A Comparative Study of Rhetorical Competence among Chinese and American College Students under the Same Teaching Background

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Abstract

It is observed that Chinese international students tend to be rhetorically incompetent, compared with their American peers, which triggers a comparative study of their rhetorical competence in the same teaching environment in the U.S. The experimental group and the control group are populated in 20 students respectively, the former group being 20 Chinese students who once major in English and communication in one Chinese famous university but now study in one American university, the latter being 20 American college students in the same class. They are selected to participate in tests of speech and writing competence. The result indicates that there is some discrepancy of speech competence between Chinese and American college students, as well as of writing competence, from which we gain some applications for the cultivation of rhetorical competence among foreign language learners in China, and some suggestions for Chinese international students' success in American job market.

Keywords: Rhetorical competence; Chinese college students; American college students; the same teaching background

1. Introduction

Western rhetoric is so profound that it still influences contemporary world, either in politics, economy, or in education. If one can master strong skills in western rhetoric, then he/she is rhetorically competent. Rhetorical competence, in this way, is crucially important for people to deal with personal or social problems. Academically, we need to clarify the concept of rhetorical competence. However, it is so succinct and simple that few studies have been carried out on the concept of rhetorical competence. Among the accountable studies on rhetorical competence, the research carried out by Sproule (1991, 1997) is considered to be a relatively systematic attempt to discuss rhetorical competence. However, it mainly concerns with speechmaking in the background of Aristotle rhetoric. He indicates what quality should a rhetorically competent speaker master, covering five cannons, rhetorical strategies, and audience analysis, but rhetorical competence means more than speech competence. Chinese rhetoric scholar Ju (2008) views rhetorical competence as a kind of critical thinking and innovation competence and she makes some pioneering research on the cultivation strategies of rhetorical competence in the background of foreign language teaching in China. In spite of what has been done in rhetorical competence, a systematic analysis of rhetorical competence needs to be carried out. Only if we clarify the concept of rhetorical competence can we make a scientific survey of and thus get hold of college students' rhetorical competence. Accordingly, a blueprint can be pictured to cultivate college students' rhetorical competence in China. Liu (2004) points out that "Only if college students in China can skip from language to discourse, expression to response, communication to persuasion, and explanation to argumentation can foreign language teaching in China make substantial breakthrough in this century". In other words, English education in China should concentrate more on rhetorical competence, including knowledge of context relevant to various foreign languages, critical ability, cross-cultural awareness, and rhetorically reactive ability, than on linguistic competence. Therefore, the cultivation of rhetorical competence should be linked with cross-cultural context. This paper aims to make a comparative study of rhetorical competence among Chinese and American college students through an classroom teaching experiment completed in communication major of a U.S. Midwestern university.

2. Interpreting Rhetorical Competence

To interpret the concept of rhetorical competence, we need to make an investigation of the history of western rhetoric, discovering the relationship between the concept of rhetoric and rhetorical competence. In classical rhetoric period, Aristotle defines *rhetoric* as "rhetoric is the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" (*Rhetoric*, 1355b; 336 B.C.). According to *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (online), *faculty* means "a natural ability, such as the ability to see, hear, or think clearly", therefore, Aristotle's definition of rhetoric involves a sense of rhetorical competence. In this period, other rhetoricians such as Socrates, Cicero, Quintilian, etc. all regard public speaking as a key occasion for rhetorical act, five cannons including invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery, and ethos, pathos and logos as an important rhetorical strategy; persuading audience as a rhetorical target. Thus, rhetorical competence in the classical period can be viewed as an ability mastered by rhetors to apply rhetorical strategies such as five cannons, ethos, pathos

and logos to persuade audience in public speaking situation in order to eventually solve social affairs.

Scientifically speaking, the first resource of rhetorical competence is the long classical tradition of rhetoric, exemplified by such writers as Cicero and Aristotle; the second important resource of information about public speaking is twentieth century social science research in communication (Sproule, 1991, P. 17). The second resource in his words can be regarded as a trend of the new rhetoric in 20th century. In this period, Burke (1969, p. 43) defines *rhetoric* as "rhetoric is the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human agents". Burke then regards identification between the rhetor and audience as target of rhetorical acts. Besides, the rhetorical strategy (five cannons) is upgraded to categorization, conceptualization, symbolization, organization and operationalization (Harper, 1979), and more rhetorical situations are introduced in this period such as interpersonal communication, drama, and symbolic act, than in the classical period. Accordingly, rhetorical competence in new rhetoric period can be stated as an ability mastered by rhetors to apply rhetorical strategies such as upgraded five cannons (categorization, conceptualization, symbolization, organization, and operationalization), to persuade the audience of rhetorical acts and thus to achieve identification between rhetors and audience.

