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Exploring the meaning of argument in China

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ABSTRACT: This paper aims to explore the meaning of the English word argument in Chinese culture and language. It first reviews the various definitions and concepts of argument in western literature and Chinese culture. Next, it argues that there is no one single all-encompassing word in Chinese that can fully represent all the meanings of the English word argument. Finally, it conducts a survey research to get the possible Chinese translations of the English word argument.

KEYWORDS: argument, Chinese culture, Chinese language, interpersonal argument, public debating

1. INTRODUCTION

In most of the argumentation and conflict management literature, China is identified as a society that prefers non-argumentative, non-confrontational, and conflict avoidance approach over direct argumentation and confrontation (Leung, 1988; 1997; Lin, Zhao, & Zhao, 2010; Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003; Oetzel et al, 2001; Triandis, 1995). However, there is no study that examines whether there is such a concept or such a Chinese word that corresponds exactly to the meaning of the English word "argument". In other words, the concept and meaning of the English word "argument" have rarely been cross-examined with Chinese culture and Chinese language. Therefore, this paper aims to address this void in the current research. This paper will first review the efforts made by the western scholars in defining the concept and meaning of the English word "argument". Then, it will try to sift through Chinese culture and language for similar concepts and meanings as the English word "argument". To this end, a survey was conducted to investigate the

possible Chinese translations of the English word "argument" provided by modern Chinese college students who have a good mastery of English.

2. STUDIES ON ARGUMENT IN THE WEST

The studies on argument and argumentativeness have been a constant effort by scholars in the West ever since Aristotle. Although Aristotle did not actually provide a formal definition of argument, he did put forward a comprehensive framework for studying argument from analytic, rhetorical and dialectical perspectives. In particular, he defined rhetoric as the available means of persuasion (Rhetoric, 1984, p. 37) and this definition has had an enormous influence on the later scholars' research on rhetoric and argument. His work had also initiated the discipline of logic which takes argument as its focal subject. Following Aristotle's *analytic* studies on argument, logicians usually conceive of argument to be the embodiment of human reasoning or inferences.

Now, let's skip ahead thousand years to examine the modern scholars' efforts in defining argument. Among modern logicians who study argument from a mathematically formal approach, an argument is defined as a set of propositions among which one of them could follow from the others. This abstract way of defining argument equates argument with a proof or a demonstration, highlighting its formal and structural properties. But in doing so it ignores many substantial aspects of real life arguments. Therefore, many contemporary scholars try to re-conceptualize argument in some other way to better characterize its practical features. Hample (2005, p. 19) defined argument as "a conclusion supported by a reason", and its function is to "create meaning". Brockriede (1975) specified six characteristics of argument: it involves an inferential leap from one or more prior beliefs to a new one, it included the rationale seen as justifying that leap, implicitly or explicitly, it always involves a choice between two or more claims; its aim is to regulate uncertainty, usually by trying to reduce it, the arguer must expose himself or herself to the possibility that one's own beliefs will be refuted, and the arguers need to share the framework of reference to understand one another. Later on, by analyzing Brockriede's six characteristics, O'Keefe (1977) argued that those six characteristics can be further categorized into two different kinds of arguments: argument 1 and argument 2. Argument1 refers to something that is done alone and is conveyed in an utterance or a sort of communicative act. It usually involves the creation of a public text. Argument2 refers to a particular kind of interaction, something that two or more people have, that is interpersonal or conversational arguments. Wenzel (1980, 1990) provided a detailed analysis of three perspectives of understanding argument as the rhetorical process, dialectical procedure and logical product. Hample (1985) further completed O'Keefe's theory by suggesting a third kind of argument, argument 0. It is defined as the cognitive argument that exists in the arguer's mind prior to the utterance and the argument that exist in the mind of anyone who receives the argument. In addition, Johnson (2002) looked at argument from a different perspective by suggesting that argument can be divided into two types: public issue argument and personal issue argument. In her opinion, public issue argument, which focuses on issues outside the interpersonal

relationship, can have higher degree of enjoyment while personal issue argument can result in more pragmatic outcome and higher ego-involvement. Therefore, it can be seen that the word "argument" in English can be interpreted in various ways from various perspectives and with different focuses.

3. ARGUMENT-RELATED CONCEPTS IN CHINESE CULTURE

The Chinese has a longstanding tradition of stressing the values of harmony and coherence in their culture. Chinese society has always been regarded as a group where conflict avoidance is viewed more positively than direct confrontation and argumentation. In Chinese, the concept of argument overlaps in many cases with conflict. Conflict is defined as "the perceived or actual incompatibility of values, expectations, processes, or outcomes between two or more parties over substantive or relational issues" (Ting-Toomey, 1994, p. 360). It is thought that in Chinese culture, there is no clear-cut distinction between argument and conflict. They can be referred to interchangeably in most cases, and sometimes are both associated with negative meanings. A review of the three main philosophies in China, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, can help us better understand Chinese people's understanding and attitude towards argument and conflict.

