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**Struggles for social belonging on weibo:
Chinese overseas students' accounts of their experiences in Australia**

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Struggles for social belonging on weibo: Chinese overseas students' accounts of their experiences in Australia

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Abstract

Abstract

This paper investigates the expression of stance in weibo writing. It applies Du Bois's (2007) definition of stance to analyse how Chinese overseas students in Australia use weibo to report and discuss their unpleasant and even traumatic experiences. I argue that weibo provides a space where a strong affective stance of fear and fury on self-reported incidents of violence is manifested through linguistic strategies of *categorization*, *the recurring topi of danger*, *flaming* and *nationalistic rhetoric*. Weibo-enabled functions such as *repost*, *@users*, *metacomment* and *emoticons* facilitate and accelerate the recurrence and circulation of this sentiment. Within the limited space of weibo, huge public pressures are generated on authorities in Australia, compelling them to respond to the incidents with a resolution. Using a hysterical-shouting style of *tucao* (i.e. complain something in a self-mockery manner), weibo users also form a discourse of resistance, challenging the stereotypical perception of overseas students as 'born rich' and their overseas life as prestigious and relaxing. The expression of stance in weibo writing reveals that overseas students suffer from an identity crisis and are yet to form a distinct group identity.

Introduction

Every year, thousands of Chinese students go abroad to pursue their studies in a foreign country.¹ Carrying with them are stories, recounts and other forms of texts that record their memories of overseas experiences and reflect who they are. In the age of Web 2.0, these texts are largely stored and are accessible on the Internet-enabled social media (e.g. blogs, microblogs, online forums, etc.). On such platforms, these texts can travel across time and space, and can even establish online communities in which writers, readers and commenters present themselves, share their experiences, personal beliefs and cultural values, and form emotional bonds with each other.

This paper presents a case study of these social media texts. It aims to investigate how Chinese overseas students in Australia present their identities on social media, as well as the ways they use language to express their experiences and feelings. In particular, I am interested in examining how Chinese students express their struggles for identity and struggles for social belonging in a foreign country using social media.

The linkage of language use and texts with identity has long been recognised and explored in the field of linguistics. As Joseph (2010: 9) points out, “our sense of who we are, where we belong and why, and how we relate to those around us, all have language at its centre”. He argues that language has “Identity-making and –marking functions”. Different choices of languages and ways of speaking signal social belonging (Joseph 2010: 9).

In this study, Sina Weibo (新浪微博, hereafter weibo) is chosen as the target social media platform. It is the largest Chinese-language social networking and microblogging service platform. It also enjoys great popularity in Australia.² From the linguistic point of view, weibo has its unique features that mark itself out from traditional media and other social media platforms. Weibo writing is restricted to 140 characters per post. But it allows an integration of linguistic texts and other semiotic resources (e.g. pictures, videos and emoticons) in meaning-making. It has great

¹ Cf. People. 2014. 《2013 年共 41 万人出国留学 72.83% 选择归国发展》, available at <http://edu.people.com.cn/n/2014/0224/c1053-24444292.html>, last viewed 24/02/2014.

² According to Sina Technology’s report in 2012, the number of Sina Weibo users in Australia is over 500,000, and 60% of them are Chinese overseas students, Chinese-speaking immigrants and entrepreneurs. Australian politicians, organisations and universities also use their Sina weibo accounts to promote ideas to and receive feedbacks from Chinese communities in Australia (Jiang 2013).

dialogic potential by allowing users to interact with inner-circle friends and acquaintances, complete strangers and even those who would otherwise be out-of-reach (e.g. talking to other people using the "@User" format or re-posting other users' written messages using the "//@User" construction; and adding hashtags with "#Topic#" format to group users and posts). As such, individual weibo users can provide a short narrative of themselves, share information with others or express their opinions about what is going on in the world. In other words, weibo provides a space for users to express their experiences and feelings, which might not be accessible to grassroots netizens on traditional media platforms. As I shall discuss in this paper, weibo users can manipulate this space to voice their views on specific issues, claim positions with respect to those issues, and align/dis-align with others in terms of shared/opposing beliefs and value systems. By doing so, they carve out their individual identities and signal their "association/disassociation" (Bucholtz 1999) with certain collective identities in their choice of words and style of writing.

Stance

In this paper, Chinese overseas students' discursive identity construction in weibo writing is mainly investigated through their expression of "stance" on a series of assault incidents that occurred during 2012 and 2013 in Australia. Here, Du Bois's (2007) definition of stance is adopted as the theoretical framework. According to him, stance is "a public act by social actor, achieved dialogically through overt communicative means, of simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects (self and others), and aligning with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of the sociocultural field" (Du Bois 2007: 163). He proposes a stance triangle model that consists of three key components for interpreting stance in discourse, namely the stance-taker, the object of stance and prior stance(s) to which the current stance is responding. Interactions between these three components need to be analysed within a given context.

While Du Bois (2007) provides the theoretical framework for identifying stance, Gray & Biber (2010) presents a classification system of stance. In their survey of the literature on stance, Gray & Biber (2010) argue that stance can be expressed along two parameters: 1) meaning of the assessment and 2) linguistic manifestation of the assessment (ibid: 15). Along the first parameter, stance consists of "epistemic stance"

(assessment of the status of knowledge), “attitudinal stance” (affect) and “style of speaking (speaker/writer’s comments on the communication)” (ibid: 17). Along the second parameter, stance is analysed on the level of value-laden lexis and grammatical constructions (ibid: 19-23).

There are a number of studies on stance in written discourse. For example, Hyland & Ginda’s (2010) collection of papers explores linguistic manifestation of stance and voices in various academic written genres. Coupland & Coupland (2009) examine the authoritative and impositional stances taken in medical clinics and magazine texts dealing with body shape and weight loss. Hsieh (2009) in her analysis of epistemic stance marking in Chinese news reports found that the choice of an epistemic stance marker is a strategic one with the view to attain distinct forces of stance taking.

Some researchers argue that the expression of stance is an act of constructing and indexing social Self and Others in interaction. Jaworski and Thurlow (2009) investigate the travel sections of two British weekend newspapers targeting the middle-class, affluent readership. He argues that various linguistic moves and devices are used to construct a stance of superiority and social distinction, and perform an elitist identity. Johnstone (2009) examines the talks and writings of Barbara Jordan, arguing repeated patterns of stancetaking can become a style associated with an individual’s social identity. Bucholtz’s (2009) analysis of the use of the slang ‘güey’ among Mexican-American youth suggests that this term indexes alignment in stance, but it can operate in different styles of youthful masculinity and display a particular gender identity in interaction.