In sum up, there are some similarities existing between rhetorical competence both in the classical and new rhetoric periods--adopting such rhetorical strategies as five cannons; using speaking and writing as rhetorical situation; viewing persuading audience as rhetorical intentions/target, which are crucial parameters in rhetorical competence. We select speech competence and writing competence, shared by the two typical periods in the history of western rhetoric, as the key research target in this paper. As for speech competence, we quotes the main parameters mentioned by Sproule (1991, 1997); Concerning writing competence, we largely focus on the ability mastered by the students in the background of writing in American universities and colleges , which is generally different from foreign language writing in China, largely referring to TEM 4 or 8 writing, CET 4 or 6 writing, or English writing tasks for English majors or non-English majors in universities and colleges in China.

3. Experiment

3.1 Experiment Question

To make a comparative study of rhetorical competence among Chinese international students and native American students, we designate the following questions: (1) Which group behaves better in terms of rhetorical competence, Chinese international students or native American students? (2) Which elements of rhetorical competence can be reflected by the rhetorically incompetent group?

3.2 Experimental Subject

The experimental and comparative groups are populated in 20 students respectively. 20 Chinese international students (CS in short; experimental group) and 20 native American

college students (AS in short; control group) in Rhetoric course of a Midwestern University of America are selected in the teaching experiment. Those Chinese students whose majors are English and communication are engaged in 2+2 program in which they spend 2 years studying in a Chinese university and another 2 years in the cooperative American University. Moreover, the two groups are involved in the same Rhetoric class for one semester--16 weeks.

3.3 Experimental Material

The material in this experiment are divided into two parts. The first part is the research presentation (the content is comprised of motivation for doing the project, the key components of the study, including research question and method, and the most interesting findings of the research) made by CS and AS at the end of semester (16th week), used to survey students' speech competence; the second part is two groups' term papers composed on the basis of the presentation contents with the length of 20-30 pages, used to examine students' writing competence.

3.4 Experimental Tool

Two experimental tools are applied, among which one is speech competence appraisal scale and the other one is writing competence appraisal scale, used to test CS and AS's speech and writing competence respectively. The former one is designated based on the study by Sproule (1991, 1997), concerning the speakers' rhetorical knowledge, attitudes, and rhetorical strategy. The latter one is designed on the basis of both rhetorical competence in classical and new rhetoric period and the difference between speech and writing, focusing on rhetorical strategy, argumentation mode, linguistic correctness and writing formatting.

3.5 Experimental Procedure

Rhetoric teaching practice and rhetorical competence appraisal are involved in the experiment. Regular rhetoric teaching runs through the whole spring semester of 2015, covering the literature review of rhetoric concepts, the history of rhetoric in the classical, middle ages, renaissance, 18-19 century and 20th century, and the basic theories and modes of rhetorical criticism. Concretely speaking, the teacher, a well-known rhetorician in America, mainly gives a bunch of lectures on the above topics in the first 7 weeks, and implements activities such as quiz, think piece, individual coaching, and group workshop in the following 8 weeks, motivating students to finish the research design, introduction, literature review, main body, and conclusion in this period. The assessment of CS and AS's speech competence is held in the last week, during which these two groups present their research projects in 5-7 minutes; while the assessment of writing competence is done after CS and AS hand in their term papers at the end of 16th week. Furthermore, students' performance will be scored by the author on the basis of the grading work of the teacher, to ensure the authenticity and appropriateness of the data of the experiment.

