

Ethos in First Person Pronouns: An Investigation of Aristotle's *Poetics*

SHUTING XING

Postgraduate, Soochow University

Abstract

Academic writing has long been assumed to be an impersonal entity, marked by distant, dry and cold voice, where writers should act as invisible servant of the discipline. However, there is a growing recognition that academic writers could project their persona invested with attractive characteristics so as to persuade readers. In this paper, we focus on the rhetorical concept of ethos (achieving persuasion through the writer's character) by investigating the first person pronouns, the most visible manifestation for the author's presence, in the classic academic work written by Aristotle: Poetics. Through the detailed analysis, we discover that Aristotle mainly uses singular first person pronouns to make an assertion, present his view and mention his previous academic achievement, which can construct an intelligent, authoritative, experienced authorial persona firmly established in the norms of discipline. Meanwhile, it also reflects his confidence and courage to take responsibility for his unique original claim. For first person plurals, Aristotle often uses them to display the author's goodwill of understanding, communicating and empathizing with readers and his good sense of stating his view in a firm voice, which establishes his authority and reflects his confidence to represent the academic community to state a view. Modesty is also an indispensable element achieved by plural first person pronouns. Moreover, Aristotle intrudes into the discourse in an appropriate manner, which helps him achieve ethical appeal more effectively. We conclude that academic writers could announce their presence via first person pronouns, but need to keep an appropriate degree and seize the right moment to present themselves.

Keywords: Ethos, first person pronouns, kairos, *Poetics*

1. INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, it has been widely acknowledged that academic writing should be objective and impersonal, which requires authors to avoid the usage of first person pronouns, symbol of subjectivity. However, recently a plethora of research have demonstrated that authors of academic discourse are not merely the distant reporters of the external reality but communicators who can also elect to project certain personal image via the discourse so as to achieve successful communication with the reader (Clark, 1992; Ivanic & Simpson, 1992; Tang & John 1999; Hyland, 2001, 2002). According to Hyland, first person pronouns may be one of the most important linguistic approach that writers can employ to present themselves in the discourse (2002, p.

1093). Although there is a growing body of research paying attention to the usage of first person pronouns in academic writing from several perspectives, mostly are concerned with modern published thesis while exploring the classic academic works from the angle of rhetoric has been somewhat overlooked by scholars.

Ethos (ethical appeal), along with pathos (emotional appeal) and logos (logical appeal), are three basic means of persuasion put forward by Aristotle. Ethos involves persuading audiences by virtue of speaker's character. According to Aristotle, "Persuasion is achieved by the speaker's personal character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible" (1954, p. 25). Aristotle thinks highly of ethical appeal, since the speaker's character "may almost be called the most effective means of persuasion" (ibid). Besides, Aristotle further specifies three elements of ethical appeal that lend credibility to the speaker in Book II of Rhetoric: "good sense", "good moral character" and "goodwill". Brahnam (2009, p. 30) redefines Aristotle's ethos as "the synonym of character, reputation, persona in classic literature, self-images of the author in modern context". In modern times, ethos has been applied into different fields, such as communication, business, politics, but few research dwell on linking ethos with the use of first person pronouns in academic writing, let alone in classic academic works. First person pronouns, which are mainly used to refer to the author himself, must project certain personal image. Thus, it is of vital significance to investigate how the author of classic academic works realizes ethical appeals by means of first person pronouns.

Kairos, a word with complicated references, entrenches itself into a remarkable position in the history of rhetoric. It can assume a range of connotation, including right time, due measure, appropriate, fitness, occasion and so on. By dint of kairos, we will analyze when and how Aristotle uses first person pronouns in *Poetics*, and whether it is appropriate.

The research data is selected from *Poetics*, a classical work written by Aristotle, which occupies a remarkable position on human science. The reason why this exploration chooses poetics as example can be summarized as follows: first, probing into the the representative academic works in the Greek times allow us to look back to the origin of western academic writing. Second, according to Hyland (2001), writers in the field of soft science tend to use more frequently first person pronouns to invoke a real writer in the academic discourse than those in the hard science. Thus, this research selects *Poetics*, a representative work in humanities to explore the ethical appeal of first person pronouns. Fourthly, it is observed that Aristotle uses first person pronouns frequently in *Poetics* whose rhetorical function deserves our attention. And, as the promoter of ethos, Aristotle himself is adept at establishing his personal image in this book.

