

MASTER'S THESIS

A cross-cultural analysis of the organization of English and Chinese texts

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Date of Award:
1996

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A CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE ORGANISATION
OF ENGLISH AND CHINESE TEXTS

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE
MASTER OF ARTS IN LANGUAGE STUDIES

HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

MAY 1996

Abstract

In this study, I am looking at argumentative, or more precisely, at expository, texts on the topic of euthanasia from a contrastive point of view. Six letters to the editor from the newspapers have been chosen for the analysis. Among the six texts, four are written in English while two are in Chinese. The writers of two English texts are native Chinese. The methods of analysis is based on rhetorical structure theory and the focus of the analysis is the presentation of the main thesis. It has been found that the main thesis in the two Chinese texts is presented differently from the English expositions in terms of its position in the overall rhetorical structure and in terms of their function towards the construction of coherence. It is concluded that culturally determined conventions of writing may indeed play a role when accounting for these differences in rhetoric and the sequence of thoughts.

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