Chapter 1   Introduction

1.1   Scope of the Present Study

Politics and language are so closely related that, as R. Lakoff (1990: 13) put it, politics is language and, at the same time, language is politics, which are intimately linked at a fundamental level (Chilton, 2004: 4). The close relation between politics and language is revealed in political discourse, which has attracted many scholars' attention at home and abroad, and has been approached from a wide range of disciplines, like pragmatics, systemic-functional grammar, stylistics, critical discourse analysis, cognitive linguistics, and rhetoric. With regard to the political discourse, these researches have all made their great contributions and shed light on the different aspects of the total phenomenon.

From the 1980s' onward, there has been an increasing interest in the language of politics (political rhetoric, political speech, political style and political discourse) (Landsheer, 1998: 1). Actually, it is hardly something new, which can be traced back to as early as ancient Greek and became a heated topic from that time on, especially on whether it is legitimate to change people's minds by using language in a well-designed way. On one hand, Aristotle suggested that a good speaker should be capable of making use of language in such a delicate way as to alter people's

attitudes toward the world, since "man is a political animal [*politikon zoon*]" (Aristotle, cf. Chilton, 2004: 4). On the other hand, Plato condemned that this way of employing language is illegitimate, for it cannot be excused from being intended to control others.

Nowadays, with the expanding globalization and cross-cultural communication, people are more sensitive to political speeches, for they are not only presentations of speaking skills of certain politicians, but also manifestations of reinforcement of policies and political attitudes upon the addressees. Thus, the most prominent features that distinguish political speeches from the other types of speech are their strong association with power and their multiple aims, explicit or implicit. On one hand, the speaker often tries to present himself as an authority in order to enforce the power upon the hearers; on the other hand, he has to mitigate his power, in one way or another, so as to establish a desirable relationship with the audience. This two-sidedness often forms a sharp contrast in political speeches. All of the above features make the political speech more complex and deserve our special attention. Due to time and space limit, our present study narrows down to the analysis of English political public speaking (EPPS, for short).

From the 1950s' on, rhetoric has been reborn and flourished with different ideas and methodologies; however, it has been neglected in the political discourse analysis, to some extent. Therefore, this study attempts to analyze EPPS from the perspective of identification, the key term for Kenneth Burke's new rhetoric. Then, it probes into the identification strategies that politicians have employed to transcend division, gain identification, induce cooperation and realize their motives in EPPS, and discuss the positive effects of these strategies on EPPS. Finally, we propose a rhetorical model of EPPS identification in the hope of providing a new approach to the political discourse analysis.

Two concerns have been involved in our study: Kenneth Burke's key term for new rhetoric – identification, as our theoretical basis; EPPS as the subject of our analysis.

1.2   Purpose and Significance of the Present Study

Based on the theory of new rhetoric, the current study attempts to make a systematic investigation into the rhetorical process of EPPS, to figure out how the speakers achieve its rhetorical effect, and to discuss how the politicians use the identification strategies to transcend division, gain identification, induce cooperation, and thus, realize their motives. A rhetorical model of EPPS identification will be put forward to help people interpret EPPS in a more effective way.

This research of EPPS from a new rhetorical perspective is of both theoretical and practical significance. Its theoretical value lies in not only providing the empirical evidence for Kenneth Burke's new rhetoric, which is applicable to analyze EPPS, but also offering a new perspective to analyze the political discourse. Our research results are also of practical importance. On one hand, they can guide people to appreciate the art of politicians' speaking better, learn the language techniques employed in EPPS, and improve their own speaking skills. On the other hand, they can help people to understand the deeper meaning implied in EPPS better, and find the language strategies and techniques the politicians used in EPPS to attract the audience, shorten their distance, and, thus, to conceal the multi-purposes of their speaking. In addition, the model we proposed emphasizes the interactive relationship between the

speaker and the audience in EPPS. The audience-oriented concept is central to our rhetorical identification model, which is also applicable to writing as an active process between the writer and the reader. Thus, our rhetorical identification model and its emphasis on the audience have also shed light on writing practices.

1.3   Methodology and Data Collection

To effectively analyze EPPS, we should try to follow some sequential steps: description, interpretation, and explanation put forward by Fairclough.

> Description is the stage which is concerned with formal properties of the text; Interpretation is concerned with the relationship between text and interaction – with seeing the test as the product of a process of production, and as a resource in the process of interpretation; Explanation is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context – with the social determination of the processes of production and interpretation, and their social effect. (Fairclough, 1989: 26)

On the basis of introducing identification systematically, this book will analyze several addresses in particular. The data will be collected from the published books and the websites, which possess the prominent characteristics of EPPS. This book will focus on interpreting the speeches – how the speakers employ the identification strategies to transcend division, gain identification, induce cooperation and realize their motives in EPPS.

The methodology employed in the research is the combination of

qualitative method and quantitative method, in which qualitative method is the primary one. Generally speaking, our study is speculative in nature.

1.4   Organization of the Book

EPPS, the typical example of political discourse, is very common in our society. This book, based on the identification theory, attempts to explore the rhetorical strategies employed in EPPS.

This book consists of seven chapters.

Chapter One is a general introduction to the current EPPS research. The scope of the research is defined, the purpose and significance of the project is stated, the data and methodology to be used are described, and the overall structure of the book is generalized.

Chapter Two defines EPPS, and offers a state-of-the-art review of EPPS studies. The perspectives of pragmatics, systemic-functional grammar, stylistics, critical discourse analysis, cognitive linguistics, and rhetoric all contribute to EPPS studies in different aspects. However, the change in rhetorical situation calls for a new rhetorical approach to EPPS studies, i.e. the statement of the approach in our present study.

Chapter Three introduces the theory of rhetoric in general and Kenneth Burke's New Rhetoric in particular, and expounds the notion of identification and its related terms. The rhetorical model of EPPS identification is based on the proposition that rhetorical process occurs in both rhetorical content and rhetorical form. The proposed model serves as the theoretical framework for the following chapters.

Chapter Four investigates EPPS identification via rhetorical content. Apart from the three appeals proposed by Aristotle, it also analyzes identification via antithesis, inaccuracy, and non-verbal symbolic actions.

Chapter Five concerns EPPS identification via rhetorical form from

the following aspects: the conventional form, progressive form, repetitive from and figurative form.

Chapter Six is the application of the theoretical framework constructed in Chapter 3, 4, and 5 to case studies.

Chapter Seven draws the conclusion of the present study, explores the pedagogical implications for public speaking and writing in a brief way. Its limitations and recommendations for the future study are also being mentioned in the final part of the book.