

Differences between Reader/Writer Responsible Languages Reflected in EFL Learners' Writing

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This paper reveals the common occurrence in many Chinese EFL student learners' English writings of a large number of sayings and parallel structures, and of diffusely organized rhetorical structures. Following the theory that the reader-responsible language differs in some way from the writer-responsible language, this study finds that the above mentioned phenomena in students' writing do reflect some differences between the two languages, in that Chinese written discourse is likely to require readers' background knowledge for understanding, while English written discourse tends to elaborate major propositions; Chinese rhetorical structures are often intuitively organized, while English structures are logically organized; and Chinese discourse appears to be expressive while English tends to be informative. From the view of cognitive linguistics, these differences are attributed to the choice of different cognitive patterns such as imagery, metaphor, perspective, salience, selection, and encyclopedic knowledge. It is the choice of cognitive patterns that opens up a new way for Chinese EFL learners to gain clarity about the pattern of the written discourse of the target language.

Contrastive studies between the languages of English and Chinese make up a field of research that has been drawing much interest from language researchers and teachers and has acquired remarkable achievements, which are of great benefit to English teaching in China. Research in this field has come from various perspectives like lexis, syntax, or pragmatics. The present study discusses differences at the written discourse level between Chinese EFL learners and English native speakers; the teaching practice of the present investigators witnesses certain phenomena in the English written form made by the Chinese EFL learners at the Harbin Institute of Technology and an obvious gap in writing between these students and English native speakers. To tackle the problems present in the writing of the Chinese EFL learners, the study turns to "reader- and writer-responsible languages" and some theories of cognitive linguistics for help.

It is generally believed that English is a parataxis-oriented language while Chinese is a hypotaxis-oriented one. Compared to apparent formal links adopted in English, Chinese, in most cases, may have covert structural clues in the author's mind, requiring the reader to explore cohesion in the discourse. Hinds (1987, p.141) refers to English as a "writer-responsible" language since the person primarily responsible for effective communication is the writer. However, Chinese has a different way of interpreting the communication process: It is the reader's responsibility to understand what the author intends to address. In the course of this study, the phenomena revealed in the students' writing, which are shown in the following charts, are found to be concerned with reader- and writer-responsible languages, and are interpreted from the perspective of cognitive linguistics in order to offer insight into the understanding of certain differences between Chinese and English.

Findings Obtained in the Samples

In order to identify the characteristic of the phenomena concerning the students' writing and probe into their substance, a study was carried out on the basis of the analysis of essays written by 74 Chinese non-English major doctoral candidates who were enrolled in the fall of 2005 at the Harbin Institute of Technology. For convenient analysis, 30 essays were picked out as samples concerning 5 topics. Each essay is about 300 words long. Ten essays were from the placement test for these students, 10 from classroom assignments, and 10 from the final exam. The findings in Table 1 reveal that 21 of 30 essays cover the four types of discourse organization. More than one-third of the essays are written with paragraphs illogically organized in semantics. That is, the main information of the paragraphs is conveyed diffusely or at will, but not centered upon one theme, consequently resulting in unclear discourse organization. The first example in Table 1 best illustrates this problem as the three paragraphs each find their own angles to deal with the topic of "change and challenge" but without smooth connection between them either in semantics or grammar devices like lexical means. The second type of discourse organization obtained from two-thirds of the samples is characteristic of unnaturally connected ideas as background information, which causes the unfolding of an incoherent discourse. Another two-thirds of the essays try to present coherent subtopics, certain of which are offered so casually as to cause digression. The last type of discourse organization embodied in less than two-thirds of the essays concerns ideas randomly delivered upon one topic, which also leads to digression. It is obvious that all four ways of presentation reveal that there are problems with discourse coherence in the students' writing, which is characteristic of diffuse discourse organization.