Confucianism is a Chinese ethical and philosophical system developed from the teachings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius. It heavily emphasizes harmony, which is defined by Höchsmann (2004, p. 174) as "a process of creation and the balance between two opposite states in the natural and human world." In Chinese culture, one important way to preserve harmony is to give and save face, which is also known as face concern. The concept of face refers to a positive public image of oneself that he or she wants to claim (Brown & Levinson, 1987).The research on face work has yielded several important theories. One of the most important theories is the face-negotiation theory. This theory was developed by Ting-Toomey and Kurogi (1998) through combining the work of Goffman (1955, 1967) and Brown and Levinson (1987). Face negotiation theory argues that face is an explanatory mechanism for different conflict management styles in different cultural groups. Based on this theory, since Chinese people place a great emphasis on saving and giving face, and believe that any conflict or dispute between two parties can result in the loss of face for one party or both parties, they prefer conflict avoidance approaches to preserve harmony.

Taoism also has a huge influence on Chinese culture. According to Taoism philosophy, "individuals should not interfere with the harmony of the universe, which in its own way, functions harmoniously" (Lin, Zhao & Zhao, 2010, p. 86). One of the most important doctrines in Taoism is "without action" (无为), which means to avoid all hostile and aggressive actions which undermine the intrinsic regularities of the universe. According to Welch (1996, p. 33), "without action" even suggests that one's (artificial) non-aggressiveness can also make others feel inferior, thus achieving the effect of aggressiveness. This doctrine of "without action" and non-aggressiveness has been observed by Chinese people in dealing with interpersonal relationship.

Buddhism, as a foreign religion, was introduced to China during the Han Dynasty (202 B.C.-220 A.D.). When it was first introduced into China, Buddhist monks attempted to propagate Buddhism in China by adapting Taoist theory to interpret the Buddhist doctrine. This caused the native Chinese to regarded Buddhism as a kind of Taoist practices at the very beginning. Eventually during the Tang Dynasty (618-907A.D.), Buddhism established its unique position in China, and since then, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, became the three major philosophic schools in the Chinese society. The teachings of Buddhism also promote harmony to achieve inner peace. Buddha set six principles of harmony (Gernet, 1995) for his followers to follow in order to bring about unity and harmony. Those six principles guided people to love each other as brothers and sisters and to not say harmful things or quarrel with each other. Moreover, Buddhist teachings consider that "trouble exists from the mouth" and emphasize the importance of being silent (Chin, 1998, as cited in Li, 2009). Those principles of Buddhism, again, guided people's understanding and attitude towards argument and conflict.

In addition to the three main philosophies in China, there are also considerable folk wisdom and folk stories in Chinese history that help shape Chinese people's attitude and strategies towards argument and conflict. Folk wisdom stories, as described by Peng and Nisbett (1999, p. 744), reflect "culture-specific habits." One such story dates back to the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.), called "Luo Wei feeds neighbor's cattle", illustrating how to settle conflict with neighbors by doing extra work for the neighbors to make them feel ashamed. In that story, the cattle owned by Luo Wei's neighbor ate Luo Wei's crops. Luo Wei told this incident to his neighbor but his neighbor did not take any action. Luo Wei did not get furious; instead, he decided to solve this problem by getting up early every morning to cut enough grass to feed his neighbor's cattle. Once the cattle got fed, they stopped eating Luo Wei's crops. Eventually, the neighbor found out what Luo Wei had done and felt deeply ashamed and promised to watch over his cattle more carefully. Another story, called "Sima Hui gave up his pig", illustrates that conflicts and misunderstandings should not be argued because things will straighten out in their own way. Sima Hui was a very famous scholar in Han Dynasty. Once, his neighbor lost a pig and mistook Sima Hui's pig for his. Sima Hui did not argue and simply said: "take it if you think it is yours". So the neighbor took the pig away. A few days later, the neighbor found his own pig from elsewhere and realized his mistake. He took Sima Hui's pig back to him and apologized. Sima Hui did not blame him at all. Instead, he even tried to save his neighbor's face by saying that these incidents happen a lot and there is nothing to be ashamed of. The third story, happened in Qing Dynasty (1636-1912 A.D.) between the family of the then Prime Minister Zhang Ying and their neighbor back in his hometown, illustrates that once involved in a conflict, people should try to make the concession first. Zhang Ying's family and their neighbor both planned to build new houses and had a disagreement about the ownership of a piece of common land in-between. Zhang Ying's mother wrote him a letter in the hope that Zhang Ying could use his power as Prime Minister of the country to make their neighbor yield. To everyone's surprise, Zhang Ying replied and instructed his family to give up that piece of disputed land to maintain harmony with their neighbor. His family did as he instructed and when his neighbor saw this,

his neighbor felt ashamed and also decided to give up that piece of land. As a result, this piece of land was constructed to a wide road for the benefit of the general public, and this story has been passed on for generations that one should be humble and tolerant regardless of your social status or personal achievements.

Therefore, from the review on traditional Chinese philosophy and culture above, argument and conflict are found to be strongly discouraged in dealing with interpersonal relationship. According to the five conflict styles illustrated in Pruitt and Carnevale's (1993) dual concern model, Chinese people would mainly choose the first four styles, which are avoiding, compromising, obliging and integrating. The fifth style, dominating, is also labeled as competing or contending, though is rarely encouraged in Chinese culture.

