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**STUDY *Smarter***

# **Transitioning from the Confucian to Socratic writing model: implications for teaching of academic writing to Chinese undergraduate students**

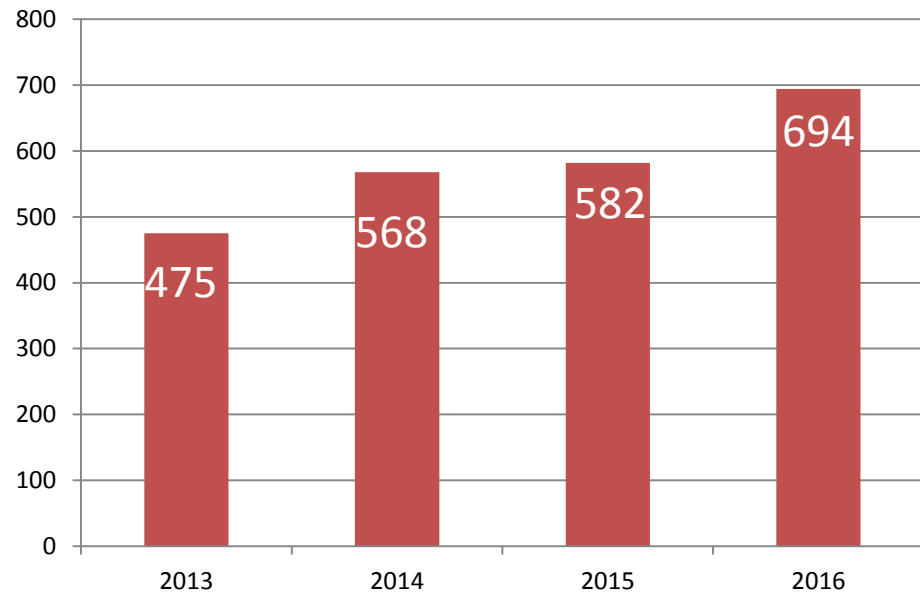


# Aims of the study

- **Identify the culturally defined rhetorical and grammatical deviations**
- **Offer explanations as to why they exist**
- **Provide recommendations and strategies to adapt to a new writing model**

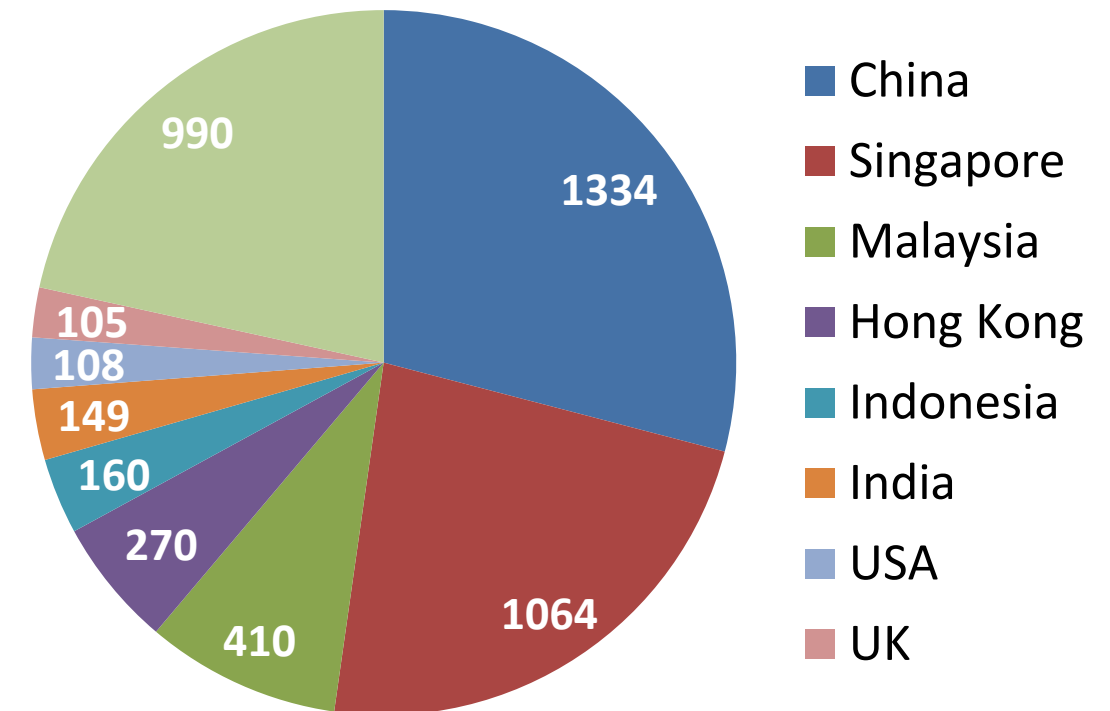
## Chinese undergraduate students at UWA 2013-2016

