third most commonly used marker to indicate permission.

Although *can* and *may* tend to occur with inanimate subjects, they differ in their typical functions: the modal *can* often expresses permission, ability and possibility (resulting from the development of internet or referring to internet in present study) meanings, while *may* usually expresses possibility meanings.

In Chinese writings, writers usually use 可以, 会, 能/不能, 可能/能够, 也许, etc. (see Table 4.15 below) plus verbs to indicate the act or event potentially to happen or realize, in order to mark the meaning of permission. This can be shown from the following examples:

- (5)...那么你只需把书名打入计算机, 然后计算机就会[Deo-Per]很快帮助你找到你所要的书, 你只需1分钟的时间就可以[Deo-Per]找到你要的书...

- (6)只要正确发挥其积极作用, 控制其消极影响, 人们定能[Deo-Per]喜而无忧。

The sentences composed of modals with verbs referring to the possible actions (in this case often the results or effects arising from 'internet') thread through both English and Chinese writings, which help making the argumentation explicit to readers. From the table below it is easy to find the literal translation between the markers in English and Chinese.

Table 4.15 Frequent permission/possibility/ability stance markers in English and Chinese writings

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EN		CN	
Stance markers	Freq.	Stance markers	Freq.
Can/can't	338	可以	321
Will/won't	77	会	67
May/might	17	能/不能	52
Would	12	不可能/可能	15
Could	12	也许	11
Able/unable/abilities/enable	10	无法	5
Maybe	4	不一定	3
possible	2		

#### 4.3.2.2 Causation stance markers

Causation stance markers manifest the relations of cause and effect, and the effort or action that people take referring to the question under discussion (i.e. internet), and the results or consequences therefrom. In learners' English writings, these markers are grammaticalized in a wide range of verbs and nouns, indicating the cause or results related to people, or things people are concerned about (see Table 4.16 below). These can be illustrated by the following examples with annotation forms:

(7) This help[Deo-Cau] us save[Deo-Cau] a lot of time and money.

In a word, Internet can provide[Deo-Cau] us a more real description of an event and wider range of information we need.

(8)此外,网络还会威胁[Deo-Cau]到国家安全,导致[Deo-Cau]国家秘密、情报、军事秘密的泄露 [Deo-Cau]。

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Table 4.16 Frequent causation/effort stance markers in English and Chinese writings

EN		CN	
Stance markers	Freq.	Stance markers	Freq.
help/helps/helped	29	省/节省/	33
effect/influence/affectation	26	提供	23
save/saved/save	15	帮助/帮忙	23
provide/provides/provided	12	影响/后果/变化	20
waste/wastes/wasted	11	资源共享/共享	15
get in touch with/keep in touch with	9	导致/以至于/不至于	13



offer/offers	9	破坏/入侵/瘫痪	13
control	7	解决	9
lead to	6	费	8
commit	4	足不出户	8
take advantage of/make full use of	4	控制	7
		深入/渗入/渗透	6
		丰富	6

#### 4.3.3 Attitudinal stance markers

Attitudinal stance markers are of decisive significance in argumentative essays. On one hand, authors can argue for their ground, get through their opinions, involve and persuade readers as effectively as possible, and readers know what stance the author are taking and supporting, thus reading the authors' mind on the other hand. This may be the fundamental reason for the significant correlation between attitudinal markers in English writings and Chinese writings. In the present study, the correlation is especially high ( $r = .573, p < 0.01$ ) when writers show their evaluation on the topic (in this case the internet). The following table shows the frequently used evaluation markers.

Table 4.17 Frequent evaluation stance markers in English and Chinese writings

EN		CN	
Stance markers	Freq.	Stance markers	Freq.
Good/better	147	方便/便利	132
Convenient	54	欢喜/欢乐/喜	87
Bad	48	好处/利/益处/好的	83
Important	33	忧/忧愁	76
Advantages/disadvantages	25	坏/负面影响/不好	49
Useful	21	弊/弊端	24
Quickly/quicker/quick	20	色情/黄色	20
Great/greater	17	快捷/快	18
Fast/faster	16	不法之徒/犯罪	16
Easy/easier/easily	16	最新的	14
Agree	13	轻轻地/轻松地	12
Widely/wider/wide	11	暴力	10
Benefit	9	黑客	8
Wonderful	8		

The above table presents the literal translation between stance markers in English and Chinese writings. The most often used markers in English writings are *good/better*, which correspond to 欢喜/欢乐/喜, the second most often used marker in Chinese writings. In the same vein, the second frequently used marker *convenient* in

English writings corresponds to the most frequently used marker 方便/便利 in Chinese writings. Similar correlations can still be easily found in other frequently used markers, such as *quickly/quicker/quick, fast/faster* and 快捷/快, *advantages, useful, great, benefit* and 好处/益处/好的, etc.