However, the study has also obtained some interesting findings (in Table 2) concerning rhetoric. Table 2 shows that 62.7% of the 30 essays involve the use of rhetorical means covering idiom, analogy, sayings, expressions of wisdom, and so on. As can be seen in the table, the concept of philosophy ranks highest in percentage, sayings next, analogy as well as concerned knowledge rank thirdly, and idiom ranks lastly. It should be admitted that most of the rhetorical devices are used effectively in the essays, except for only a small number of them which fail to perform their functions. In other words, in comparison, the student writers are better at making use of such rhetorical devices in discourse production than keeping discourse organization under control.

Another aspect of the findings is the appearance of certain textual patterns in the students' essays that contribute to the development of writing. An English language researcher, Michael McCarthy, believes that "certain patterns in text reoccur time and time again and become deeply ingrained as part of our cultural knowledge. "These patterns are manifested in regularly occurring functional relationships between bits of the text" (McCarthy, 2005, p. 28). Linguists like Michael Hoey, Eugene Winter, Michael McCarthy, and Ronald Carter have deeply researched textual patterns and believe that there may exist many textual patterns in English discourse, with "problem-solution," "general-particular," "general-example," "preview-detail," "claim-counterclaim," and "question-answer" being the most common patterns. To recognize these patterns, the study analyzed another 30 passages written by English native speakers, which are randomly chosen from a book named "English Reading Skills and Practice" (Liu, 2002). In addition to the confirmation of the named patterns, two

more new patterns, cause-effect and comparison-contrast, are identified as the byproducts. For the appearance of the patterns in the Chinese students' essays and their contribution to discourse organization, the present study has probed into the same samples again and arrived at some results presented in Figure 1.

This figure shows that the most frequent appearance of the eight patterns falls on general-specific and comparison-contrast, which implies that the student writers are unaware that they employ the two patterns for flow of semantics. Besides, five other patterns – general-example, preview-detail, claim-counterclaim, problem-solution, and question-answer – also make their appearance in very low frequency. This means that only a small number of writers happen to try these patterns in producing smooth discourse. However, the pattern of cause-effect takes no position in the essays at all. Another angle of addressing the patterns also verifies the contribution of the textual patterns to logical discourse organization, which is represented by the percentage numbers of the frequency of the patterns in the essays.

As can be seen from Table 3, more than two-thirds of the essays involve the use of textual patterns. This indicates that most student writers attempt to organize coherent discourse by making use, unawares, of certain patterns.

Reader and Writer Responsible Languages

The findings of the study can be boiled down to three categories: diffuse discourse organization, which results from the four types of unsmooth discourse organization, effective application of rhetorical devices for discourse production, and logical discourse organization, which is based on the appearance of textual patterns. Further study reveals that diffuse discourse organization actually takes the characteristic of what Hinds (1990, p. 98) calls a "delayed introduction of purpose," which he often finds in oriental writings. "This delayed introduction of purpose makes the writing appear incoherent to the English-speaking reader" (Connor, 2005, p. 20). In regard to the frequent appearance of rhetorical means, the writers seem to involve much contextual knowledge in discourse production. In fact, the two issues are found to address the "relative reader/writer responsibility" (Ibid). This relative reader/writer responsibility is understood as the responsibility for ensuring successful communication between the writer and the reader. The term of relative responsibility suggests that the writer and the reader assume different degrees of responsibility for their communication. Moreover, this reader/writer responsibility varies across natural languages (Wang, 2002, p. 315).

In a writer-responsible language, the writer assumes very heavy responsibility, and the presumption of shared knowledge is severely constrained. In this case, the communication via writing starts with the writer's belief that the reader is equipped with the least background knowledge of the topic as well as the writing convention. In consequence, it is the responsibility of the writer to provide maximum assistance for the reader, which may include excessive guidance to the structure of the text through the use of transitional phrases, patient explanation of many slightly puzzling propositions, and direct and clear organization of the text. In this sense, "the rhetorical form preferred in the West places the expository burden chiefly on the writer" (Connor, 2005, p. 20).