However, it should also be pointed out that the discussion above is about Chinese people's understanding and attitude towards argument and conflict on *interpersonal* level and are mainly about *personal-related* issues. Actually, another meaning of the English word "argument" as *public arguing or debating* has long existed in Chinese culture for thousands of years, and is highly acknowledged and regarded. Before we sift through evidence from Chinese culture and history to support our argument, we think we should first point out that according to a previous study done by Becker (1986), there is a lack of debate and argumentation in China, in particular in public setting. Becker (1986) built up his argument on three aspects: First, Becker (1986, p. 75) argued that the geodemographic factors influenced China to prioritize human-centered hierarchies over propositional truth in their thinking systems; second, he argued that the hieroglyphic character and grammatical presuppositions of Chinese orient the Chinese people to have a more imagery and sympathetic mind-set; third, he sought evidence from the main philosophies that influence China, i.e. Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism.

As is discussed above, those three main philosophies mainly aim to provide guidance for Chinese people to deal with interpersonal relationship on personal issue argument and conflict. After a careful examination of Chinese history, we argue that Chinese culture and people think highly of public debating on public issues. For example, during Spring and Autumn Period (770 B.C.-476 B.C.) and the Warring States Period (476 B.C.-221 B.C.), China was divided into several kingdoms and there were constant conflicts and wars among those kingdoms. Therefore, the rulers of each kingdom desperately needed some intellectuals who were excellent at thinking and arguing to help them make right decisions and negotiate the best interests with other rulers and forge alliance. Against this background, many famous negotiators and debaters emerged and were appointed top positions in those kingdoms. Zhang Yi, as the most famous one among them, travelled to various kingdoms on behalf of Kingdom Qin to advocate Qin's diplomatic and military policies to win allies and also to instigate the mistrust among other kingdoms. He was so successful that eventually, Kingdom Qin conquered all the other kingdoms and unified China into one whole country in 221 B.C. for the first time in Chinese history. Therefore, it is believed that the excellent skills of debating and arguing in public about public issues by intellectuals have played a significant role in the unification of China over two thousand years ago.

The practice of public debating or argumentation actually abounds in Chinese history. Over thousands of years, debates about public policies were held in the ruler's presence, and a great deal of argumentation was happened among Chinese scholars in their works. Public debating or argumentation is also considered a good strategy for the exchange of ideas and wisdoms. Classic Chinese philosophy is, from its beginnings, characterized by a focus on social, moral issues rather than abstract topics. Ancient thinkers had to grapple with a plurality of viewpoints. They engaged very often critically with each other, trying to defend their own doctrines convincingly while criticizing others, especially in the period of the 'Hundred Schools' during the Warring States periods (476-221 B.C.). Many famous Chinese philosophers strive to argue with each other on some important issues, in order to get recognition from the rulers and the public. The need for reflection on prevailing argumentative practices had even initiated a strong tradition of argumentation studies in ancient China (especially in the pre-Qin period). Mohists, in particular, combined a strong faith in argumentation with a keen interest in its study. They valued argumentation (*bian*) as an activity by which we "clarify divisions between right and wrong; examine the guidelines of order and disorder; clarify points of sameness and difference; discern the patterns of names and reality; settle benefit and harm; and resolve uncertainty and doubt" (*Xiao Qu*).

For another example, Chinese history has recorded an interesting story illustrating how Zhuge Liang, the most intelligent figure during Three Kingdom (220-280 A.D.) period, debated with a hall of learned lords to refute their stupid and selfish ideas, thereby to persuade the ruler of Kingdom Wu to change his decision eventually. This debate brought Zhuge Liang great glory, the whole process of that famous debate was faithfully recorded by Chinese historians and has been fully studied and analyzed by later scholars and politicians as art of debating. For example, Gao (2008) summarized Zhuge Liang's art of debating into three strategies: First, he based his argument on fact. Second, he had a central argument point and always refers back to it. Third, he used a variety of language styles and tones when debating with different people.

The converging of eastern and western debating philosophy occurred in the early 20th century. In 1915, the New Culture movement was initiated in China, marking the era of Chinese scholars starting to embrace the western ideology of democracy and science as well as more equality and freedom. In 1916, Yanpei Huang introduced the western rules of debate to China, and ever since then, debating has been established as an academic discipline and taught at Chinese universities.

4. ARGUMENT-RELATED WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS IN CHINESE LANGUAGE

After examining the relevant concepts and meanings of the English word "argument" in Chinese culture, let's continue to examine the root words and idioms in Chinese language that have similar meanings as "argument". After consulting with the official Chinese language dictionary *Xin Hua Zi Dian* (Xin Hua Dictionary), it is thought that there is no such all-encompassing word in Chinese that can fully represent all the meanings of the English word "argument". However, the following

Chinese root characters are identified to share similar meanings with argument: *zheng* (争), *bian* (辩), *lun* (论), *shuo* (说), *chao* (吵). Literally, *zheng* (争) can mean compete, contend, strive to be the first, run off to the front, argue and refute. *Bian* (辩) has several meanings that are related to argument such as debate, distinguish, argue, defend one's position and justify. *Lun* (论) can mean discuss, argue, review and evaluate. *Shuo* (说) means persuade, inform, advise, and talk. *Chao* (吵) means quarrel and squabble.

