INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of this book is to give teachers of writing, especially those involved in the teaching of English academic writing to Chinese students, an introduction to key stages in the development of Chinese rhetoric. The book will make Western readers familiar with Chinese rhetorical styles and Chinese scholarship on Chinese rhetoric.

Chinese rhetoric is a wide-ranging field with a history of several thousand years. This book is concerned with what might be loosely termed non-fiction or "academic" writing and the writing of essays. It therefore does not deal in any depth with the Chinese poetic tradition. While the focus is on writing, principles of persuasion in Chinese oral texts will also be considered.

Why is such a book necessary? For some forty years, it has been customary to argue that Chinese students' academic writing in English has been influenced by traditional Chinese writing styles. Many scholars, both Chinese and Western, have long argued that Chinese rhetorical norms and traditions are somehow unique to Chinese and that these, when transferred into academic writing in English are a source of negative interference (cf. Kaplan; Jia and Cheng; J. Chen). The underlying assumption is that the English writing of these students is, in some way, inappropriate to academic writing in English. The view is that Chinese students bring with them culturally nuanced rhetorical baggage that is uniquely Chinese and hard to eradicate.

In this book we shall argue that these views stem from an essentially monolingual and Anglo-centric view of writing and that, given the exponential increase in the international learning and use of English, there needs to be a radical reassessment of what English is in today's world. It is no more than a truism to point out that there are many more speakers of English who have learned it as an additional language and use it, either as a new variety of English, such as Indian English, or as a lingua franca, than there are native speakers of it. Kingsley Bolton has estimated that there are some 800 million users of English in Asia alone. In China, it has been estimated that there are currently more than 350 million people who are learning English (Xu, *Chinese English*). This means

that there are more speakers of English in China than the total population of the United States. If we also consider the number of English speakers in Europe and other parts of the world–bearing in mind, for example, that when people who belong to the so-called BRIC group, which comprises Brazil, Russia, India and, China normally communicate through English—it becomes clear that English is now a language far more used by multilinguals than by native speakers.

To date, the native speaker and Anglo-American rhetorical styles have remained the benchmarks against which other English users are measured, although many scholars have argued for some years that this needs to change. John Swales suggested that it was time "to reflect soberly on Anglophone gate-keeping practices" (380) and scholars such as Ammon have called for a new culture of communication which respects the non-native speaker (114). Canagarajah (*A Geopolitics of Academic Writing*) has pointed out that, in this age of globalisation, we need to be able to accommodate and respect people who are moving between different cultural and rhetorical traditions. Likewise we shall here argue that, in today's globalising and multilingual world "we need to be sensitive to rhetorical traditions and practices in different linguistic and ethnic communities" (You, Writing, 178).

We shall describe the Chinese rhetorical tradition in order to illustrate its rich complexity and show that Chinese writing styles are dynamic and change for the same types of reasons and in the same types of ways as writing styles in other great literate cultures. In particular, we will argue that the socio-political context is a main driver of change in Chinese writing styles. To argue, therefore, that Chinese students bring with them culturally determined and virtually ineradicable rhetorical traditions to their English writing is to overlook the contextual influences of writing styles and the rich and complex Chinese rhetorical tradition. It also overlooks the value of different rhetorical traditions. The aim of the teacher of writing should not be to gut the English of the Chinese writer of local cultural and rhetorical influences, but to look to see how these can be combined with other rhetorical "norms" to form innovative and effective texts. This will require the writing teacher to have some knowledge of Chinese rhetorical practices. This book will provide writing teachers with a reference to the ways Chinese writing styles have developed over time and a clear understanding of how writing styles change and develop.

An example may help illustrate this point. Chapter 3 includes a summary of the *Wen Ze* or *Rules of Writing*. This was written by Chen Kui in 1170. The *Wen Ze* is an important text, being commonly referred to by Chinese scholars as China's first systematic account of rhetoric (Zheng; Zong and Li; Zhou).

The rhetorical principles that *The Rules of Writing* promulgates include the importance of using clear and straightforward language, the primacy of

meaning over form, and ways of arranging argument. These principles were, in large part, determined by the needs of the time (Kirkpatrick, "China's First Systematic Account"). *The Rules of Writing* was written at a time of great change in China. Two changes were of particular importance. The first was the development of printing (Cherniack). This made texts much more accessible and affordable than they had been before. The second change was that the Song dynasty sought to increase dramatically the number of men entering the civil service through merit, as opposed to privilege (Chaffee). The role of the civil service exams in ensuring only men of merit entered the civil service increased significantly. We have argued that *The Rules of Writing* was written as a guide for men who wanted to enter a career in the civil service and who needed to pass the strict series of civil service exams in order to do so. As such, it can be compared with contemporary "Anglo" texts on rhetoric that aim to provide university students with advice on the correct way of writing academic texts.