In comparison, Chinese is a typical reader-responsible language. In Chinese, heavy

Table 1: Four types of discourse organization and the effect

Type	Example	Effect
paragraphs illogically organized in meaning n=4 13.3%	As we all know, we are living in the midst of accelerating change and complexity... <i>I like change and challenge</i> as many of younger born in 1980s. <i>Today we can meet changes in anywhere, in technology, communities...the change and challenge just give us a chance</i> <i>We are common people, and also are afraid of losing face, failure and injury...</i> So welcome challenge is the most advisable.	incoherent discourse
background information with heterogeneous ideas leading to similar delivery of body information n=6 20%	<i>In China, there are great changes in the recent 20 years.</i> For example, one of the changes in the development of cities, towns and rural areas is remarkable. <i>There are a lot of buildings</i> in towns instead of clay houses. <i>But we also find that there are a lot of problems</i> in the great changes. <i>For instance, pollution, disease, disaster</i> and so on. In my opinion, <i>the great changes are good to our Chinese people</i> , but <i>we also get many difficulties</i> in dealing with the problems.	discourse unfolded incoherently
subtopics disconnected in meaning n=6 20%	...Our life is completely different from that in all periods of history. The people's living and communicating changes a lot, which contains good and bad ones. The better life is taken to people by modern gadgetry. <i>It's so convenient that you can sit down in your sofa getting any information which you want.</i>	digression
ideas on one topic being inconsistent in meaning n=5 16.7%	These gadgets change our life. <i>We have more and more gadgets.</i> At holiday, take digital camera to take photos with our family.	digression

Note: In Table 1, "n" refers to the number of the essays in which the problem arises, and the percentage number refers to the rate the problem takes in the 30 essays. This also applies to Table 2.

Table 2: Types and effect of rhetorical means

Types	Example	Effect
idiom n=1 3%	Urbanization has its <i>double-face</i> character.	valid
analogy n=4 13%	The city has become <i>the cancer of the earth</i> and we should not develop <i>the cancer</i> .	completely denying cities' functions
	Everyone is <i>the cell of the society</i> . Change of the society is driven by all the people.	valid
sayings and expressions of wisdom n=5 16.7%	No pains, no gains.	valid
	No change, no improvement.	
	One coin has two sides.	
concept of philosophy n=7 23%	Everything has its opposite side.	valid in the individual essay, but sounding monotonous on the whole
	Everything has two sides.	
	All things have two sides.	
	Anything has two sides.	
concerned knowledge n=2 7%	Urbanization gives people more free time to enjoy the fruits of modern science. They need not worry about "the weather of tomorrow."	improper choice
	Thirdly, the interview is an effective way to realize the so-called "two-sided selection."	valid

responsibility is placed on the reader to understand what is said, and a very high degree of shared contextual knowledge is assumed. Chinese writers entrust readers with good knowledge of the background of the topic, and therefore much is said without clear explanation in reference to the reader's potential for comprehension (Wang, 2002), as is reflected in forms of diffuse discourse organization and rhetorical means in the Chinese students' writings.

Intuitive Discourse Organization vs. Logical Discourse Organization

The characteristic of diffuse discourse organization shown in Table 1 goes well with that of the reader-responsible language in that the discourse is organized intuitively. According to Jia, intuitive organization means "addressing situations not by means of reasoning or study but by means of unawareness with the emphasis on the overall coverage of