However, it should be pointed out that *bian* (辩), *shuo/shui* (说), and *lun* (论) are the root words most commonly related to argument in ancient China. In ancient Chinese, *bian* (辨/辩) is originally a verb meaning "to distinguish or discriminate verbally, to make fine divisions". Making the appropriate distinctions normally connects to the process of contending for the right definition or attribution of *names* (名), which is the most important theme (rectification of names 正名) in classic Chinese philosophy. Thus the meaning of *bian* is also extended to refer to the activity or process of dialectical disputation over disagreement, whose purported goal is to determine the truth of some definition or thesis through competitive argument. *Shuo/shui* (说) is a character in ancient Chinese meaning the act or activity of persuading a particular audience to accept some thesis or to change some decision. And *lun* (论) originally means a discourse or essay which provides reasons to justify some thesis or position. These words have been commonly used in classical Chinese texts to label argumentative activities, and their meaning and uses have shaped in very important way the Chinese understanding of the concept of argument.

Although in ancient Chinese every character can stand on its own as a meaningful word, in modern Chinese words normally consist of more than one character. Actually, it could be said that many of the argument-related words and expressions in modern Chinese (Mandarin) have at least one of the above three characters. For example, *lunzheng* (论证) is the literal translation of "argument" in English. It can, as the term argument does, refer to both the abstract *complex of reasons and claim* (like O'Keefe's argument1), and the activity of *argumentative discussion*, (but not the same as O'Keefe's argument2, because it normally doesn't include quarrel, fight…). Another example is *lunbian* (论辩), which translates *argumentative discussion* in English, referring to an interpersonal activity in which participants try to refute the position of the other party and to defend their own by exchanging their arguments/reasons. There is also another word, *zhenglun* (争论), which means an interpersonal activity in which participants try to refute or defend some thesis by mainly rational means, but their mood is more contentious, hence the process will be more impetuous, with a very strong intention to win.

Besides, Chinese idioms are also a good resource to examine the relevant meanings and concept of argument in Chinese language. Chinese idioms take the condensed form of four characters and their meanings are often intimately linked with the myth, story, literature, or historical facts in Chinese history. Idioms are commonly used in daily Chinese speech and over ten thousands idioms are recorded in the Dictionary of Chinese Idioms (Yu & Sun, 2004). Many Chinese idioms are

argument-related, and used frequently in ordinary life till now. For example, "use lame arguments and perverted logic"(强词夺理), "argued with great acuteness" (能言善辩), "the argument from two sides match point by point" (针锋相对), "show off one's glibness in speech or wits" (卖弄口舌), "ready to answer and argue with whatever questions being asked" (对答如流), "eloquent in debating" (辩才无碍), "unreasonable demand" (胡搅蛮缠).

It can be seen from the discussion above that although the Chinese culture does not encourage aggressive behaviors and confrontation, the Chinese language does contain a variety of words and expressions that resonate with the meaning of the English word "argument". However, this article argues that there is no one single all-encompassing word in Chinese that can fully represent all the meanings of the English word "argument". Therefore, a study is conducted with the college students in China who have a good mastery of English to get their understandings of the possible Chinese translations of the English word "argument".

5. METHOD

5.1 Data Collection and Analysis

A questionnaire is designed which contains three sections with seven questions in total. It is distributed to 59 students, 35 from philosophy and 24 from law, at Sun Yat-Sen University, Guangzhou, China. The students were asked in this questionnaire to list the possible translations, frequency of usage of these translations, and their variation of degree, for both the verb of "argue" and the noun of "argument". Additionally, the students were asked to explain a bit the appropriateness of every listed translations, and to rate their own English proficiency on a scale of one to ten, where one is the worst and ten is the best.

Grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) was used for the analysis of data in those questionnaires because according to Glaser and Strauss (1967), it can be used to do comparative analysis and build theory through data. First, the researchers read the data over and over again to become familiar with the data. Then, the researchers used the technique of microanalysis or "detailed line-by-line analysis" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 57) and did open coding to identify salient core themes and categories respectively. During this process, the researchers also wrote memos respectively to document their reflections on the difficulties they encountered during the open coding process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Then the researchers compared the findings they got through open coding and jointly did axial coding to systematically explore the properties and dimensions of the core themes and categories and selective coding to identify the core category and relating the other categories to the core one (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this way, the researchers were able to focus on enriching the existing core themes, their subcategories, properties and dimensions while at the same time continuing to be sensitive to emerging themes.

5.2 Findings

Based on the answers provided by the Chinese students, twenty-seven different Chinese words are considered to be related to the meaning of the English word "argument". Those twenty-seven Chinese words can be categorized on a spectrum of aggressiveness from most passive to most aggressive: think, claim, demonstrate, persuade, reason, discuss, prove, defend, disagree, debate, quarrel, and physical fighting. Among these words are variation in subjectivity and point of reference. For example, *renwei* (认为), meaning think, is a subjective point of view. An English example could be "Columbus *renwei* (argued) that the world was round". This can be contrasted with *rending* (认定), meaning that a person not only thinks his view is right, but also exclusively adheres to this view while refuting others' views. While an English example would translate to "Sarah Palin *rending* (argued) about creationism". It would have the implication that Sarah Palin actively refutes the opposing view.