There are relatively few studies on stance in online and social media discourse. Zhang & E’s (2012) analysis of the online circulation of a popular slogan shows that the slogan and its encoded value can be a powerful intertextual resource for Chinese youth to take stances in their efforts to establish their own identity and social space. Myers (2010)’s analysis of stance and public discussions in blogs argues that marking stance may not necessarily be signaled by lexical choices or syntactic constructions. Rather rhetoric strategies such as irony, which “dramatises an opposing position to undermine it,” can mark stance-taking actions in blog writing (Myer 2010: 273).

In sum, analyzing expressions of stance can provide insights into the ways people present themselves and interact with others in a given context. For this study, the integration of written language with weibo-enabled semiotic and dialogic

resources in stance-taking expressions are important means by which Chinese overseas students construct their identities and express their social belonging on social media.

Data collection

The weibo posts in this study were retrieved from the Sina Weibo search engine. This search engine has a filtering function, allowing users to sort the results by attributes (e.g. location of posts, publication date range, originally written posts, etc.). Initially, the nominal phrase ‘悉尼留学生’ (overseas students in Sydney) was used as the search term, and generated 334,544 posts. A rough sketch of these posts suggests that there is a high concentration on those Chinese overseas students’ assault incidents which happened in mid 2012 and early 2013. Also, there are a number of posts that *tuciao* (i.e. (complaint through self-mockery, see Section 4 for details) the overseas study experiences. Thus, the clause ‘留学生被打’ (overseas students got assaulted) and a typical *tuciao* expression ‘留学生伤不起’ (overseas students are too vulnerable to withstand any traumatic experience) were chosen as the new search terms to generate relevant weibo posts. In other words, ‘assault incidents’ and ‘overseas study experiences’ would be the weibo writers’ “objects of stance-taking actions”. In total, 568 posts whose writers reside in Australia were collected during the period from January 2012 to June 2013, and form the corpus of the current study.³

There are three major questions that I attempt to answer in this study: 1) What stance do Chinese overseas students take on their experience of living and studying in Australia; 2) How stance is expressed in their weibo posts; and 3) What do the results tell us about Chinese overseas students’ sense of social belonging in Australia?

Data analysis

In this section, I examine the expression of stance in Chinese weibo writing. It aims to identify the linguistic strategies of stance-taking that Chinese overseas students adopt in reporting and evaluating their unpleasant or even traumatic experiences in Australia. By doing so, it attempts to carve out their struggles for social belonging..

³ The search term ‘留学生被打’ generates 290 posts, and ‘留学生伤不起’ returns 278 results.

1. Chinese overseas students' self-reports of and comments on assault incidents: taking a stance of defiance against racism and social injustice

Many researchers argue blog and other social media enable grassroots-citizens to disseminate information, informing people of politically sensitive issues, and thus giving rise to 'participatory journalism' or 'citizen journalism' (e.g. Awoshakin 2010; Xin 2010). As Sullivan (2013) argues, weibo in China, also provides a complementary channel for information dissemination, and may empower grassroots netizens to fight against political and ideological predominance.

Since it is not easy to broadcast information through traditional media outlets in Australia, some netizens self-report their overseas experiences on weibo. By posting self-reports, writers can inform a wider audience, and share with them their opinions and attitudes towards the reported incidents. See an example of a self-report of an assault incident posted on weibo by one of the three victims in the incident.

- 1) 微博播报者 1:⁴ 求扩散。澳洲真的太恐怖！完全没有安全！我们在车上没有帮我们。车停了两站！最可恨的是另一个被抢的白人女人居然对那群痞子说：“抢他们，他们是中国人，他们有钱！”我操你澳大利亚！ @今日悉尼 @今日悉尼_时尚频道

Self-reporter 1: Please disseminate the message! Australia is terror-frightening country. It is not safe at all. Nobody helped us on the train, which stopped at two stations. A white woman who was also robbed said to the hooligans, "Rob them. They are Chinese, they are rich!" This was the most annoying moment. I fuck you, Australia! @SydneyToday @SydneyToday_SydneyFashion

Example 1 is one of the posts that caused online outrage among Chinese overseas students in Australia. It starts with a petition to the general weibo users to help generate more public attention. Referential terms such as 'we' and 'Chinese' are juxtaposed with 'them', 'the white woman', 'those hooligans' and 'you'. By doing so, the writer constructs Australia as a nation full of terror and described the incident as a vicious racist attack on Chinese nationals from Australians. His declaration 'I fuck

⁴ In this paper, the account names of the cited self-reporters are anonymised and replaced with the term '微博播报者' (self-reporter). Other weibo users are also anonymised and identified as '微博用户' (user). Only when required in the discussion, some users' weibo account names are retained in the cited examples.

you, Australia' projects his stance of strong disapproval of Australia as a nation the nation and defiance against racism. The post concludes with two *@user constructions*, attempting to inform a wide audience of the incident through two influential Sydney-based media outlets.

1.1. Use referential strategies to categorise social groups

After its publication on weibo, the post drew a number of comments, posts and similar self-reports. It is predictable that weibo writers would adopt similar referential strategies widely in order to align themselves with the Chinese overseas student community and draw boundaries with Australians who are perceived as out-group members. According to Reisigl & Wodak (2001: 44, cited in Krzyżanowski 2010: 113), referential strategy refers to linguistic ways of naming and referring to persons. This strategy is widely identified in the discourse of discrimination, exclusion and social inequality (cf. Hart 2010). In the collected weibo posts, the dichotomy is most typically expressed when the opposition is drawn between 'overseas students' and 'local teenagers', between 'overseas students' and 'Australian policemen', between 'Chinese/Asian' and 'Australian white', and even between 'overseas students' and 'Chinese government'. See the following extracts taken from the self-reports of another two assault incidents.

- 2) 微博播报者 2: 作为留学生都要学会保护自己, 虽然我们是弱势群体, 但我们的利益, 尊严, 安全都需要自己来捍卫。

Self-reporter2: **Overseas students** need to learn how to defend themselves. Although **we** are a disadvantaged group, we need to defend our own interests, dignity and safety **by ourselves**.