Figure 1: Frequency of the 8 textual patterns in 30 essays

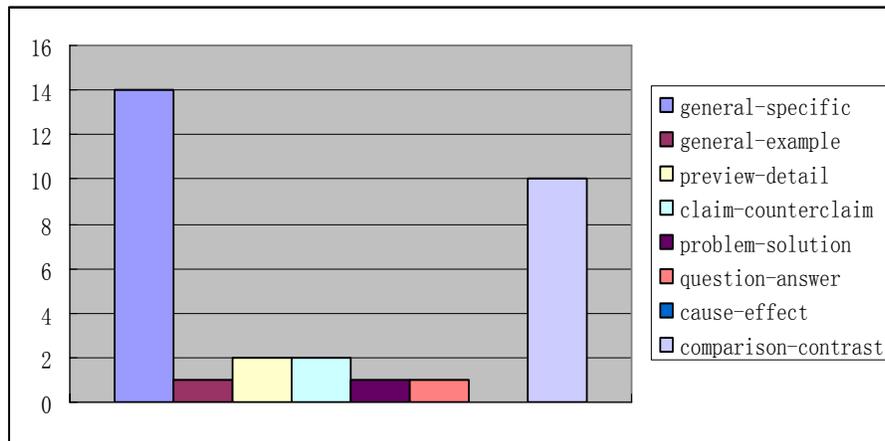


Table 3: Frequency percentage of the patterns in the essays

Textual patterns	Number of essays	Percentage number
0	8	26.7%
1	13	43.3%
2 or more	9	30%

situations so as to gradually get to the substance” (Jia, 2000, p. 99); thereby, it’s easy to arrive at the feature of intuitive discourse organization as “understandable but not explicit, inspirational but not logical, and rich in imagery but lacking in strict structures” (Wang et al., 2004, p. 493). This explains why the Chinese students deliver information at random or organize the discourse diffusely, why “Chinese writers tend to permit a rather great degree of digression” (Wang, 2002, p. 323), and why “Chinese writers tend to suggest or be indirect” (Connor, 2005, p. 40). That is to say, the Chinese language is a reader-responsible language, and Chinese writings demand much of the reader’s decoding capacity.

By contrast, English writers perceive writing as a task of solving problems and therefore, they are in a position of providing sufficient analysis and reasoning or rather, writers assume much responsibility in paragraphing, as they are convinced that all information is centered on the main idea which should be highlighted at the beginning of the paragraph, and irrelevant information of any kind is regarded as harmful to the unity of the discourse. Thus, all sentences can hold to each other on the basis of the semantic information they decode and the logical relation that ties them together. This characteristic is clearly backed up by the appearance of the textual patterns for logical discourse organization which are shown in the Chinese students’ essays, and is also easily found in writings by English native speakers. For example, a paragraph from the article “As More Crime Invades the Shopping Malls” can illustrate the feature of logical discourse organization:

- (1) Criminals are finding a lucrative stamping ground in the sprawling emporiums that dot U.S. suburbs.
- (2) “Malls are like great big jars of honey,” says

Police Chief Joseph Delaney of Paramus. (3) “Lots of bees come buzzing in, stingers at the ready.” (4) Paramus, a New York City suburb of 26,000 whose six malls draw nearly 200,000 people on a typical Saturday, reported 8.9 million dollars in shopping-center crime losses last year. (5) It is crimes of violence that are causing the most alarm. (6) Vast parking lots and mazes of stores offer good working conditions for criminals. (7) Victims and booty are readily accessible, escape routes plentiful (Tan, 2000, p.15).

As “Western patterns of thinking are characteristic of rationality, analysis, empiricism, preciseness, and systematization” (Wang et al., 2004, p. 493), English writers often resort to signposting means for logical discourse development such as “cause and effect, comparison, addition, emphasis, concession, exemplification, conclusion, sequencing, and contrast” (Jia, 2000, p. 397). In the sample paragraph, the writer apparently takes cause-effect as the means of development, since the serious problem of robbery at American emporiums is put forward in the first place as the effect, followed by the analysis of the causes that “malls are like great big jars of honey,” for which “lots of bees come buzzing in, stingers at the ready.” The effect is also backed up with the economic loss of “8.9 million dollars” from the official statistics. And the implication to solve the problem is to watch out for “crimes of violence.” Still unsatisfied at the cause for effect, the writer offers “vast parking lots,” “mazes of stores,” “victims and booty,” and “escape routes plentiful” as additional causes for the problem. Admittedly, the writer has made good use of logical writing techniques such as cause, effect, exemplification, problem, solution, and addition to offer the reader easy access to the information.