Similarly, *zhuzhang* (主张) is to claim while *biaoming* (表明) is to make clear, to show or demonstrate. An example of *zhuzhang* (主张) is "The commercial *zhuzhang* (argued) that the lotion would make freckles disappear", while an example of *biaoming* (表明) is "He *biaoming* (demonstrated) what his real position is". *Shuofu* (说服) translates similarly from Chinese to English, with the meaning of putting forth one's views so as to convince the other side. A basic example would be "He *shuofu* (convinced) us to see the movie with him". *Liyou* (理由), meaning reason, is generally used as a noun to indicate the logic behind an entire premise, so an instance of this would be "There is no *liyou* (reason) to think it that way". *Taolun* (讨论), which can be literally translated as discuss, has a meaning similar to the western understanding of dialectic, in that it is an objective way of discussing a proposition, regardless of good or bad, to achieve the truth. For example, "the two students *taolun* (argued) about the project", while *lunzheng* (论证), meaning prove or provide reasons, has emphasis on supporting reason or justifying a view, for example "the woman tried to *lunzheng* (argue) that her theory of the crime was right".

Moving to the more aggressive end of the spectrum, *bianhu* (辩护) is to defend from a confrontation or to provide justification to make one's own idea acceptable to another. This could be translated as "the graduate student *bianhu* (argued about) his own view before his professors". A similar term is *bianlun* (辩论) which means debate in English, while a more aggressive term is *zhengchao* (争吵), which is close to dispute or quarrel in English. Students reported the difference in meaning of *bianlun* and *zhengchao* as *bianlun* being to argue about something while *zhengchao* is to argue with someone. An English example of *bianlun* would be "Betty Freidan *bianlun* (argued) about women's rights with some of her classmates" and an example of *zhengchao* would be "Steve and Joe *zhengchao* (argued over) the toy truck". *Zhengyi* (争议) is another term used similarly to the way disagreement or dispute would be used in English, for instance "the arbitrator settled the *zhengyi* (dispute) between the two sides". Finally, the most aggressive term reported by students was *chaojia* (吵架), which means quarrel or squabble that is full of anger,

shouting, personal attacks hurting feelings and faces, and sometimes even resulting physical fighting. This term has a strong negative meaning and as such it is something in which the Chinese would try to avoid involvement. A translated Chinese example of this usage would be "the older brother and his younger brother *chaojia* (have a noisy quarrel) in anger".

6. DISCUSSION

Although Chinese culture has also acknowledged (some particular form of) practice of argumentation, the argument-related words and expressions in Chinese language are different from that of English. From the student reports, it is fair to say that the Chinese do not have an exact word that corresponds to the western concept of argument. The twenty-seven Chinese words provided by college students represent a variety of ways of understanding, and of translating the western concept of "argument" into the modern Chinese. It could be implied that Chinese understand the practice of argumentation in some different way, highlighting and valuing some of its distinct aspects. These language differences, if explored deeply, could reveal the major influence of cultural diversity. For example, as is argued by Garrett (1993), the classic Chinese root words of argumentation and persuasion, "*bian* (辩)" and "*shuo/shui* (说)", are all "reflective of deeper cultural presuppositions or contexts" in ancient China (p. 114). Moreover, the different translations reported in our survey, ranging from the most passive to most aggressive, could also be relevant to further investigate the attitude towards, or the perception and reception of, arguing/argument in contemporary China.

Second, it could be noted that the Chinese language is lack of a word that specifically corresponds to the concept of argument *as a product*. As indicated before, *lunzheng* (论证) is a literal translation in modern Chinese of the English term "argument", which can refer to both the abstract complex of reasons and claim, and the activity of "argumentative discussion". However, it is important to note that this term usually occurs in formal contexts like documents and report, but not daily conversations. Actually, it is not a word in ancient Chinese, and is rarely used by Chinese people in ordinary life. On the contrary, it is a word mainly used in academia, especially by people who have been educated to know about this word, particularly from the disciplines of logic and philosophy. For ordinary people, though they argue everyday in many occasions, it is customary to only simply ask for reasons, or to respond directly with reasons. The words used more commonly by ordinary Chinese people for describing the act of arguing are "*shuoli*" (说理) or "*jiangdaoli*" (讲道理), both of which are meaning only *speaking out/explaining reasons*. Moreover, even in academia, for those scholars who are not familiar with the discipline of logic and philosophy, it is still customary for them to translate the English word *argument* into Chinese as "*lunju*"(论据), a term which means only *supportive reasons*. It appears as though Chinese people in their argumentative practices care more about the reasons themselves than the complex of reasons and claim. Hence a concept of argument as product, or of an entity of "a conclusion supported by a reason", seems to be alien to Chinese.