- 3) 微博播报者 3: 澳洲布里斯班留学生受到当地鬼佬种族歧视惨遭辱骂毒打...毕竟我们留学生一个人在外真的不容易, 我们没有靠山没有背景, 每天上学下学闲暇打工, 生活在这样一个潜伏着对中国人歧视和施暴的环境里, 我想每一个人都挺担惊受怕的。

Self-reporter3: **Overseas students** in Brisbane were abused and assaulted by **local devils**...It is really not easy for **us overseas students**, to study in a foreign country. **We** are all alone here. We work after the school or at our spare time. I think everyone is scared living in such an environment where discrimination and violence against **Chinese** abound.

In both posts, the writers/victims identify themselves as in-group members of weibo users who are assumed to be Chinese overseas students. They also depict the whole group as innocent and weak victims of racial assaults and discrimination. Australian teenagers are portrayed as violent attackers and policemen as irresponsible and indifferent onlookers. The rhetoric of ‘*us*’ and ‘*them*’ and ‘*foreign land*’ and ‘*homeland*’ permeates the posts and carries a hint of nationalism. Collective pronouns ‘we’, ‘you’ and ‘they’ are a common means of constructing in-and out-group status. In particular, in the months of April and May 2012 following the two assault incidents, the use of the pronoun ‘我们’ (we) peaked in the weibo posts in the eighteen-month data collection period. This high density suggests not only in-group membership for weibo users but also the idea that all weibo users should be aware of the situation and be called upon for protecting the whole group from danger and threat brought on by out-group members. The use of war-related terms such as ‘捍卫’ (defend) in Example 2 tends to invoke an imaginary battle in which in-group members fight against enemies for safeguarding collective dignity, interests and honour. The juxtaposition of ‘我们’ (we) with the term ‘留学生’ (overseas students) and the nationym ‘中国人’ (Chinese) as illustrated in Example 3 further conveys a sense of strong group unity bound up by national belonging. When referring to and portraying Australian attackers and policemen, the conventional slang term for foreigner 鬼佬 (ghost-bloke > ‘foreign devil’) is adopted. Although largely neutralized in contemporary Chinese language, this Cantonese term still encodes negative implications when used by Chinese speakers.

1.2. Integrate recurring topos of danger with emoticons

Schaller & Neuberg (2008: 405, cited in Hart 2010: 52) point out that “merely categorizing an individual as an out-group member is not sufficient to promote avoidance. There must also be some cognitive association linking that out-group, and its members, with some specific connotative or affective information that promotes behavioural avoidance”. In the weibo posts, the portrayal of Australians as out-group members is further achieved through repeatedly associating them with the topos of danger and fear.

- 4) 微博用户 1: 自从看了那个悉尼留学生被打的微博后就一直在恐慌中, @微博用户 2 又打死不接电话 🙄 澳洲这么乱, 不敢呆了。。。 @微博用户 2 你手机不会又被抢了吧。。。 🙄🙄🙄🙄🙄

User1: I have been indulged in fear since I read the weibo posts that reported the assault incident on that overseas student in Sydney. @user2 didn't answer my calls [crying face] Australia is such a chaotic place, and I dare not to stay here any longer...@user2 Is your mobile phone robbed again? [crying face] x 5

- 5) 微博用户 4: 悉尼这地方果然够恶心的, 坚决不去那上学 😡 // @微博用户 3: 悉尼留学生在火车上遭到殴打和种族歧视言语羞辱。

User4: Sydney is **truly disgusting**. I insist on not studying there [angry face] // @User3: Overseas students in Sydney were assaulted and humiliated by racist remarks.

- 6) 微博用户 6: 中国留学生被打的事件又在发生了 🙄🙄🙄 // @微博用户 5: 两名留学生在 Maroubra 附近的 Hillsdale 遭遇 local 小混混无端殴打, 两人已经住院, 希望大家转发声援! @微博用户 7

User6: Chinese overseas students were assaulted **again** [annoyed face with a sweat drop] x 3 // @User5: Two overseas students were viciously attacked by local hooligans in Hillsdale, which is close to Marouba. Both students were admitted to hospital. I hope everyone can repost this message to show your support for them! @User7

- 7) 微博用户 9: 悉尼好危险 🙄 @微博用户 10 @微博用户 11 @微博用户 12 // @微博用户 8: 昨晚悉尼留学生冲突事件详细版回顾。谢谢各澳洲微博媒体的大力转发声援, 尤其好友 @微博用户 12 第一时间致电受害学生了解详情, 我们也正在积极与警方和媒体联系帮助受害学生

User9: Sydney is so dangerous [scared face] @User10@User11@User12 // @User8: this is a detailed recount of last night's assault incident on overseas students in Sydney. Thanks to all Australia-based weibo channels for reposting the message and showing support. It was our friend @User12 who called the assaulted students for detailed information at the first place. We are now cooperating with the police and the media outlets to help these student victims.

Zappavigna (2010) in her study on the English microblogging service platform Twitter points out that “a tweet may have both an information-sharing and a bonding function” (ibid: 29). She argues that retweeting, which incorporates another text within the current text as a direct quotation, is a “heteroglossic engagement resource”

(ibid: 63). Written in *RT @User structure* and in *metacomment – RT @User structure*, the re-tweeted posts take “a stance in relation to other positions in other texts” (ibid: 62). These findings can also be applied to weibo, the Chinese counterpart of Twitter. Examples 5-7 are a type of retweets which consist of metacomments and reposted messages written by other weibo users. Metacomments are verbal texts at the beginning of a post preceding the *//@user* structure. While the reposted messages are reports on assault incidents, the metacomments in 5 and 7 that encode negative evaluation of Sydney as ‘乱’ (chaotic), ‘恶心’ (disgusting) and ‘危险’ (dangerous) construe solidarity with ‘Chinese overseas students’ by responding to the appeal of the reposted messages and aligning themselves with reposted messages in the same stance. Moreover, the use of the adverb ‘又’ (again) in 6 and the expression of ‘恐慌’ (terror) in 4 and a negative statement ‘I insist on not studying there’ in 5 reemphasise a repeating message: Sydney is not safe for Chinese overseas students.