Reliance on Background Knowledge vs. Elaboration of the Main Proposition

Another characteristic of a reader-responsible language is reliance on background knowledge. It is already demonstrated in the students’ essays where concerned knowledge is involved like “the weather of tomorrow” and “two-sided selection.” In order to understand what the terms refer to, the reader has to possess the knowledge that “the weather of tomorrow” is usually used to mean the uncertainty of the future, and that the term “two-sided selection” is popular with the market of human resources and refers to the selection made by the two sides: employer and employee.

In reality, such features of reader responsibility are easily picked out in Chinese writings. For another example, in a book named “Temptation of Circle,” the writer describes women in such a way:

时至今日，女人再不用以帛缠足，在六尺高的金制莲花上跳舞；也不会有“楚王好细腰，宫中多饿死”的惨剧发生；至于“行莫回头，语莫掀唇，出必掩面，窥必藏形”，若有女人如此，她准是有了毛病、这般藏头露尾、偷偷摸摸，说话不张嘴、人还以为她回腹语术、让人吓一大跳。(Han, 1997, p. 161)

The paragraph roughly means that “at present, females no longer need to get their feet

wrapped in layers of cloth to prevent them from growing big so as to keep them in a pretty size, since they don't have to dance on the six-foot high gold lotus. No tragedies take place any more like the cases in which many concubines died of hunger because the emperor of the Chu Dynasty liked narrow-waisted women. Modern people would think them weird or ill if females walked without turning their heads, spoke without showing their teeth, went out in public but covered their faces, and looked but hid their eyes. People would be startled at such behavior."

It is obvious that the writer of the paragraph makes use of some practices observed by women in the past and an ancient story (as shown in the italicized form) to reveal a striking contrast between ancient and modern women in behavior and manners, since the writer assumes that the reader has sufficient background knowledge to share what is conveyed here.

On the other hand, in a writer-responsible language like English, readers expect that the main proposition should be provided in detail by the writer or that it should be clearly defined so that the paragraph can be easily understood. In this sense, the article "As More Crime Invades the Shopping Malls" also serves as a good example. From the perspective of the main proposition, the writer elaborates the key elements, "criminals," "lucrative," "emporiums," and "U.S. suburbs" as the evidence for truth. Therefore, "the sprawling emporiums" are "a lucrative stamping ground" because they are like "great big jars of honey," which draw "nearly 200,000 people on a typical Saturday," and are full of "accessible victims and booty." "Criminals" are described as "bees" "buzzing in" with "stingers at the ready," and as the cause of the loss of "8.9 million dollars," and as the sources of "crimes of violence." As for "U.S suburbs," the writer offers "Paramus" as an example with extra information like its population of "26,000," the number of shopping malls, and the geographical formation of "vast parking lots and mazes of stores." For being "lucrative" to "criminals," the writer explains that "victims and booty are readily accessible." Undoubtedly, the writer establishes a clarified paragraph to the reader from the angle of elaborating evidence to support the main proposition.

Expressive Discourse Organization vs. Informative Discourse Organization

According to Connor (2005, p. 38), "Chinese rhetoric lacks argumentative coherence because of its reliance on appeals to history, tradition, and authority and its frequent references to historical and religious texts as well as proverbs." Moreover, Chinese writers "write subjectively to a larger degree than English writers as if the function of Chinese writing is primarily expressive or poetic rather than informative or persuasive" (Wang, 2002, p. 315). It is true that one of the functions of Chinese rhetoric rests on expressiveness, which is the result of thinking in terms of form and image and is realized by imagery, poetry, legend, fable, etc. This can be seen in the essays, where forty percent of the 30 Chinese student writers cover rhetorical means from philosophical concepts, idioms, sayings, and allusions to concerned knowledge. In addition, the Chinese paragraph from "Temptation of Circle" is another good illustration of expressive discourse organization, since it is full of historical references, tradition, and idioms. In Matalene's belief, "these phrases, sayings, and allusions are used to ornament and enliven discourse" (1985, p. 789). Generally, Chinese writers seem socially and academically closer to their readers because they assume much more connivance from the readers about their writing" (Wang, 2002, p. 315).