Third, among these Chinese words which are considered to be related to the meaning of argument, some of them are related to the acts of arguing, for example *zhuzhang* (主张), *biaoming* (表明) and *Shuofu* (说服), while many others are explicitly related to the interpersonal activity of argumentation, for example, *Taolun* (讨论), *zhengchao* (争吵), *bianlun* (辩论), *chaojia* (吵架), and *zhenglun* (争论). It could be thought that Chinese people have a clear awareness of the concept of argument as process (the act of arguing), and of the concept of argument as a particular kind of interaction (the global process of dialectical argumentation). Moreover, as reported by the students who took the survey, *zhenglun* (争论) is considered to be the most relevant translation of argument. It is a word that is common in everyday conversation, meaning back-and-forth arguing with reasons. Specifically, the two constituent characters are *zheng* and *lun*, the former means compete, contend, argue and refute, while the latter is a root character related to argument in ancient Chinese, meaning a discourse or essay which provides reasons to justify some thesis or position. Therefore, the popularity of the word *zhenglun* (争论) in ordinary conversation also signifies a particular emphasis on both the rational and competitive nature of argument in modern Chinese society.

7. CONCLUSION

In this paper we try to explore the meaning of the English word argument in Chinese culture and language. Although Chinese people mainly adopt the non-argumentative and conflict-avoidance approach to deal with personal-related issues on interpersonal level, we argued that public arguing or debating has long existed in Chinese culture and is highly acknowledged and regarded. The Chinese language, in both ancient and modern times, has its own argument-related words and expressions, but there is no one single all-encompassing word in Chinese that can fully represent all the meanings of the English word argument. The result of a survey research with the college students in China has confirmed this claim, and also reveals a variety of possible Chinese translations of the English word argument. It is indicated that Chinese people have a clear awareness of the concept of argument as process (the act of arguing), and of the concept of argument as a particular kind of interaction, but a concept of argument as product appears to be alien to Chinese. Moreover, *zhenglun* (争论) is considered to be the most relevant translation of argument, which signifies a particular emphasis on both the rational and competitive nature of argument in China.

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APPENDICES

Since it is reported in our survey that *zhenglun* (争论) is considered to be the most relevant translation of argument, we have used it to translate our *Argumentativeness and Verbal Aggressiveness scale, Taking Conflict Personally scale,* and *Argument Frames Scales*. Here all these scales are appended for possible uses in future studies.

Appendix I: Argumentativeness and Verbal Aggressiveness Scale

请你阅读如下各句话，并根据你的自身情况，判断这些说法对你而言的相符程度。请在每句话左边的横线上，以某个恰当的数字来标明（请参照如下量表，来选择恰当的数字）

1 = 几乎从不如此
2 = 极少如此
3 = 有时候（偶尔）如此
4 = 经常如此
5 = 几乎总是如此

____ 1. 在和人争论的时候，我会担心我正与之争论的那个人会形成对我的负面印象。
____ 2. 就那些有争议性的议题进行争论，会有助于提高我的智力（使我更聪明）。
____ 3. 我喜欢避免与人进行争论。
____ 4. 在与人争论的过程当中，我会表现得充满活力和热情。
____ 5. 在和人争论结束之后，我会告诉自己，以后我决不会再与任何人争论了。
____ 6. 对我而言，与人争论给我带来的问题，常常多于我通过争论所解决的问题。
____ 7. 当我在争论当中有所胜出（或占上风）时，我会有一种愉悦的感觉。
____ 8. 在我结束与别人的一次争论之后，我会感到不安与心烦。
____ 9. 对于一个有争议性的论题，我喜欢和人对之进行一番有益的争论。
____ 10. 当我意识到我即将要涉入一场争论的时候，我会有种不愉快的感觉。
____ 11. 我喜欢针对某个议题辩护自己的观点。
____ 12. 当我避免了一场可能发生的争论时，我会感到高兴。
____ 13. 我不喜欢错过就某个具有争议性的议题进行论争的机会。
____ 14. 我更喜欢和那些很少与我意见不同的人相处。
____ 15. 在我看来，与人争论是一个令人兴奋的智力挑战。
____ 16. 在进行争论的过程中，我发现自己想不到那些有用的论点。
____ 17.当我与别人就某个具有争议性的议题展开了一次争论之后，我会感到精神振奋和心满意足。
____ 18. 我有能力在一场争论当中表现得优异。
____ 19. 我会试图去避免参与到任何争论当中去。
____ 20. 当我发现我所参与的一个对话正发展成一场争论的时候，我会感到兴奋。
____ 21. 当我在攻击他人观点的时候，我会极其小心地去努力避免攻击他（或她）的个人智商。
____ 22. 当我发现某人（在争论当中）非常固执时，我会对他使用侮辱性（或不礼貌的）的话语来削弱他（或她）的顽固态度。