This book also aims to encourage debate about the "primacy" of Anglo-American rhetoric. While it is indisputable that English is the primary language of research and publication and that this English is a specialised variety based on Anglo-American rhetorical principles, this encourages a one-way flow of ideas. We need to create an environment in which the ideas of others can flow through to the Anglo-American world. We need to debate the proposition that ideas and research which do not conform to Anglo-American rhetorical principles might be presented and published in varieties of English (cf. Canagarajah; Swales). As the world of education becomes increasingly international, the more we know about the rhetorical traditions of different cultures the better. And, of course, as China becomes increasingly powerful and influential, the world needs to understand Chinese culture; and we cannot understand China "without also understanding what it says, how it says things, how its current discourses are connected with its past and those of other cultures" (Shi-Xu 224–45).

The book also aims to make a contribution to the debate over the link between language, thought and culture. Chinese has commonly been seen as a prime exemplar of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, as scholars (cf. Graham, *The Disputers of the Dao*) have argued that the Chinese language determines Chinese ways of thinking and seeing the world. This view has recently been challenged (Wardy), and the book will provide further evidence that it is the socio-political context, rather than underlying thought patterns determined or influenced by language, which provides the major impetus for the arrangement of texts and argument.

The two authors of this book have both had to cross the Anglo-Chinese rhetorical divide. Xu is originally from Liaoning Province in the northeast of China and did his undergraduate and master's degrees at a leading university

in Beijing, where he also taught English and Applied Linguistics. One of the courses he taught was "English for Academic Purpose (EAP): Academic Writing" to engineering master's and doctoral students. Throughout the course, he was constantly aware of the cultural differences in the writing of his students in relation to the Anglo-American academic texts he had read in his own research field. Some differences could be as subtle as the use of "we" instead of "I" for single-authored essays and papers by his students. However, while he was aware of the cultural differences, he still became a "victim" of the rules of Anglo-American writing discourse. For example, his first submission for a conference in Australia was rejected partly because of the "inconsistent use of single and double quotation marks." Although his submission was eventually published in the online version of the proceedings, he came to realise the different conventions even in the use of punctuation marks between Chinese and English for academic writing. Xu did his doctoral study at a university in Australia, then worked there before spending five years teaching in the department of English at the Hong Kong Institute of Education, where he taught applied linguistics courses to language and education major students, and led a project on English academic writing (cf. Xu et al. *Academic Writing*). He is now lecturing in world Englishes at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia.

As far as Xu's experience of learning to write Chinese is concerned, he went through local Chinese primary and secondary schools in which he acquired Chinese literacy (reading and writing) and studied both modern Chinese texts and selected Classical Chinese texts. He achieved high grades in both Chinese and English in the *gao kao* (College Entrance Examination) in 1985. As a result, he majored in English education and Chinese English translation for his BA degree. Apart from the English language course, he also took compulsory Chinese courses (primarily reading and writing) in the first two years of his BA degree studies. The textbook for the Chinese course was entitled *Daxue Yuwen* (University Chinese). This contained classical Chinese texts, for example, selected verses from the Book of Poetry, and prose from the Tang and Song dynasties. There were also contemporary Chinese texts, for example, by Lu Xun, and Zhu Ziqing, and translated texts of overseas authors, for example, Anton Chekhov, Mark Twain, Nikolai Gogol, and William Shakespeare. The Chinese lecturer would periodically assign some writing tasks based on the genres of the reading texts. Writing was only tested through summative assessments during the course, while examinations which tested knowledge of Chinese comprised the major formative assessments. We provide a summary of contemporary Chinese writing textbooks such as *Daxue Yuwen* in Chapter 10.

Kirkpatrick did his first degree in Chinese Studies at the University of Leeds before doing a postgraduate diploma in Chinese literature at Fudan University

in Shanghai, which is where he was made aware of different rhetorical requirements of academic writing. As part of the diploma he had to write a thesis (in Chinese) which he proudly handed in by the due date. Two weeks later, the thesis was returned with instructions that the first part would have to be rewritten if he was to receive the diploma. The examiner was happy with the content but could not pass it as it stood because there were no references to authority to buttress the arguments that had been put forward. As this took place in 1977, the references to authority actually meant references to Chairman Mao. Kirkpatrick then spent the next week looking for suitable quotes from the Chairman which he could insert in appropriate places towards the beginning of his thesis. Once his thesis had been correctly framed by quotes from authority, it was passed. We recount a rather more serious case of urgently needing to find the appropriate reference in Chapter 9.

Both authors, then, have direct but different experiences with learning the rules of academic writing in different cultural traditions which we hope will provide useful insights to readers of this book, the framework of which is briefly summarised below.