In striking contrast with the Chinese expressive discourse organization, English discourse seeks more information in verbal codes, since the writer of a writer-responsible language tends to be quite aware of his reader and, because of this, finds it essential to analyze the needs and specific knowledge of his reader. As a result, the code itself delivers the maximum information, which is already proved in terms of elaboration of the main proposition in the article "As More Crime Invades the Shopping Malls." From another angle, the large amount of information that this paragraph conveys is realized by means of a propositional network. "Propositional network refers to the simpler propositions on which the truth of the main proposition rests" (Richards, 2000, p. 372). In the topic sentence of the paragraph: "Criminals are finding a lucrative stamping ground in the sprawling emporiums that dot U.S. suburbs," eight simpler propositions are raised, followed by detailed and additional explanations. The simpler propositions are: 1) there are criminals, 2) there is a stamping ground, 3) there are sprawling emporiums, 4) there are U.S. suburbs, 5) a stamping ground is lucrative, 6) the stamping ground is in the sprawling emporiums, 7) the sprawling emporiums dot U.S. suburbs, and 8) criminals find a stamping ground. In order to make clear to the reader how sprawling emporiums are attractive to criminals, the writer uses the comments of Police Chief Joseph Delaney of Paramus as the convincing proof. In offering evidence to the main proposition, the writer, besides supplying the corresponding information like "Paramus" for "suburbs," "six malls" for "the sprawling emporiums," provides additional information like the population of Paramus, the number of customers at the six malls, the time in which violence takes place, and the result of violence. Even though the cause of losses is quite clear in context, the writer again assures the reader of crimes of violence as the cause. Before ending, the writer again adds more information to the reason why sprawling emporiums are fit for robbery, for fear that the discourse is still ambiguous.

Moreover, the high degree of informativeness can be identified by what Beaugrande and Dressler call "contextual probability" (quoted in Liu, 2000, p. 48), meaning that a sequence can be made up of constituents that are easily accepted in syntax but relatively difficult in interpretation or special in usage. In other words, it is normal in cohesion or in grammar, but unique in coherence or in ideation (Ibid). The same paragraph mentioned above also bears this feature. For example, "lucrative stamping ground" is used instead of "the favorite place for criminals to make money"; allusions like "jars of honey," "bees buzzing in," and "stingers at the ready" are used instead of plain explanations like "the stores are full of goods so as to attract criminals"; furthermore, the expressions of "mazes of stores" and "victims and booty" are chosen instead of "many stores adjacent to each other" and "customers and goods which are available." It is obvious that the ideation employed in this paragraph greatly increases informativeness.

Discussion at the Dimension of Cognitive Linguistics

Generally, cognitive linguistics mainly focuses its research on lexicon and syntax. However, the American linguist Ronald Langacker tries analyzing discourse with approaches from cognitive linguistics. He points out that "cognitive linguistics has been concerned with relationships between language structures and interactivities, that there is a natural and intrinsic relationship between cognitive linguistics and discourse analysis, and that discourse can be well interpreted within the theoretical framework of cognitive linguistics" (Wang,

2003, p. 84). Accordingly, cognitive linguistics cannot only contribute to the recognition of relationships between words and sentences, but can dynamically analyze them, as well as the entire discourse, with approaches like interactive patterns between mind and discourse, cognitive world, encyclopedic knowledge, and contextual framework, thereby the characteristics of reader- and writer-responsible languages discussed above can also be made explicit.