____ 23. 当我试图（用自己的观点去）影响别人时，我会非常努力地避免使他（或她）对自身感到失望。

____ 24. 如果我知道一件事是重要的，但别人却拒绝去做，而且还根本给不出任何好的拒绝这样做的理由，那么，我就会明确告诉他（或她）：你是不讲道理的（不可理喻的）。

____ 25. 当别人做了一些在我看来很愚蠢的事情时，我也会极其友善的对待他（或她）。

____ 26. 对于那些我试图（用自己的观点）去影响的人，如果他（或她）的人格（品质）确实有问题，那么我就会选择攻击他的人格（品质）。

____ 27. 如果别人正以一种非常低俗（不得体）的方式在行事，我会通过羞辱他们来使他们明白自己的不当方式，从而重新回到得体的行事方式。

____ 28. 纵使别人的想法是愚蠢的，我也会尽力让他们认为自己其实表现得还算良好。

____ 29. 当别人就是不愿意在一个重要的事情上改变其立场和态度时，我会发火，并对他们说一些更重的话。

____ 30. 当别人批评我的缺点或短处时，我会以某种幽默的方式来接受，并且也不会想着要去对他们加以还击。

____ 31. 当别人无礼地侮辱我，但我却成功地驳斥了他们时，我会感到非常高兴。

____ 32.当我很不喜欢某人时，我会尽力避免将这种不喜欢在我说的话和我说话的方式中表现出来。

____ 33.我喜欢取笑那些做了非常愚蠢的事的人，并借此来使他们能够改正自己的行为。

____ 34. 当我攻击（或反对）别人的观点时，我尽力不损伤他们的自我意识（他们对自己的看法）。

____ 35. 当我试图（用自己的观点去）影响别人时，我会尽很大的努力使他（她）不会感到不快或觉得受到冒犯。

____ 36. 当别人做了刻薄或残暴的事情的时候，我会攻击他的人格（品质），以使他们改正自己的行为。

____ 37.我拒绝参与那些会涉及到人身攻击的争论。

____ 38. 当我试图去影响他人却毫无成效时，我会大喊大叫甚至高声尖叫，以使他（或她）的态度能够有所变化。

____ 39. 当我不能够反驳别人的立场时，我会尽力使他（或她）感到自己处于守势，由此来削弱他（她）的立场。

____ 40.当一场争论开始转变为人身攻击时，我就会尽全力转换谈话的主题。

Appendix II: Taking Conflict Personally Scale

请阅读以下各句话，并根据你的自身情况，判断这些说法对你而言通常是正确的还是不正确的。并请在每句话左边的横线上，以某个恰当的数字来标明（请参照如下量表，来选择恰当的数字）

  1 = 我非常不同意（strongly disagree）
  2 = 我不同意（disagree）
  3 = 我持中立态度 （neutral）
  4 = 我同意 （agree）
  5 = 我非常同意 （strongly agree）

____ 1. 我总是认为对我的批评就是针对我个人的攻击。
____ 2. 发生（意见）冲突实际上有助于增进彼此之间的关系。
____ 3. 我其实很讨厌与自己不是很熟悉的人争论。
____ 4. 我讨厌与任何人争论。
____ 5. 对我而言，与人发生（意见）冲突是一件很个人的事情（关乎私人恩怨的事情）。
____ 6. 当别人批评我所说的东西时，我并不认为这是在针对我个人进行攻击。
____ 7. 有时，当一个人正在激烈争论的时候，你也能发现他身上的一些令人赞赏的优点。
____ 8. 于我而言，被他人批评确实会使我感到很伤心。
____ 9. 与人发生（意见）冲突实际上会伤害彼此之间的关系。