This sentiment of fear and discontent is very prominent in the collected weibo posts. Besides verbal texts, such sentiment is visibly evident in the wide adoption of emoticons. Similar to non-verbal behaviours in face-to-face interaction, emoticons are emblems for people’s feelings and attitude in computer-mediated communication (Huffaker & Calvert 2008, Luor et al 2010, Jibril & Abdullah 2013). They are “graphological realisation of facial expressions”, which can intensify affect and attitude, and support interpersonal connections (Zappavigna 2010: 76). The most frequent emoticons in the collected posts are crying face (Example 5) and angry face (Example 6), followed by annoyed face with a sweat drop (Example 7) and scared face (Example 8). The employment of these emoticons in the posts articulates not only the users’ negative emotional feelings but also additional confirmation for the stance they take towards to the reported incidents. The repeated crying faces in Example 5 and the repeated annoyed faces in Example 7 further upscale and intensify the users’ negative evaluation of the incidents.

1.3. Post flaming messages

Another upscale manifestation of anger is a few occurrences of flaming. According to Johnson et al (2009), flaming is generally defined as a type of hostile communication of emotions, including the use of offensive or hurtful statements.

Flaming messages violate the communicative norms of a specific group in interpersonal interaction when common bonds between interlocutors cannot be achieved. The potential for flaming tends to be increased if interlocutors in computer-mediated communication are strangers and remain anonymous to each other. The weibo platform allows flaming messages for at least two reasons. First, though every user has an account name and needs to provide certain personal information during the registration process the real identity of individual users is hard to determine. Second, netizens can be creative in manipulating linguistic forms to avoid the Chinese government's profanity censorship. See two examples below.

- 8) 微博用户 13: @微博用户 14 继南加州大学事件后, 悉尼留学生在澳无故被打, 警察法院竟然判没事! 祖国难道就这么放任自己的学子被欺负?! 这就是政府对我们的态度吗? 留学生凭什么受这种对待! 澳洲警察! 你们吃的那么白胖白胖, 不干活啊?! 就知道查车票, 吃软饭啊! 未成年就可以随便打人不负责?! 你爸妈没教育过你啊

User13: @User14 After the USC incident, overseas students in Sydney were attacked unprovoked. However, the police and the court did nothing to the attackers! Can the motherland turn a blind eye to her own students and let them be assaulted?! Is this the attitude that the government shows towards us? Why are overseas student treated in such as way! Australian police! You are so white and fat, don't you do any work?! Do you do anything other than checking? You are soft rice-eaters! Shouldn't teenager attackers be responsible for their vicious attacks?! Didn't your parents ever educate you?

- 9) 微博用户 17: 就特么应该砍死他! //@微博用户 16: 操他妈的傻逼土澳法官, 要是中国留学生被打, 被砍了, 绝对会放了闹事儿的, 白猪都应该死光光

@微博用户 15: [澳洲新闻] 砍伤醉酒挑衅者被判刑 中国留学生提起上诉

User17: He **should** be fucking hacked dead! //@User16: The mother-fucking Australian bogan judge! If Chinese overseas students were attacked and hacked, the attackers would definitely be released. White pigs **should** be wiped out.

@User15: [Australian News] A Chinese overseas student was charged for hacking a drunk man who picked the fight. The student lodged an appeal.

Example 8 starts with a reference to the homicide of two Chinese students in Southern California on 11 April 2012, which was less than two weeks before the assault incident on a Sydney train. By linking two incidents involving vicious attacks on overseas Chinese students, the writer aligns himself and his assumed fellow overseas students in Sydney with their counterparts in US. Also, he constructs an impression that Chinese overseas students fall victims to vicious assaults everywhere in the world. It can be seen that this post consists of exclamation statements and rhetoric questions, setting a highly confrontational tone of the criticism. The writer takes a strong oppositional stance against the Australian police and court, accusing them for unfair treatment of overseas students in Sydney. He also questions the ‘motherland’ and the ‘government’ for not protecting their students, and ridicules Australian police as ‘white and fat’ and ‘soft rice-eaters’ (i.e. count on others to survive). By stating the rhetoric question ‘your parents haven’t taught you that, have them’, the writer implicitly portrays those teenage attackers as irresponsible and uneducated.

Example 9 shows flaming messages can be extreme ways of expressing dissatisfaction and disagreement. The example here entails two layers of metacomments of a reposted message about a court’s decision on an incident which involves a brawl broken out between an overseas Chinese student and an Australian drunk man. The first layer is a direct metacomment made above the repost framed in a square box. Here the user evaluates the reported incident as an unfair and racist treatment of overseas Chinese students by using abusive forms of reference such as ‘白猪’ (white pigs), and derogatory descriptions as ‘傻逼’ (idiot) and ‘土澳’ (Aussie bogans), swearwords such as ‘操他妈的’ (fuck his mother) and curses such as ‘白猪都应该死光光’ (White pigs should all be wiped out). The verbal text preceding the //@user structure is the second layer metacomment, which echoes the first metacomment by offering an even more a violent resolution (i.e. 砍死他 > hack him dead). The use of 特么 (fricking), which is a euphemistic variant of the typical Chinese swearword 他妈 (fucking), expresses fury and indicate a strong oppositional stance. Thus, the second metacomment conveys not only the user’s attitude towards the reported incident but also a reinforcing support for the stance made in the first metacomment. In-group connections and solidarity between Weibo users and assumed

Weibo readers are hereby established and strengthened by putting overseas Chinese students in opposition to white Australians.

1.4. Adopt nationalistic rhetoric

Besides flaming, it is not uncommon to find posts of nationalistic discourse. Since weibo is a Chinese-language social media platform, it is generally assumed that most weibo users are or were Chinese nationals. This pan-identity assumption and claim in weibo posts is an “associative identity practice” (Kádár et al 2013: 347, quoting Bucholtz 1999). That is, an individual weibo user’s identity is associated with the collective identity of Chinese-speaking users, and then can be extended to the national identity or ‘being Chinese’ in inter-group contexts. Thus, a threat to an individual who is a Chinese weibo user is translated into a threat to all weibo users collectively, and by extension to the whole nation (i.e. China). An example of this can be seen below.