Roughly speaking the book takes a chronological approach in tracing the development of Chinese rhetoric and writing. While noting that such comparisons can be dangerous, we nevertheless also attempt to compare the origins and essence of Chinese and "Western" rhetoric at various stages throughout the book.

Chapter 1 provides a brief overview of rhetoric in Ancient China. It is important to establish here that one reason why it is difficult to be precise about tracing the origins of rhetoric in China is that there was no distinct discipline of rhetoric in ancient China in the same way that there was in the West (Harbsmeier). There were, however, important works which touched on rhetoric and, of course, incorporated it. In Chapter 1, we review some of these important texts and try and dispel several "myths" (see Lu, X., Ancient China) about Chinese rhetoric and show, for example, that it was not monolithic and represented only by the Confucian school. In fact, as we show, Confucian style only received state sanction during the period of the Western Han dynasty (206 BCE-9 CE).

In Chapter 1 we also introduce the common Chinese sequencing pattern of "because-therefore" and "frame-main," showing how this operates in an argumentative text of the Western Han. We will argue that this rhetorical sequence has become a fundamental principle of sequencing in Chinese and is one reason why so many Western scholars have classified Chinese rhetoric and writing as indirect. We shall argue that this is not so much a case of "indirectness" but one of a preference for inductive reasoning. We also stress, however, that deductive and "direct" reasoning was used by Chinese writers.

Chapter 1 also demonstrates how aware Chinese rhetoricians and writers were of the importance of audience–in particular the relative status of speaker/writer and listener/reader–on the choice of rhetorical style and the way in which a speaker/writer sequenced argument. We cite examples from classical texts to demonstrate how a subject who was trying to persuade his emperor had to be careful not to ruffle the "dragon's" scales. This, naturally enough, also encouraged an inductive method of argument.

As noted above, rhetoric did not develop as a discrete discipline until the twentieth century, but many early texts discussed topics directly relevant to rhetoric and Chapter 2 provides a summary of some of these key texts. These texts include the famous *Wen Xin Diao Long (The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons)*, thought by some to be the first Chinese text on rhetoric itself. We also compare and describe two major Chinese literary styles, namely *guwen* (classical prose) and *pianwen* (adorned prose) before reviewing ways of reasoning in Chinese. In this, we provide a number of examples from written texts which show how the Chinese writers arranged their arguments and we discuss their motivation for sequencing their arguments in the ways that they did. Again, we show that a frame-main or inductive style was the preferred methods, and suggest reasons for why this was so.

Chapter 3 is devoted to a summary of the work that most Chinese scholars describe as China's first systematic account of rhetoric, the *Wen Ze (The Rules of Writing)* by Chen Kui. The Rules of Writing was published in 1170. Chen Kui's aim was to summarise the rules and techniques of writing, using classical texts for his examples and source materials. Five main topics make up the book: genre, "negative" rhetoric, "positive" rhetoric, syntax and style (Liu). Negative rhetoric deals with such aspects of rhetoric as text structure and argument sequencing. Positive rhetoric deals with rhetorical tropes. As a fervent advocate of the *guwen* or classical style, Chen Kui identifies the general overriding principle that language should be simple, clear, succinct and contemporary (Kirkpatrick, Systematic, 115). By giving a summary of the book, we feel that some of the advice Chen Kui gave to Chinese student writers on topics such as the arrangement of ideas will be familiar to teachers of writing in American universities today.

As the *Rules of Writing* was more or less contemporaneous with the *Ars Dictaminis* treatises of Medieval Europe–themselves also manuals on how to write appropriately–we provide a brief summary of two of these and compare the advice in them with the advice provided in the *Rules of Writing*. We also compare the times at which the *Rules of Writing* and the *Ars Dictaminis* treatises were written. We argue that the comparable needs of empire and bureaucracy were important factors in explaining some of the rhetorical similarities.

The *ba gu wen* or eight-legged essay, probably the most (in)famous of all Chinese text structures, is the topic of Chapter 4. Several Western scholars have argued that this structure influences the writing in English of Chinese students (e.g., Kaplan, *The Anatomy of Rhetoric*). In disputing this, we provide the historical background to this essay style and its role in the imperial civil service exams. We summarise the critiques Chinese scholars have recently made of it. We also provide a detailed historical example of a *ba gu wen*, along with the rhetorical analysis of it. This chapter concludes with a very rare example of a modern *ba gu wen*, written in 2005 by the famous Chinese scholar Zhou Youguang, and a discussion on whether a reincarnation of the *ba gu wen* is likely or not.