____ 10. 在别人与我就所发生的（意见）冲突进行讨论时，我总是会感到对方在拼尽全力想要战胜我。

____ 11. 当相互之间一场较大的（意见）冲突结束之后，实际上大家也会因此而拉近了彼此之间的距离。

____ 12. 那些经常会和我因（意见）冲突而进行讨论的人，他们其实是很喜欢吹毛求疵地挑我的毛病。

____ 13. 与人发生（意见）冲突，是一种非常有趣的交际方式。

____ 14. 对于一个团队而言，就（意见）冲突而展开讨论实际上能够增强与其他成员之间的工作关系。

____ 15. 发生（意见）冲突对于相互之间的关系有积极的影响。

____ 16. 我不喜欢参与任何与人发生（意见）冲突的场合。

____ 17. 那些与人发生（意见）冲突的场合，会让我感到困扰和痛苦。

____18. 对于一个团队而言，就（意见）冲突而展开讨论实际上会破坏与其他成员之间的工作关系。

____ 19. 就彼此之间的（意见）冲突进行讨论，能够增进相互之间的友谊。

____ 20. 我真的非常讨厌与我的朋友发生争论。

____ 21. 如果在一个星期内和很多人发生了（意见）冲突，我有时会感觉自己几近崩溃。

____ 22. 在（意见）冲突的场合中通常会体现出一个人的诚实与正直，而这可以使人们增进相互之间的关系。

____ 23. 对我而言，与人发生（意见）冲突并不是一件会让我觉得紧张和充满压力的事情。

____ 24. 每当参与那些紧张和有压力的讨论，都会使我感到不舒服。

____ 25. 就彼此之间的（意见）冲突进行讨论，这实际上会破坏相互之间的友谊。

____26. 当我所处的团队中的其他成员拒绝接受我的某个建议时，我会觉得他们这是在针对我个人。

____ 27. 在经历了一场紧张的讨论之后，我的整个这一天通常也就被毁了。

____ 28. 对我而言，与人争论是一件乐事。

____ 29. （在讨论中）如果你所给出的建议不好的话，大家会认为你很笨。

____ 30. 对我而言，与人争论并是一件让人觉得紧张和充满压力的事情。

____ 31. 与人发生（意见）冲突会对彼此的关系产生负面的影响。

____ 32. 我并不介意自己的观点被别人质疑和批评。

____ 33. 在工作中与人产生（意见）冲突，这事实上会毁掉整个工作场合本来的氛围。

____ 34. 我通常很喜欢与人发生（意见）冲突。

____ 35. 那些与人发生（意见）冲突的情形，都会让我感觉很烦扰。

____ 36. 如果别人批评我的观点，我就会有很强的情绪反应。

____ 37. 我觉得他人（在与我讨论时）总是喜欢对我进行人身攻击。

Appendix III: Argument Frames Scales

请阅读如下各句话，并根据你的自身情况，判断这些说法对你而言通常是正确的还是不正确的。并请在每句话左边的横线上，以某个恰当的数字来标明（请参照如下量表，来选择恰当的数字）

1 = 我非常不同意（strongly disagree）
2 = 我不同意（disagree）
3 = 我持中立态度（neutral）
4 = 我同意（agree）
5 = 我非常同意（strongly agree）

____ 1.我通过与人争论（进行论证）来展示自己的聪明才智。

____ 2.别人也经常通过与人争论（进行论证）来展示他们的聪明才智。

____ 3.与人争论（进行论证）有益于表明我相信的到底是什么。

____ 4.与人争论有益于展现我到底有多么聪明。

____ 5.通过观察他人在争论过程中所说的那些内容，你可以了解到他的很多东西。

_____ 6. 如同友好的交谈一样，争论也同样能够揭示出他人的性格品质。

_____ 7. 我通过与人争论来赢得别人对我的尊重。

_____ 8. 一个人在与人争论的时候，你可以观察到他最好的一面或者最差的一面。

_____ 9. 与人争论是一件有趣的事情。

_____ 10. 进行争论有时候只是两个朋友之间消磨时间的一种方式。

_____ 11. 我喜欢质疑别人刚说出来的话，以便看看（在被我质疑之后）他接下去还能够说出什么来。

_____ 12. 有时候我也会说一些不合情理的东西，只是为了随后可以享受为之进行辩解的乐趣。

_____ 13. 在与人争论中战胜别人，是一种主导或支配他人的方式。

_____ 14. 在与人争论当中失败了，也就意味着（至少在此时）别人处于了占支配地位的上风。

_____ 15. 当我与人发生争论时，对我而言，获胜比表现得友好要更为重要。

_____ 16. 当我与人发生争论时，对我而言，获胜比说正确的东西（实事求是）要更为重要。

_____ 17. 无论一场争论是涉及什么主题的，实际上它通常都是关乎于谁有权力去支配谁。

_____ 18. 当我与人发生争论时，我总是告诉自己我必须要获胜。

_____ 19. 我认为，在与人争论时能够做到灵活与变通是重要的。

_____ 20. 对于我而言，获得别人真心的认同比获得别人不情愿的（勉强的/被迫的）认同更能令人满意。

_____ 21. 当我试图去解决自己和他人的（意见）分歧时，我也会认真地去考虑到他（她）的想法和需求。

_____ 22. 争论的最根本目的，就是使不同的人们来共同关注某一个问题，而不是来让一方得以压倒另一方。

_____ 23. 那些认为争论的最根本目的是获胜的人，其想法是不成熟的。

_____ 24. 当你与他人进行争论的时候，你必须时刻想到自己和他（她）之间的长远关系。

_____ 25. 争论涉及到喧嚣的说话声和负面的话语。

_____ 26. 争论涉及到双方或多方之间的合作。

_____ 27. 争论结束后，相互之间的关系会有积极的进展。

_____ 28. 争论能展现出不同参与者各自持有的闭塞思想和偏见。

_____ 29. 争论导致问题的成功解决。

_____ 30. 争论当中会涉及到非理性的情感或情绪。

_____ 31. 争论结束这后，相互之间的关系会受到负面的影响。

_____ 32. 争论当中会出现某种相互敌对的状态。

_____ 33. 争论当中会涉及到彼此之间观点和看法的真诚交流。

_____ 34. 争论当中会涉及到（身体的）暴力行为。

请阅读后面的条目，思考其中的各对描述中，哪一个最适用于描述"争论"。
如果条目的左边项明显比右边项更好地描述了"争论"，则标注 1；
如果条目的左边项稍微比右边项更好地描述了"争论"，则标注 2；
如果条目的左边项和右边项同样好地描述了"争论"，则标注 3；
如果条目的右边项稍微比左边项更好地描述了"争论"，则标注 4；
如果条目的右边项明显比左边项更好地描述了"争论"，则标注 5。

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              竞争    1 2 3 4 5  合作
          攻击（他人）  1 2 3 4 5  坚持观点
   难以控制的情绪表达  1 2 3 4 5 （为观点）提供理由
              暴力    1 2 3 4 5  平和
        支配与控制    1 2 3 4 5  解决问题
    让自己感到累人    1 2 3 4 5  让自己感到满足
  破坏彼此间的关系    1 2 3 4 5  促进彼此间关系的发展
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