10) 微博用户 18: 【5.19 中国留学生被殴打诬陷全过程】这是@微博用户 19 @微博用户 20 以及@微博用户 21 位当事人共同回忆。同胞们，此时此刻我们必须团结起来，让澳洲政府和@陆克文 @RobertKok 同志听到我们的声音，为我们的留学生伸张正义，不要让我们留学生，一次又一次承受如此的屈辱和伤害。（请放大图片）<http://t.cn/zO19v9J> [长微博] 转发(727)|评论(150)

User18: [A comprehensive recount of the May 19 incident in which Chinese overseas students were assaulted] This is @User19 @User20 and @User21’s recount of the incident. Fellow compatriots, we must unite at this critical moment. Make our voices heard by comrades @KevinRudd @RobertKok. We should fight for justice. Don’t let our overseas students fall victims to humiliation and harm again. (Please zoom in on the attached picture) <http://t.cn/zO19v9J> [long weibo post] Repost (727) | Comment (150)

The example consists of a metacomment and its follow-up repost which reports an assault incident taking place on 19 May 2013 in Sydney where three Chinese overseas students were attacked by four drunk men on their doorstep. In this post, the use of the collective address term 同胞 (‘compatriots’) and the possessive pronoun 我们的 (‘our’) grant readers full membership and belonging within the national collective identity through interpreting the terms as referring to the nation (i.e. 中国 >

‘China’) and as associating the group (i.e. 中国留学生 > ‘Chinese overseas students’) with the nation. The call for unity (i.e. 此时此刻我们必须团结起来 > ‘We must unite at this critical moment’) and the use of 同志 (‘comrades’) to refer to Kevin Rudd and Robert Kok remind readers of China’s revolutionist rhetoric, which also tends to reinforce a strong sense of national unity.

Apart from evaluative lexis, the employment of the *@user structure* serves as another stance-taking strategy in this post. As mentioned previously, the *@user structure* is a very common strategy of engagement whereby a user is informed of the post writer’s knowledge or shared with the writer’s opinions (Zappavigna 2010). In the example, however, the post also uses the *@the three victims of the May 19 assault incident* structure to verify the authenticity of the reported incident. By using @陆克文 and @RobertKok, the post involves both the victims and the two key Australian political figures who are generally believed to be close associates with the Chinese community in Australia into the same conversation. By presenting the posted message as bearing a relationship to those users, the post simultaneously makes them the target of its stance-taking action. The post is constructed as a petition for help and social justice. By doing so, the post writer aligns himself with other weibo users who are assumed to be Chinese nationals and calls on them as a collective to take action. It can be seen that the post has received huge responses from Chinese communities: it has been reposted 727 times and generated 150 comments.

1.5. Manipulate intertextual resources NP+伤不起

Chinese netizens are highly creative and productive in manipulating language online (cf. Gong 2012; Yuan 2012). On the weibo platform, users often incorporate or reconstruct linguistic expressions of others in their own posts. Certain expressions are widely used online, and are often employed as intertextual resources for stance taking. In the corpus, the NP+ 伤不起 structure (‘*NP is too vulnerable to withstand any trauma structure*’) has relatively high occurrences in the weibo posts. See the example below.

11) 微博用户 19: 留学生伤不起。。 //@微博播报者 1: 求扩散, 澳洲真的太恐怖! 完全没有安全! 我们在车上没有人帮我们。车停了两站! 最可恨的是另一个被抢的白人女人居然虽然对那群痞子说: “抢他们, 他们

是中国人，他们有钱！”我操你澳大利亚！@今日悉尼 @今日悉尼_时尚频道

User19: **Overseas students are too vulnerable to withstand any trauma**...//@Self-reporter1: Please disseminate the message! Australia is too terrifying. It is not safe at all. Nobody helped us on the train, which stopped at two stations. A white woman who was also robbed said to those hooligans, “Rob them. They are Chinese, they are rich!” This was the most annoying moment. I fuck you, Australia! @SydneyToday @SydneyToday_SydneyFashion

The expression NP+伤不起 is a popular set structure originating in Chinese online ‘hysterical shouting style of writing’ (咆哮体). As a way of self-mocking and self-release of pressure, it expresses a sense of hopelessness, struggle, dissatisfaction and negation, projecting a stance of rebellion and resistance to those ‘widely perceived truths’ (cf. Yang 2011).

The NP+伤不起 structure is a variant form of the passive voice construction in Chinese: NP is the patient of the verb ‘hurt’, whereas the passive marker ‘被’ is absent and the agent is unidentified. In the example here, the term ‘overseas students’ occupies the position of NP, making it the target and the patient of the action ‘hurt’. The agent of the action, however, is implied in its follow-up //@user structure, which reports the assault incident. The complete message here is ‘the already frail overseas students cannot withstand any assaults’. Thus, the Weibo user employs the NP+伤不起 structure in his metacomment to align with the writer of the original post and take a stance of defiance against violence towards overseas Chinese students.

1.6. Discussion

As shown above, the self-reports and their massive follow-up comments and reposts establish a very clear collective attitudinal stance that Chinese communities take towards the incident. That is, they are frightened, upset and angry.

In his study on weibo in China, Lu (2011) argues that netizens would “use the Internet technology to make collective expression of opinions on social events and incidents reported on the Internet”. Consequently a huge public pressure would be produced through diffuse posting, reposting and commenting on an incident, and its articulation into a hot topic of online discussion within a short period of time. This

behaviour is called ‘围观’ (‘surrounding gaze’). Tong & Lei (2011) argues that weibo provides a space for “the war of position over hegemony”, or the ideological predominance of the ruling classes, and surrounding gaze is an essential strategy in this war. According to them (ibid), surrounding gaze, which is formed by an enormous accumulation of public attention and opinions, would generate a great pressure on the government, forcing it to face the issue or the event in question, find a resolution or even overturn its previous decisions.

The self-posts of the assault incidents in Australia have successfully formed a surrounding gaze on weibo. Example 3, for example, received 55 likes, was reposted 4370 times and generated 1007 comments by 26 May 2013. Consequently, the self-reporter was invited to Kevin Rudd’s office and talked to him in person. This case suggests that the China’s popular slogan of weibo could also be true in the context of Australia, namely, *Surrounding Gaze is Power* (围观就是力量). Also they demonstrate that the surrounding gaze is a collective stance-taking action of self-expression and defiance against social injustice by Chinese netizens.

2. Responses to criticism from China: taking a stance against misperception and misunderstanding

The reported assault incidents also received wide publicity in Mainland China. The reporting of these incidents also caused heated discussions on the Chinese Internet. Take the Tencent Online Forum for example. In this forum, the discussion on the April’s train assault incident in Sydney generated 192 follow-up comments and attracted 2293 discussants by the date of the data collection. 58% of these comments are infused with contempt, disdain and hatred. They accused the victims of showing off their wealth in the public, and classified them as the children of the rich (富二代) or of bureaucrats (官二代).