### Chinese International Undergraduate



Chinese Undergraduate students

### International students 2016



# Methods: Corpus Analysis

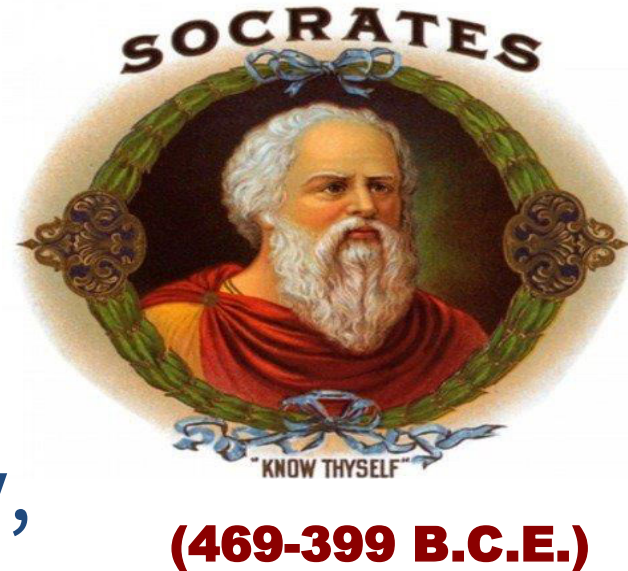
**Examination of 10 essays by Chinese international undergraduate students from the People's Republic of China (PRC)**





# Socratic model of scholarship

- ‘Independent learners’
- Critical thinkers
- Evidence based
- Concise and formal in register
- Writing represents cohesion and unity, and includes appropriate grammar



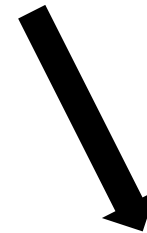
# Confucian model of scholarship

- ‘Passive learners’
- Reluctant to ask questions or give opinions in class
- ‘Surface learners’
- Memorise information
- Writing does not reflect critical, argumentative or analytical thinking



**Confucius(551-479 B.C.E)**

## Recurring errors in students' essays



**Paragraph-level  
errors**

**Sentence-level  
errors**



# Paragraph-level errors

**Structuring paragraphs**

**Digression from the main argument**

**Engaging critically with scholarly sources**

# Sentence-level errors

## Shared culture (Confucian practice)

**ERRORS IN  
REFERENCING**

**INACCURATE USE  
OF TRANSITIONS**

## Shared language (L1)

**ADJECTIVE  
NOUN  
CONFUSION**

**SUBJECT VERB  
AGREEMENT**

**SENTENCE  
FRAGMENTS**

**PUNCTUATION  
ERRORS**

# Sentence-level errors

An article (Ruijie Z, Zhihui Z, 2012) reported ‘Factors [...]’. **[reference error]**

*Secondly*, Zara also change its apparel designs to meet different demands in different countries. **[inaccurate transition]**

Looking back the ordinary life in Syria, an Islamic state, where populace lack of health and health care **[sentence fragment]**

# Sentence-level errors

When people *talks* about Chinese culture, most of them probably come up with Chinese comics and animation.  
[incorrect subject verb agreement]

It will increase the *efficient* of the purchase process and decrease the *inconvenient* and risk significantly.  
[adjective noun confusion]

Starbucks is known as a successful global brand, *in fact*, Starbucks created the market for the small coffee shops. [punctuation error]

# **Recommendations for AALL practitioners**



# Paragraph-level error correction

## Pre-writing instructional and drafting workshops

- Principles of academic writing
- Demonstrate examples
- Engage students in analytical discussions

## Post-writing editing sessions

- Tips to edit and proofread
- Evaluate and provide feedback



# Sentence-level error correction

## Transition Signals

Provide non-academic texts



Identify semantic groupings



Repeat with academic texts

## Subject verb agreement

- Sentence patterns with easily identifiable subject and verb
- Visual Cues

# Final thoughts

- **A targeted pedagogical strategy for improving Chinese international students' academic writing**
- **More substantial linguistic analysis of the influence of culture in academic writing**