3.6 Statistical Analysis

Speech competence appraisal scale. (1) A five-point Likert scale (completely competent=5;

mostly competent=4; somewhat competent=3; mostly incompetent=2; completely incompetent=1) is built based on students' mastery of rhetorical knowledge (speaker's intention, message structure and audience's need for communication), attitudes towards speechmaking (enthusiasm for speaking, desire to perfect knowledge, interaction with the audience), and rhetorical strategy (invention, organization, style, memory, and delivery); (2) a detailed subdivision is made to five cannons, due to its important position in classical and new rhetoric. Another five-point Likert scale is built based on students' mastery of invention (validity and ethics of the material), organization (exordium, partition, confirmation, refutation, peroration, and transitions), style (appropriateness and diversity of wording), memory (memory of the main ideas and arrangement of points), and delivery (vocal clarity, fluency, pronunciation, and non-verbal communication means). Total points is counted as 100.

Writing competence appraisal scale. A five-point Likert scale (completely competent=5; mostly competent=4; somewhat competent=3; mostly incompetent=2; completely incompetent=1) is built on the basis of students' mastery of five cannons [1] (invention--validity and ethics of material, organization--exordium, narration, partition, confirmation, refutation, peroration, and transitions, and style--clarity, appropriateness and diversity), argumentation mode, critical procedure (description, explanation and evaluation[2]), linguistic correctness (grammar, punctuation and wording), and writing formatting[3] (using APA or Chicago style). Total points is counted as 100.

4. Experiment Results

4.1 Comparison of CS and AS in terms of speech competence

On the macro-level, the experimental group behaves differently from the control group in the same learning environment. CS is rhetorically less competent than AS in speechmaking, which also shows the discrepancy of rhetorical education tradition of speech between Chinese and American universities and colleges. On the micro-level, in terms of *mean* total score, the control group is 74.2250; while the experimental group is 63.0000, 11.225 lower than AS. Concerning the *mean* of specific parameters, most of them are over a gap of 0.5. In terms of *standard deviation*, 8.87486 (CS) is greater than 7.42413 (AS), which shows that there is a higher unevenness among CS, some of whom are excellent English speakers while a minority of them are not talented at English speechmaking. In fact, irregularity also exists in AS, at least 2 students just got a little more than 60 points, they are native speakers, though.

Diagram 1. Speech competence data of CS and AS

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Speech competence	CS	20	63.0000	8.87486
	AS	20	74.2250	7.42413

[1] Owing to the difference between speech and writing, we select three of the five cannons in the writing competence appraisal scale.
[2] Campbell (2015) holds that description, explanation and evaluation are important procedures in critically writing a rhetorical act or artificial product.
[3] We quote the linguistic standards set by the teacher of the course.

Speaker' s intention	CS	20	3.4250	.49404
	AS	20	3.9250	.40636
Message structure	CS	20	3.3500	.43225
	AS	20	3.9250	.51999
Audience' s need for communication	CS	20	2.7250	.61719
	AS	20	3.5750	.56835
Enthusiasm for speaking	CS	20	2.9000	.50262
	AS	20	3.5750	.46665
Interaction with the audience	CS	20	2.6000	.61985
	AS	20	3.4500	.45595
Desire to perfect knowledge	CS	20	2.7750	.59549
	AS	20	3.4750	.49934
Validity and ethics of material	CS	20	3.0750	.46665
	AS	20	3.6000	.52815
Exordium	CS	20	3.3000	.49736
	AS	20	3.6500	.43225
Partition	CS	20	2.7750	.61719
	AS	20	3.7750	.47226
Confirmation	CS	20	2.9500	.51042
	AS	20	3.7000	.37697
Refutation	CS	20	2.3250	.65444
	AS	20	3.6750	.49404
Peroration	CS	20	3.2000	.44129
	AS	20	3.6750	.46665
Transitions	CS	20	3.0000	.42920
	AS	20	3.8000	.34028
Diversification of style	CS	20	3.3250	.43755
	AS	20	3.8750	.42535
Appropriateness of style	CS	20	3.2250	.41279
	AS	20	3.7250	.47226
Memory of main points and the order of points	CS	20	2.9000	.52815
	AS	20	3.6000	.38389
Vocal clarity	CS	20	3.0250	.49934
	AS	20	3.8000	.47016
Fluency	CS	20	3.1500	.63037
	AS	20	3.8500	.40066
Pronunciation	CS	20	3.1250	.53496
	AS	20	3.7750	.37958
Non-verbal communication means	CS	20	2.8500	.72729
	AS	20	3.8000	.52315