#### 4.3.4 Textual stance markers

This kind of markers represents the way of argumentation and the underlying logic behind the reasoning. They are used to metadiscoursally guide readers through the discussion, steering them to another part of the text or to another text (Hyland, 2005). The fact that writers organize the compositions in a reasonable way will promote to add the force or power to involve or convince readers. The results show that writers in the present study organize their texts almost in the same way. This may to the most extent arise from the teaching in the class. Teachers are bound to tell students how to design an essay using connectives and markers to better convey message. For instance, *for one thing, for another, first, second*, are used in the beginning of a paragraph to arouse arguing or further reasoning; *but, however* is used to convey meaning opposite to the previous information; *all in all, therefore, so, thus* are the markers indicating the conclusions or claims after analysis; in the beginning part, the writer often proposes his own opinion toward the topic, tries to support in details in the later part and moves to conclude his argumentation and reclaim his stance in the last part. Not to our surprise, this is the same case in teaching of writing under Chinese context. This contributes to the easily found literal translation between the textual stance markers below.

Table 4.18 Frequent textual stance markers in English and Chinese writings

EN		CN	
Stance markers	Freq.	Stance markers	Freq.
So/thus/therefore/as a result	62	但/但是	65
First of all/most of all/above all	40	然而/却	29
But/however/on the contrary	36	所以/因此	28
For example/such as/for instance	25	比如/例如/像	27
Second	21	再次/其次/其二	23
All in all/to sum up/in a word/totally speaking	21	总之/总而言之/归根到底	20
In this way/then	20	首先/其一	17
Because/as a result of	15	以上/所有这些/这些	16
Especially	13	对...来说	15
Thirdly	11	因为/由于	14
Besides/in addition to	11	特别/尤其是	11
Although/though	10	除了/此外/还有/且	
All the above/from the above	7	撇开	11
What's more/furthermore	6	同时/与此同时	9
		一方面/另一方面	8
		由此可见/这样一来	8

#### 4.3.5 Summary

The use of stance markers is correlated between the two versions of writings when writers organize the texts and show the meanings of certainty epistemically, of permission and causation deontically, and of evaluation attitudinally. The follow-up analyzes through concordancing the frequently used stance markers show that the semantic stance types in two languages are quite similar on the one hand, and the lexical and phrasal items employed are literally translated to each other on the other hand. Considering that the priming effect has been deliberately ruled out in the present study, it may be safe to say that L1 transfer has actually had influence on writings in L2.

## Chapter 5 Conclusions

This study examined the interlanguage behavior of Chinese EFL learners, focusing on how they construct and mark their evaluative stance in argumentative essays. Based upon Biber et al.'s 'major semantic distinctions' (1999: 972-975), four categories of stance markers (i.e. epistemic, deontic, attitudinal, and textual) were identified and marked in both sets of texts, with 9 subcategories in total. The frequencies of occurrences in both versions of essays were compared to reveal the extent to which they are different or similar in constructing argumentation.

The important findings turn to be that the total use of stance markers are generally correlated ( $r = .592$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Specifically, learners tend to show the meaning of certainty or assertion in English argumentative writings epistemically, of causation and permission deontically, and of evaluation attitudinally in a much similar fashion with that in Chinese writings. What's more, they appeared to organize the English essays textually in a same logic with that in Chinese essays.

The problem comes out that learners of English engage too much personal attitude or evaluation in academic writing, and literal translation in the follow-up analysis can be easily found between the two versions. This is worth attention of both learners and teachers of English. L1 influence does take place in English writing. It is therefore important that the teaching of stance marking strategies be adjusted according to the customs of different languages. Students need to learn the vocabulary of 'their' field, including not only specialized terms but also which lexemes are generally used in the discourse of their discipline and which are not. Actions as to learners' unduly engagement also need to take, as is noted by Hyland,

Writers seek to offer a credible representation of themselves and their work by claiming solidarity with readers, evaluating their material and acknowledging alternative views, so that controlling the level of personality in a text becomes central to building a convincing argument (Hyland, 2005).

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