The negative attitudes and comments from Mainland China have drawn attention from Australia. These comments sparked disputes between Chinese netizens in China and Australia. Consequently, these disputes generated an enormous pressure on the people who self-reported the assault incidents on Weibo. The writer of Example 1, for example, deleted all his weibo posts, closed his original account and then re-registered with a different account name. Several overseas Chinese students, however, took a

defensive stance, posting opposing messages against such negative and disdainful comments. An example is given below.

12) 微博用户 20: 我们是留学生, 本质还是学生, 我们过得不是纸醉金迷的生活, 我们也怀抱着自己的梦想, 我们可以说比很多国内的同学更努力, 承受的压力也多得多, 请国内的大众和媒体对我们少一些偏见和误解, 身在异乡我们一样很爱国, 也请祖国同样的爱我们, 不要再伤害我们这个群体@微博用户 21 @微博用户 22 @微博用户 23
转发(28) | 评论(6)

微博用户 24: 留学生亲们, 我们懂你们, 也支持你们!  //@微博用户 25: 嗯支持
微博用户 25 : 嗯支持
微博用户 26: 所以不管背后有多少令人心寒的谣言, 大家一定要挺下去, 一定要顺利完成学业, 我们将来工作起点以及晋升空间就是会比那帮没素质的家伙优越!

User20: We are overseas students. We are students indeed. We are not living in a luxurious life. We have dream-chasers too. Probably, we are more hardworking than many students in China. We are under greater pressure. As to those people and media outlets in China, please don't misperceive and misunderstand us. Although we are in a foreign country, we love China as much as you do. We hope the motherland would love us too. Please don't hurt us any more. @User21@User22@User23
Repost (28) | Comment (6)

User24: Dear overseas students, we understand you, and support you![thumbs up] [thumbs up] [thumbs up] //@User25: Yes, we support you
User25 : Yes, we support you
User26: No matter how many rumours there are, we must withstand the pressure. We must complete our studies successfully. After graduation, our future will be much brighter than those uncouth folks!

In this post, the writer takes an opposing stance to the criticism from China. This is expressed through presupposition and shared views with her fellow students and the consistent emphasis of their in-group membership. The use of the first person plural pronoun 'we' assumes an alignment from other Weibo users in Australia. The attributive statement 'we are overseas students' explicitly defines the writer and her

fellow weibo users as stance-takers who are presupposed to be Chinese overseas students. The second attributive clause '(we) are students' assigns herself and her fellow weibo users a more generic membership which encompasses all Chinese students who pursue their studies within and outside of China. In other words, the writer defines 'Chinese overseas students' as in-group members of the wider group of 'Chinese students'. In the ensuing sentences, the writer takes an opposing stance against the labeling of overseas students as children who were born into wealthy and prominent families who lead a life of luxury and indulgence. By using the adverbs '也' (also) and '一样' (the same as), she re-emphasizes the in-group membership of Chinese overseas students. Also, Using an epistemic stance marker "可以说" (probably) and the comparative construction '比...更' (X is more...than Y), she describes her fellow overseas students as dream-driven and under greater stress than those in China. Juxtaposing overseas students' national loyalty to the motherland with the misunderstanding and prejudice held by some people against them, she demands an equal treatment as other in-group members, and calls for care, love and support from people and media in the motherland. The post ends with three @users expressions, intending to spread its message through more influential weibo channels and gain alliance from the wider weibo users.

As it can be seen, this post has been reposted 28 times. It also attracts comments from weibo users both within and outside of Australia. As illustrated in the example, the first two commenters express their support for the writer and her fellow overseas students. The third commentator aligns with the writer by using the logical conjunction '所以' (therefore). This establishes a cause-effect relation between the original post and her proposed actions, 'we must withstand the pressure...complete our studies successfully'. Here the commenter takes a more confrontational stance, accusing those rumour-makers as 'uncouth folks' and claiming to have better employment prospects over them.

3. Epistemic stance marking and the #Topic# construction

It is noteworthy that epistemic stance markers, including modal verbs and adverbs evaluating the commitment and responsibility (see Li 2007: 134-144), are of low frequencies in the corpus. Modal adverbs of obligations such as 应该 (should)

and 必须 (have to) occurred only two and three times respectively (as illustrated in Examples 9 & 10). Modal adverb of inclination ‘要’ occurs seven times in posts that express safety-warning messages (as in “悉尼不安全，大家要小心” > “Sydney is not safe, everyone needs to be careful”. In terms of adverbs of certainty, ‘一定’ occurs thirteen times (as in “下班一定小心” > You certainly need to be careful after work)). But ‘必定’ (definitely), which marks a higher degree of certainty, is absent in the corpus. These findings suggest that overseas students do not express a strong demand for resolution or call for collective actions in spite of venting their fear and fury.

What is also absent in the corpus is the #Topic# construction. Hashtagging is a way of tagging topics of interests on weibo. Users can start or join a discussion with other fellow users by inserting the #Topic# construction in their own posts. Hashtagging also makes weibo posts searchable since posts which share the same topic would be grouped together automatically. In her analysis of Twitter, Zappavigna (2012) points out the hashtag has meaning potential in marking the target of evaluation and establishing affiliation with values expressed in the tweet. Similarly, the absence of the #Topic# structure in the weibo corpus may signal the absence of clearly-identified stance-taking objects and the lack of group affiliation with values individual stance takers convey in his/her own posts.

4. Tucao (吐槽): taking a stance of audacity and defiance against stereotype/ take a stance on stereotype and misperception

So far, I’ve shown that weibo users adopt lexical or syntactic construction and weibo-enabled resources of engagement to mark their affective stance on the assault incidents. However, as Myers (2010) argues, stance can be expressed in other ways such as irony. In this corpus, it is found that *tucao* (i.e. complaining in a self-mocking manner) can be a form of stance-taking as it expresses a negative evaluation of the stereotypical perception of overseas lives, and disaligns the writer from those view holders.

The term ‘tucao’ originates in the Japanese expression 突っ込み, which is similar to Chinese ‘penggen’ (捧哏, ‘supporting performer’) in Chinese crosstalk

performance (Bai 2012: 35, Wei 2012: 46). The functions of *tucao* in Chinese online communication may include: mocking and teasing others, complaining and even accusing someone or something, and divulging one's negative feelings (ibid). A typical way of *tucao* is to write a blog article or a post in the hysterical-shouting style (咆哮体).