Correspondences and Encyclopedic Knowledge

As cognitive linguistics places great emphasis on the role of human knowledge and embodiment in the application of language, it can be said that the diffuse discourse organization in the writings of Chinese EFL learners is the reflection of the intuitive mind in the application of language, and can be interpreted at the angle of “correspondences.” Langacker (2005) views correspondences as:

a record of the distortions engendered by dissociating an integrated scene into separately symbolized chunks of conceptual content, and more specifically, by the occurrence in separate components of what is really understood to be the same entity. It is equally valid to regard correspondences as indications of the overlap between two conceptions that permits their integration to form a coherent scene. Still another approach is to treat correspondences as instructions for assembling a composite structure from its components, i.e. as instructions for superimposing the specifications of corresponding substructures. (p. 278)

Whether Langacker interprets correspondences from the perspective of an integrated scene or a composite structure, the quality of correspondences lies in seemingly putting an entire whole into meaningful pieces but actually forming a coherent whole with separate concerned meaningful parts. Apparently, this quality agrees with the feature of the Chinese intuitive discourse organization, which seems to get to the substance by a wide coverage of situations; however, this wide coverage of situations is composed of “separately symbolized chunks of conceptual content,” and intends to form a coherent discourse.

On the other hand, the rhetorical means that appear in the Chinese students’ writings should be taken as devices of semantic extension and be attributed to the property of “encyclopedic knowledge.” According to Langacker (2005, p. 157), “semantic extension is invariably based on some perception of similarity or association between the original sense of an expression and its extended sense. Observe that the basis for extension is not limited to core specifications that would be appropriate in a dictionary entry, but may lie at any distance from this core within our encyclopedic knowledge of the designated entity.” Undoubtedly, encyclopedic knowledge best illustrates the function of idioms, sayings, philosophical concepts, legends, allusions, etc. in discourse as carrying contextual meaning, which Langacker believes to be “the richly detailed conceptualization that constitutes our full understanding of the expression in context and includes all relevant aspects of the conceived situation. Contextual meaning is clearly encyclopedic in scope” (Ibid). The analysis of these cognitive approaches indicates that the theories of correspondences and encyclopedic knowledge have been playing an important role in Chinese writing.

Salience and Specificity

The features of logical discourse organization, elaboration of the main proposition, and informative discourse organization summarized in this paper as those of the writer-responsible language actually conform to Langacker's belief that different images of the same scene are determined by parameters such as salience and specificity. In Langacker's understanding, salience is aimed at a focus, but "it is not claimed that a single viewpoint specification is sufficient to characterize an object. A family of such specifications is probably necessary" (Langacker, 2005, p. 123). In view of this, the textual patterns present in the students' writings or logical discourse organization are just the cases in which different focuses of the same scene, or rather, specific perspectives, viewpoints, and positions concerning the same object are made prominent one by one by the writer for the clarification of an object.

In reality, salience in such a way is most likely used to reveal a "level of specificity," which is "the fineness of detail with which something is characterized; the notion always pertains to precision of specification along one or more parameters, to the degree of restriction imposed on possible values along these parameters" (Langacker, 2005, p. 132). Consequently, a byproduct is obtained, that is, informativeness. The passage of "As More Crime Invades the Shopping Malls" is a good illustration for this, as "big jars of honey" are of a precision of specification for the parameter of "malls"; "lots of bees" for the perspective of "criminals"; and the information carried in the sentence "Paramus, a New York City suburb of 26,000 whose six malls draw nearly 200,000 people on a typical Saturday, reported 8.9 million dollars in shopping-center crime losses last year" is the instantiation relative to abstract information carried in the topic sentence "Criminals are finding a lucrative stamping ground in the sprawling emporiums that dot U.S. suburbs."

It can be concluded that different people as well as different nations may perceive things at different angles, which naturally results in different ways of construing the world. This explains why, for the same world or the same event, different nations have their own ways of conceptualization, and their own lexical means of definition, and why a reader-responsible language differs from a writer-responsible language. In recognition of certain differences between reader- and writer-responsible languages, and different ways of cognition, a path to effective writing in English can hopefully be opened up to Chinese EFL learners.

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