The worthiness of this exploration lies in two major aspects. Theoretically, this study can specify the subelements of ethos concerned with first person pronouns. It, furthermore, is conducive to providing a fresh rhetorical perspective to studying first person pronouns. Practically, delving into the first person pronouns in classic academic works also throws light into the present academic writing, especially the use of first person pronouns.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

As a core rhetorical concept, ethos has captured numerous academicians interest throughout the ages. This part will review modern and contemporary studies on ethos mainly form two aspects: theoretical research and applied research.

With regard to the theoretical inquiry of ethos, most of the scholars pay attention to the definition, features and evolution of this significant rhetorical concept. In Sattler's (1947) view, the original meanings of ethos are habits, usages and traditions that separate one community from another. Burke, the representative American rhetoricians in 20th century, recognizes the importance of ethos as well, who claims that that speakers ought to "display the appropriate 'signs' of character needed to earn the audience's goodwill" (1969, pp. 55-56). Hauser believes that ethos has two distinctive features that deserve our attention. First, it's dynamic which is a process of interactive engagement as it's based on the way a rhetor behaves in attracting audiences. Second, it's a caused response which is shaped through rhetors' choices of inclusion and exclusion (2002, p. 148). Crowley & Hawhee assume that the meaning of ethos is closely related with the English word personality, but also different as it carries the overtone of moral goodness, reputation and habits (2004, p. 163). Baumlin and Scisco (2018) hold that ethos is a word with a range of reference, such as credibility, trustworthiness, charisma, "good sense", "good will", expertise and so on. In an attempt to link the rhetoric "ethos" with "pragmatic identity", Qing and Yao (2019) find that these two concepts are closely correlated. On the one hand, rhetoric "ethos" and "pragmatic identity" both pave the way for achieving favorable speech effect. On the other hand, the ethics perspective of "pragmatic identity" naturally chimes in with the ethical dimension of "rhetorical ethos".

Apart from theoretical inquiry of ethos, the applied exploration of ethos arouses some scholars' interest as well, especially the application of ethos in politics, business and education. For instance, Belle (2017) links the unpacking of ethical behavior with the maturity of learning efforts in organizations, deeming that a beginning focus on organizational ethos provides impetus for precipitation of organic visions of doing the right things. Albalat-Mascarell and Carrió-Pastor (2019) compare the frequency and rhetorical roles of the self-mentions used by the candidates of the two major political parties during the debates of the 2016 United States presidential elections, that is , Democrats and Republicans, aiming to probe into the ways in which politicians can build a credible ethos through a competent and authoritative presentation of themselves in electoral debate. Through investigating 10 leading SEEE companies' websites and interviewing 6 mainstream teachers, Luo and Forbes (2021) explore how mainstream teachers think of the impact of the ethos on mainstream schooling and the way in which educational ethos in China is advertised by companies providing supplementary English education for elementary school students.

When it comes to the role played by first person pronouns in academic discourse, it is a vexed topic which has stirred up heated discussion among scholars worldwide. Traditionally, scholars hold a negative attitude toward the function of first person pronouns in academic discourse. Some scholars advocate that writers ought to be cautious in employing first person pronouns, a powerful linguistic approach to displaying writers' presence in academic discourse. For instance, Lester claims that writers of academic discourse should "write your paper with a third person voice that avoids "I believe" or "It is my opinion" (1993, p. 144). Arnaudet & Barrett (1984) state

that academic writing should reduce the use of first person pronouns as much as possible. However, in recent years, a great deal of research have supported the view that academic writing should veer away from the traditional academic style which overemphasizes the importance of objectivity, advocating writers to intrude themselves into their academic discourse via first person pronouns so as to secure audience's acceptance for their academic arguments and claims.