Diagram 2. Independent samples test of speech competence

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means
		F	Sig.	Sig. (2-tailed)
Speech competence	Equal variances assumed	.209	.650	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000
Speaker's intention	Equal variances assumed	.956	.334	.001
	Equal variances not assumed			.001
Message structure	Equal variances assumed	.452	.505	.001
	Equal variances not assumed			.001
Audience's need for communication	Equal variances assumed	.000	1.000	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000
Enthusiasm for speaking	Equal variances assumed	.013	.911	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000
Interaction with the audience	Equal variances assumed	3.305	.077	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000
Desire to perfect knowledge	Equal variances assumed	.704	.407	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000
Validity and ethics of material	Equal variances assumed	1.531	.224	.002
	Equal variances not assumed			.002
Exordium	Equal variances assumed	.272	.605	.023
	Equal variances not assumed			.023
Partition	Equal variances assumed	1.129	.295	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000
Confirmation	Equal variances assumed	.332	.568	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000
Refutation	Equal variances assumed	2.641	.112	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000
Peroration	Equal variances assumed	.032	.859	.002
	Equal variances not assumed			.002
Transitions	Equal variances assumed	.220	.642	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000
Diversification of style	Equal variances assumed	.196	.660	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000
Appropriateness of style	Equal variances assumed	1.075	.306	.001
	Equal variances not assumed			.001
Memory of main points and the order of points	Equal variances assumed	.619	.436	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000

Vocal clarity	Equal variances assumed	.315	.578	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000
Fluency	Equal variances assumed	2.698	.109	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000
Pronunciation	Equal variances assumed	1.094	.302	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000
Non-verbal communication means	Equal variances assumed	2.723	.107	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000

Moreover, in terms of independent samples test, the *sig.* of speech competence (0.650) is greater than 0.05, which shows that a homogeneity of variance is assumed; then according to t-test for equality of means, the *sig. (2-tailed)* (0.000) is less than 0.05, indicating that there is a significant variation existing between CS and AS. Concretely speaking, those with significant variations are comprised of rhetorical knowledge (audience' s need for communication), attitude (enthusiasm for speaking, interaction with the audience, and desire to perfect knowledge), and rhetorical strategy (partition, confirmation, refutation, transitions, diversification of style, memory of main points and the order of points, vocal clarity, fluency, pronunciation, and non-verbal communication means). Therefore, in comparison with American peers, Chinese international students' behavior is barely satisfactory in audience analysis, speech initiative, statement organization, logical and critical thinking, and linguistic competence, which simultaneously reflects different emphases on speechmaking in Chinese and American rhetorical education. In fact, "the ancient Chinese appear to have had their own well-developed sense of rhetoric, revealed morphologically throughout primary Chinese texts in the following frequently used terms: *yan* (language;, speech); *ci* (mode of speech); *jian* (advising, persuasion); *shui* (persuasion)/*shuo* (explanation); *ming* (naming); and *bian* (distinction, disputation, argumentation)" (Lu, 1998, pp. 3-4). However, the ancient tradition is not well preserved and generated to the following centuries. Therefore, foreign language and communication teachers in universities and colleges in China need to re-emphasize the importance of rhetoric in their teaching, and to make some attempts to resuscitate the prosperity of rhetorical speech in China.

4.2 Comparison of CS and AS in terms of writing competence

Similar as speech competence, CS's performance of writing competence is inferior to AS's, however the gap of writing competence score (9.55) is narrower than that of speech competence (11.225), which is in correspondence with the concentration on writing in foreign language teaching in China. In detail, the mean score of CS is 66.1250 while that of AS is 75.6750, still mirroring that there is a long way to go for non-native English speakers to write like native ones; the *standard deviation* of CS (6.16628) is greater than that of AS (4.93984), reflecting the same phenomenon in speech competence appraisal that higher unevenness exists in CS than in AS.