According to Jin (2013), the hysterical-shouting style of writing first appeared in an online discussion group called 'Jingtiao's Fan Group' (景涛同好组) on the Chinese internet portal website douban.com (豆瓣). Jingtiao Ma is a Taiwanese actor, who is well known for his exaggerated facial expressions and body language in performance. The discussion group members mock him as the 'leader of the Hysterical-shouting clan' (咆哮教主) and label themselves as 'screaming members' (叫友). They require group members to use repeated exclamation markers in every post and comment to express the intensity of screaming and shouting. But the actual prevalence of the style was stimulated by a blog article entitled '学法语的人你伤不起' (French language learners are too vulnerable to be hurt by you) posted on a Chinese counterpart to Facebook called Xiaonei (校内) in 2011. Since then, the hysterical-shouting style has spread as memes on the Internet.

Besides its signature expression NP+伤不起 as discussed in Example 11, Jin (2013) summarizes the features of the hysterical-shouting style of writing as follows: 1) it consists of several stanzas, each of which has a different theme, 2) the NP+伤不起 structure usually occurs in the title, 3) exclamation markers are repeatedly used at the end of each line, 4) the question marker '有木有' (you3mu4you3, a variant of 有没有 you3mei2you3 > 'whether') or the interjection 啊 may be employed at the end of a line, and 5) terms that enjoy great popularity on the Internet might be incorporated (e.g. 尼玛 (ni2ma3) is the online euphemistic substitute of the swearword 你妈 (ni3ma1, '(fuck) your mother'). The hysterical-shouting style provides a unique way for the Chinese netizens to debunk well-perceived beliefs (e.g. French is an elegant language) and dispel illusions (e.g. French is easy to learn.). By expressing their discontent and struggles, those hysterical-shouting writers adopt a stance of rebellion, or even a stance of defiance against misperception and misunderstanding.

The hysterical-shouting style of *tucao* occurs frequently in the corpus. Most of the identified hysterical-shouting posts are written in a simplified manner. That is, only the signature structure ‘NP+伤不起’ and exclamation markers are employed in the posts. An example is given below.

13) 微博用户 29: 留学生啊你伤不起!!! 除了学习还要洗厕所!又要煮饭!又要担心柴米油盐!

User29: **Overseas students are too vulnerable to be hurt by you!!!** Besides study, they need to clean toilets, cook and worry about all the chores.

In this example, the writer describes her frustrations as an overseas student. The NP +伤不起 constructin (i.e. ‘Overseas students are too vulnerable to be hurt by you’) and its following exclamatory statements construct a complaint of her overseas experience. Implicitly, the writer takes up a stance of defiance against the stereotypical belief of overseas lives as relaxing, joyful and luxurious, and dissociates herself from typical non-overseas students who can concentrate fully on their studies since they live on campus or at home and are free from daily chores.

Besides those simplified hysterical-shouting posts, long, full-length hysterical-shouting posts written in full-length also occur in the corpus. The Sina Weibo platform allows users to publish texts with more than 140 characters by using its ‘long weibo post tool’ (长微博工具).⁵ Without imposing any word limit on the post writing, the tool enables the users to express their opinions and views in more details. The following is an example.

14)

<p>澳洲留学生伤不起</p> <p>1. 老子几年前去澳洲留了趟学啊, 从此就踏上了尼玛不归路啊!!!</p> <p>2. 学了美式英语大半辈子啊, 到了澳洲, 顿时觉得自个儿听力白学了啊! 学校哪旮瘩都是中国人啊,</p>	<p>Overseas students in Australia are too vulnerable to withstand any traumatic experience</p> <p>1. I went to study in Australia a couple of years ago. I embarked on a path of no return!!!</p> <p>2. I've learnt American English for years. However, Australian English made me</p>
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⁵ 新浪长微博, <http://blog.sina.com.cn/changweibo.html?sudaref=www.google.com.au>

<p>鬼佬们要么不读书，要么都去学奇怪专业了啊！ 去之前多憧憬口语变得好牛逼啊，结果到了澳洲一个多月说的英语加一块还没老子雅思口语考试说的多啊啊啊！！！！</p> <p>3. 大街上的姑娘，又白又胖是一堆堆啊， 好不容易碰着个瘦子，不是满脸插环就是夏天还穿 UGG 啊！！ 大街上的崽子，外裤一定比内裤低啊， 跟在后面忍不住就想帮他提一提啊！！ 漫天的苍蝇，满地的蟑螂啊， 吃个薯条，还担心被海鸥神马的偷吃啊！！！！</p> <p>4. 整个事效率各种低啊，去医院得排好几天啊！！ 邮局你丫送货的时候敢按门铃不啊！！ TPG 什么客服敢不敢不要都是咖喱味啊啊！！ 你丫还三天两头的修铁路，修！修！修！</p> <p>5. 学校啊，住宅啊，火警没事就爱瞎 BB 啊，老子正搓澡呢也 BB 啊， 一头的泡沫就被轰出来，在寒风中哆嗦了 20 来分钟居然屁事也没有啊！！ 老子头发都黏住了跟打了发胶似的迎风流泪啊啊啊！！！！</p> <p>6. 毕业回国了被鄙视就成了一条海带了啊，还被人安慰说：没事，反正你是富二代啊！ 富你老妹啊，出个国就非得是富二代啊， 不许老子省吃俭用，端盘子洗碗打工啊！！！！ 再说老子富二代，老子就把爹妈工资条拍你脸上啊啊啊！！！！</p>	<p>lose my confidence in English listening comprehension! Chinese people were everywhere on campuses. Locals either didn't study at all, or they enrolled in weird majors! I once dreamed of speaking highly fluent English one day. However, the total amount of English I had spoken during my first month in Australia was far less than the amount of English I spoke in the IELTS oral examination！！！！</p> <p>3. The girls there were white and fat. It was rare to see girls who were thin. The ones you did see either had rings over on their faces, or they'd wear UGG boots in summer!! Young people wore low-rise pants. I always had an impulse to lift their waistbands when walking behind them. Flies and cockroaches were everywhere. When eating chips, I needed to watch out for seagulls.</p> <p>4. The work efficiency here was very low. It would take days to make an appointment with doctors. The mail delivery men would never ring the doorbell when they arrived. The customer service staff members of TPG and other companies were all Indians!!! The rail tracks were always being worked on!!!</p> <p>5. The fire alarms in universities and at residential places always went off for no reason. They once went off when I was in the shower. The false alarms forced me out of the shower and made me stand in the blowing cold wind for twenty minutes! My fricking hair was sticking together like there was a glue in it. I was crying in the blowing wind!!!</p> <p>6. I became a seaweed after I went back</p>
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<p>7. 总之去澳洲留学的上辈子都是断翅膀的天屎，老子们是真心伤不起的啊!!!</p>	<p>to China. People who tried to comfort me said “Don’t worry, your family is rich”! Fuck that! Not every overseas student is from a rich family. All my money are earned from my hard work. If anyone dares to call me ‘a rich kid’, I would throw my parents’ pay slips in his/her face.</p> <p>7. In summary, overseas students in Australia were heavenly shits with broken wings in their previous life. We are truly too vulnerable to withstand any traumatic experiences!!!</p>
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In this post, the writer describes his overseas experience in Australia by forming sharp contrasts between the imagined life and the real experience in Australia. He starts with defining his experience in Australia as ‘embarking on a path of no return’. This marks the writer’s stance as deviated from the popular belief of overseas education as glamorous and pain-free. Stanzas 2-5 portray different aspects of his life in Australia in an implicitly ironic tone. Here the Australian English accent is described as incomprehensible since it sounds very different from the more familiar American accent; the appearance of the locals is odd; and the animals are filthy and aggressive. Also, the work efficiency is low, and the customer service sector is dominated by Indians. Even smoke alarms are unpredictable and always send false alarms. The writer’s criticism and frustrations are highlighted in his adoption of repeated exclamation markers, the interjection ‘啊’ at the end of each line, the use of swearwords (e.g. 你丫 > ‘you idiot’, 尼玛 > ‘fricking’) and the first-person pronoun (老子 > ‘I’) that indicates a speaker’s arrogance and contempt, and comics-style self-mockery (i.e. ‘老子头发都黏住了跟打了发胶似的迎风流泪啊啊啊!!!’ > ‘My fricking hair was sticking together like there was a glue in it. I was crying in the blowing wind!!!’). In Stanza 6, the writer describes his return to China as ‘becoming a seaweed’.⁶ By doing so, he disaligns himself from those who believe the overseas study experience can provide guarantees for employment security and success. In

