

A contrastive study on rhetorical patterns of English and Chinese political speeches

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American applied linguist Robert Kaplan who put forward the concept of “contrastive rhetoric” believes Chinese is a representative of “oriental” language, which is indirect and implicit in its pattering and wording. However, the different voice also appeared, such as Mohan and Lo claims that the organizational pattern of Chinese discourse actually is not different too much degree from that of English discourse. Thus the further exploration on the differences between Chinese and English textual rhetoric is still needed.

Discourse patterns are individual segments of texts combined to form the logical structure of the whole and to form certain characteristic patterns. The contrastive study of rhetorical patterns between different language texts is well acknowledged as an increasingly important area of discourse analysis and it has received a large amount of attention. By analyzing clause relations and text patterns, this study aims to explore the similarities and differences of rhetorical patterns between Chinese and English political speeches and to discuss its underlying causes from language itself to the social and cultural factors.

China, as its international status arising, together with America, has become one of the two major important countries, whose attitudes and opinions on international affairs matter greatly. Authentic discourse samples in this study are collected from Chinese and American state leaders’ speeches on international conferences and

forums. This research categorizes those rhetorical patterns found in the study samples.

This study, on the one hand, contributes to a better understanding of the relationship between language and thought, and on the other hand, provides suggestions for class teaching and learning, especially the facilitation of the English learners' language comprehension and production.