Diagram 3. Writing competence data of CS and AS

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Writing competence	CS	20	66.1250	6.16628
	AS	20	75.6750	4.93984
Validity of material	CS	20	3.5750	.40636
	AS	20	3.6750	.46665
Ethics of material	CS	20	3.6750	.40636
	AS	20	3.6750	.51999
Exordium	CS	20	3.6500	.43225
	AS	20	3.8000	.34028
Narration	CS	20	3.5750	.40636
	AS	20	3.7500	.38044
Partition	CS	20	3.0500	.45595
	AS	20	3.8000	.41039
Confirmation	CS	20	3.5750	.43755
	AS	20	3.7000	.41039
Refutation	CS	20	2.6500	.48936
	AS	20	3.5500	.39403
Peroration	CS	20	3.5000	.39736
	AS	20	3.6500	.36635
Transitions	CS	20	3.2250	.47226
	AS	20	3.8500	.28562
Clarity of style	CS	20	3.5750	.37258
	AS	20	3.6750	.37258
Appropriateness of style	CS	20	3.4750	.34317
	AS	20	3.6500	.36635
Diversity of style	CS	20	3.4500	.35909
	AS	20	3.7250	.44352
Argumentation mode	CS	20	2.8250	.46665
	AS	20	3.8750	.35818
Description	CS	20	3.6500	.43225
	AS	20	3.7750	.37958
Explanation	CS	20	3.0250	.47226
	AS	20	3.8000	.29912
Evaluation	CS	20	2.8250	.63401
	AS	20	3.8500	.36635
Writing formatting	CS	20	3.0250	.49934
	AS	20	3.9000	.30779
Grammar	CS	20	3.5250	.37958
	AS	20	4.0750	.40636

Punctuation	CS	20	3.1500	.54047
	AS	20	4.0000	.28098
Wording	CS	20	3.1250	.58208
	AS	20	3.9000	.44721

Diagram 4. Independent samples test of writing competence

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means
		F	Sig.	Sig. (2-tailed)
Writing competence	Equal variances assumed	.209	.650	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000
Validity of material	Equal variances assumed	2.106	.155	.474
	Equal variances not assumed			.474
Ethics of material	Equal variances assumed	.562	.458	1.000
	Equal variances not assumed			1.000
Exordium	Equal variances assumed	.193	.663	.230
	Equal variances not assumed			.231
Narration	Equal variances assumed	.143	.707	.168
	Equal variances not assumed			.168
Partition	Equal variances assumed	.018	.894	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000
Confirmation	Equal variances assumed	.018	.893	.357
	Equal variances not assumed			.357
Refutation	Equal variances assumed	1.835	.184	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000
Peroration	Equal variances assumed	.301	.587	.222
	Equal variances not assumed			.222
Transitions	Equal variances assumed	6.999	.012	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000
Clarity of style	Equal variances assumed	.038	.847	.401
	Equal variances not assumed			.401
Appropriateness of style	Equal variances assumed	.655	.423	.127
	Equal variances not assumed			.127
Diversity of style	Equal variances assumed	2.185	.148	.038
	Equal variances not assumed			.038
Argumentation mode	Equal variances assumed	3.020	.090	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000

Description	Equal variances assumed	.085	.773	.337
	Equal variances not assumed			.337
Explanation	Equal variances assumed	.718	.402	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000
Evaluation	Equal variances assumed	4.815	.034	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000
Writing formatting	Equal variances assumed	3.138	.085	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000
Grammar	Equal variances assumed	.600	.443	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000
Punctuation	Equal variances assumed	13.412	.001	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000
Wording	Equal variances assumed	2.606	.115	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			.000

Seen from the independent sample test, the *sig.* of writing competence (0.650) is greater than 0.05, which shows that a homogeneity of variance is assumed; then according to t-test for equality of means, the *sig. (2-tailed) (0.000)* is less than 0.05, indicating that there is a significant variation existing between CS and AS. Those with significant variations are partition, refutation, transitions, argumentation mode, explanation, evaluation, writing formatting, grammar, punctuation, and wording. As for organization, CS are good at exordium, narration, confirmation, and peroration, but are incompetent in partition and refutation, which coincidently corresponds to their poorer behavior in explanation and evaluation than AS's. Moreover, CS's competence in selecting transitions is unsatisfactory. Leedham (2015) draws the similar conclusion in his research that English writers in China tend to overuse some common transitions and thus generate many redundant sentences.