⁶ Overseas students who return to China but cannot find a job are referred to mockingly as hai3dai4 (海带). This term sounds similar to hai3dai4 (海待), which means ‘overseas students who stay unemployed’.

addition, he also juxtaposes his hard-working overseas work experience to the perception held by Chinese people residing in China, taking an opposing stance against the assumption that all overseas students are from rich and prominent families (i.e. 富二代). The disalignment from stereotypes of overseas students is further echoed in the concluding stanza of the post. In this stanza, the attributive clause, ‘overseas students are heavenly shits with broken wings in their previous life’. This expression is a modification of a popular formulaic expression on the Chinese Internet, ‘X is an angel with broken wings’, which is widely adopted by Chinese netizens to express their discontent and helplessness in a self-mocking tone. By replacing ‘angels’ (tian1shi3) with a pejorative homonym ‘heavenly shits’ (tian1shi3), the writer articulates his negative evaluation of the overseas study experience in Australia. The taking-up of this stance is aligned with other overseas students through his use of collective reference terms ‘those who study in Australia’ and ‘老子+plural marker们’. At the same time, the writer disaligns himself from the stereotypical belief in his final remark, ‘we are truly too vulnerable to withstand any traumatic experiences!!!’.

This post has been reposted 134 times and received 24 comments. Although this post doesn’t initiate a surrounding gaze of overseas study experience, its online prevalence indicates that an alignment on this issue is formed among several overseas students, and they share the stance of defiance against those stereotypical perceptions of overseas students hold by those who reside in China.

Conclusion

This study shows that weibo provides a space for self-expression, allowing users to broadcast their opinions, and engage with other fellow users. It enables a multiple way of communication: from weibo writers to fellow users, from commenters back to writers, from commenters to their followers who have different groups of followers. It also makes it possible for individuals to interact with traditional and other online media outlets that have a weibo presence. In this way, a message can be spread to a wide audience within a very short period of time. Writing a weibo post that may potentially get public attention or invoke controversy is a stance-taking action. Similar to bloggers (Myer 2010: 12), weibo post writers need to manipulate linguistic and multimodal resources to construct persuasive arguments within a given set of

limitation and constraints, position themselves in relation to other weibo users, and establish alignment/disalignment with some.

In this paper, I focus on weibo posts written by overseas Chinese students in Australia. The analysis of the collected posts shows that Chinese overseas students in Australia take a strong stance of defiance against racism and social injustice on the assault incidents that occurred in 2012 and 2013. When responding to criticisms from Mainland China, they demonstrate an opposing stance against stereotypical misperception and misunderstanding of overseas students as ‘born rich’.

The expression of stance in weibo writing is largely achieved in the following ways. Firstly, weibo writers use value-laden lexis and syntactic structures are adopted to categorise in-group and out-group members and establish affective stances. Secondly, writers may employ emoticons as an additional resource to complement their attitudinal stance. Thirdly, writers use the *@user construction* to position themselves in relation to other users by informing them of a message and engaging them in a conversation. Fourthly, a weibo commenter may adopt the *metacomment//@user construction* as a way to provide evaluation of the reposted message, position him/herself in relation to the writers of reposted messages, and establish alignment/disalignment between him/herself and those writers. Fifthly, a writer may adopt certain popular online style of writing such as *tucao* to dramatise contrasts between common beliefs and the reality, and in so doing reinforces his/her oppositional attitudes and stance of defiance. Because of its prevalence online, *tucao* posts are likely to strike a chord with those who are familiar with the style of writing.

In sum, the findings suggest that Chinese overseas students suffer from a dilemma that arises from what they have encountered and experienced in Australia on the one hand, and the stereotypical perceptions held by those who live in Mainland China and have no overseas experience. The dilemma makes them struggle between the self-ascribed identity of a marginalised racial group and the imposed identity as a distinct group who enjoys socioeconomic privilege and has access to superior educational and material resources. On the weibo platform, this struggle for identity and struggle for social belonging plays itself out through linguistic stances taken in their weibo writing. While venting their anger and labelling themselves as in-group members of Chinese community, individual weibo users have not formed a strong stance of obligation and commitment to take collective actions or demand for resolutions as a united group in their weibo communication. Hence, further research

and conclusive evidence is needed to see if overseas Chinese students have an established and distinct group identity as ‘overseas Chinese students in Australia’.

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