In Chapter 5 the focus shifts from rhetoric and text to the institutions in which these were taught. The *shuyuan* academies originated during the Tang dynasty (618-907) and lasted right up until the end of the Qing in 1912. The *shuyuan* have been defined as "essentially comprehensive, multi-faceted cultural and educational institutions, serving multiple functions, as a school, a library, a research centre or institute, and others including religious and spiritual functions" (Yang and Peng 1). They played a key role in Chinese education, in particular in the teaching of writing. This chapter will describe the *shuyuan* curriculum and how writing was taught. *Shuyuan* also prepared students for writing the *ba gu wen* essays, the topic of the previous chapter. The chapter ends with a discussion of the reasons for the suppression of the *shuyuan* in the twentieth century.

Chapters 6 and 7 review and describe fundamental principles of rhetorical organisation in Chinese. Chapter 6 looks at these principles and how they operate at the level of words, sentences and complex clauses. Chapter 7 looks at these principles and how they operate at the level of discourse and text.

In chapter 6, the principles or rhetorical organisation which we discuss include: topic-comment; modifier-modified; big-small; whole-part; the principle of temporal sequence and the "because-therefore" or "frame-main" sequences found in complex clauses in Chinese. The chapter includes a discussion of parataxis and hypotaxis in Chinese and English, and shows that Chinese is traditionally a more paratactic language in that clauses follow a "logical" order and that therefore the use of explicit connectors which signal the relationship between the clauses are not required. For example, in Chinese, the sequence, "He hurt his ankle, he fell" *must* mean, "Because he hurt his ankle he fell." We argue that these subordinate clause–main clause sequences represent the unmarked sequence in Chinese, but point out that, through influence from the West, caused in large part by the translation into Chinese of Western texts, the alternative main clause–subordinate clause sequences have become more

common, along with the explicit use of connectors to signal the subordinate clause and its relation to the main clause. That is to say, sentences of the type, "He hurt his ankle because he fell" are now common in Chinese.

In chapter 7 we show that these principles of rhetorical organisation and sequencing also operate in extended discourse and texts. We exemplify this using naturally occurring data of extended discourses and texts, including a university seminar, a press conference and an essay which compares Hitler with the first Chinese emperor, Qin Shihuang. We conclude chapter 7 by summarising the principles of rhetorical organisation and sequencing we have identified.

Chapter 8 describes how ideas from the West started to enter China and become influential in the early part of the twentieth century. We look at the language reform movement and how this was influenced by Chinese scholars who had studied overseas in Japan and the West. This includes an account of Hu Shi's proposal for promoting the use of the vernacular language as the medium for educated discourse. As we show, Hu Shi had studied at Cornell and Columbia universities and was particularly influenced by the ideas of the American pragmatist philosopher, John Dewey. As American influence was important at this time, we also give a brief account of changes in attitudes towards rhetoric and writing in the United States during this period. We also argue, however, that Hu Shi was at least equally influenced by the Chinese rhetorical tradition as by American rhetorical practice.

Along with Hu Shi and his contribution to language reform in general, the Chinese scholar who made the most significant contribution to the study of rhetoric and its establishment as a discrete discipline in China was Chen Wangdao, the author of *An Introduction to Rhetoric*. This became an important book because Chen combined key concepts of Western rhetoric along with ideas from the Chinese rhetorical tradition. Chen Wangdao was himself a powerful figure, being appointed president of the prestigious Fudan University in Shanghai in 1952, a position he held for 25 years (Wu H.). Fudan remains a leading Chinese centre for the study of rhetoric.

The final section of Chapter 8 summarises two important comparative studies into paragraph organisation and arrangement in Chinese and English (Wang C.; Yang and Cahill) and we argue that the findings of these two studies support the operation of the principles of rhetorical organisation we have identified as fundamental to Chinese rhetoric and writing.

In Chapter 9, we turn our attention to the influence of Communist Party politics and the Cultural Revolution upon contemporary Chinese rhetoric and writing and the ways in which these influences have radically altered Chinese rhetorical style. Using texts from Mao and from dissidents, including the controversial Charter 08, we argue that Chinese rhetoric has developed

a strikingly confrontational style and that this is seriously undermining civic discourse and constructive criticism in today's China. We argue that Chinese rhetoric needs to return to its fundamental principles if it is to provide an effective medium of civic discourse and constructive criticism.

Chapter 10 provides an in-depth review of contemporary Chinese academic writing textbooks and shows that these books display influence both from Chinese traditions and from Western theory and practice. We also show that there is more focus in many of these textbooks on *yingyong* or practical writing, as opposed to academic writing as such and consider possible reasons for this. The final chapter, the Conclusion, summarises the main points we have made in the book.

We hope that, after reading this book, readers will have gained both an understanding and interest in the Chinese rhetorical tradition, and that this will help those readers who are teachers of writing by giving them insights into a different rhetorical tradition. This, we hope, will, in turn, help them help and better understand writers who come from different rhetorical traditions.