In terms of argumentation mode, CS is not talented at this point. Lastly, concerning linguistic correctness[4] and writing formatting, compared with the control group, the experimental group can meet the requirements for non-native writers, however, there is still some gap to catch up with native writers. This problem cannot be overcome in a short time, due to the difficulty of cultivation of language awareness in non-native language environment.

5. Implications

5.1 Cultivating rhetorical competence in foreign language teaching environment

From the experiment, a simple and visible conclusion can be generated that Chinese international students, as non-native speakers or writers, are incomparable with their American peers at the same class. However, we make this experiment not only to verify this simple fact, but also to discover how and even why are they inferior to American college

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[4] Crowley and Hawhee (2012, pp. 336-338) argues that *delivery* in written discourse can be represented as correctness and formatting.

students in terms of rhetorical competence, namely speech competence and writing competence. Therefore, we need to contemplate about the implications of the experiment to foreign language teaching in China. Firstly, courses such as *western rhetoric*, or *rhetoric and argumentation* should be set up (Bartnett, 2002; Fletcher, 2015) and packed into the curriculum of foreign language majors and communication majors in China. Just like the profundity of Confucius theory in China, Aristotelian rhetorical theories is particularly influential in western countries. Many rhetoricians, either in the classical period, middles ages, renaissance period, or in the 18-19th century and 20th century, have made considerable contribution to the development of rhetoric. Based on the experiment result in this paper, compared with American college students, Chinese international students are rhetorically incompetence in speechmaking and writing, which are two key fields linked with western rhetoric. Crowley & Hawhee (2012) argues that classical rhetorical theories, five cannons in particular, is helpful to speech activities of contemporary college students. More than that, it is also beneficial for students' writing.

Secondly, teaching methods and pedagogy need to be renovated to enhance students' rhetoriocal competence and more emphasis should be put onto the implementation. In foreign language teaching practice of China, the simplest translation method and grammar teaching method, which largely focus on linguistic competence, are still in use. However, due to more attention has been paid to linguistic competence, less attention, comparatively, is paid to rhetorical competence. Students always follow the teachers' steps and form a habit of memorizing and imitating, in which way students do not get the opportunity to develop their own creative and critical thinking skills. Thus, their rhetorical competence is far from being satisfactory. Furthermore, the outcome of foreign language teaching can not match the research on teaching methods. Chinese students usually study English for about 12 years before they go to college, however, they can not fully and approriately express themselves even when they start their college education. In other words, they are really rhetorically incompetent. Therefore, implementation of those research on teaching methods should be reinforced to enhance students' rhetorical competence. Only if we implement those research achievements into foreign language teaching process can we truly start up enhacing students' linguistic competence as well as rhetorical competence.

5.2 Cultivating rhetorical competence to succeed in American job market

According to a recent survey, rhetorical competence is viewed as a crucial factor in employment. Just as Campbell (2015: xix) states, "the *Wall Street Journal* reported that in a survey of 480 companies ranked communication skills (speaking, listening, and writing) as those most valued in any job. In a report on the fast-growing careers, the U. S. Department of Labor stated that communication skills would be in demand across occupations well into the twenty-first century. When 1000 faculty members from a cross section of disciplines were asked to identify basic competencies for every college graduate, skills in communicating topped the list". Therefore, rhetorical competence is a must in job market, at home and abroad.

According to the experiment in this paper, Chinese international students are not as

rhetorically competent as their American peers. Actually, according to Cai (2015), international talents should be equipped with strong rhetorical competence and independent competence of dealing with international activities. Generally speaking, Chinese college students' contemporary rhetorical competence cannot fully meet the requirements of internal talents. Therefore, if Chinese international students want to find a job in America after their graduation, they must develop their rhetorical competence to meet the basic requirement of a common job in America.

6. Conclusion

As is discussed in this paper, rhetorical competence, to some extent, is a must for college students, both in China and America. We made an experiment in this study among two student groups, among whom one is Chinese international students in America and the other is American peers in the same class, to indicate that Chinese international students' rhetorical competence is inferior to their peers'. Therefore, more work should be done to enhance students' rhetorical competence in foreign language teaching in China, in order to promote intercultual communication and cultivate international talents in the future. Anyway, there are some limitation in this research, which only limits the number of experimental objects to 20, therefore, further studies need to enlarge this part.

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