Among the research investigating the positive role played by first person pronouns in academic discourse, mostly tend to explore it from the perspective of pragmatics, especially focus on writer identity and the discourse function of first person pronouns. Ivanic (1998) proposes three aspects of writer identity based on the function of first person pronouns: autobiographical self, discursal self, and self as author. Tang and John look into the use of first person pronouns in essays of 27 first-year undergraduates, believing that "the first person pronoun in academic writing is not a homogeneous entity" (1999, p. 23), but front various identities. Based on their research, they find six roles played by first person pronouns: "I" as representative; "I" as guides, "I" as architect; "I" as recounter of research process; "I" as opinion holder; and "I" as originator (1999, p. 27).

With regard to the discourse function of first person pronouns in academic discourse, there are also some scholars are curious about it. Hyland (2002) specifies five discourse functions of exclusive first person pronouns: expressing self-benefits, stating a purpose, explaining a procedure, elaborating an argument, stating results/claims (p. 1099). Harwood explores the use of personal pronouns I and inclusive and exclusive we in journal research articles from four distinct disciplines, discovering that I and inclusive and exclusive we could assist writers to exhibit the novelty of their work, describe or critique disciplinary practices, elaborate arguments on behalf of the community, organize the text for the reader, highlight the current problems which preoccupy the field (2005, p. 343). Built on Hyland's typology, Talyor & Goodall (2019) develop an adapted typology concerning the function of first person singular pronouns, including acknowledging support and expressing gratitude, reflecting on self/actions, expressing intentions and decisions, stating a purpose, explaining a procedure, elaborating an arguments, suggestions and recommendations and stating results/claims (p. 139).

In addition to the function of first person pronouns, previous research on the use of first person pronouns also concentrate on other aspects, especially across different languages and disciplines. Martínez (2005) conducts a contrastive study on the first person pronoun use in research articles between native English speakers and native Spanish speakers. Yang (2015) compares the construction of author identity in China and North America master's thesis, displaying that Chinese students construct more implicit identity via first person pronouns compared with North America students. Chang and Swales (1999) find that philosophers and linguists tend to use first person pronouns more frequently than mathematicians. Apart from interdisciplinary differences in pronoun use, Harwood (2006) discoveries intradisciplinary differences of first person pronouns use in research articles in the field of political science. On the basis of Tang and John's writer identity model, Li & Xiao (2018) compare the difference of writer identity constructed by first person pronouns in 36 linguistic essays between Chinese writers and native English writer.

Besides the aforementioned two aspects, some scholars also pay attention to the impact of writers' level on the first person pronoun use in academic discourse

(Hyland, 2002; Henderson & Barr, 2010; Nesi & Gardener, 2006), and the use of first person pronouns in different sections of academic discourse like abstract and acknowledgments (Zhang, 2008; Chan, 2015; White, 2018).

Poetics, a masterpiece in aesthetics written by Aristotle, refines the charming Greek artistic spirit from the height of philosophy, which has always been an interest for scholars throughout the ages. Concerning the study investigate the *Poetics*, scholars tend to mainly delve into it from two aspects: literary criticism and philosophy.

For instance, Paul (1992) directs his attention to the concept of mimesis: the Greek word commonly translated as “imitation”, thinking that it has little to do with the issue of truth in poetry, but a great deal to do with the impact of poetry on its audience. Li and Ji (2007) interpret Katharsis in *Poetics* from the angle of narrative, regrading it as an important weight to balance pleasure and laughter, which is thus a principle of “balance and coordination” from the perspective of narrative ethical criticism. Huang (2012) also joins the campus in investigating the concept of Katharsis who demonstrates the concept of Katharsis with examples, pointing out that Katharsis throws light on modern education principle.

A large number of scholars pay attention to the philosophical dimension of the *Poetics*. Carli (2010) believes that from *Poetics*, we can perceive that poetics is closer to philosophy than history, as it speaks more of universals and attempts to illustrate the cognitive status of poetry concentrating exclusively upon conceptual resources offered by Aristotle. Maley (2017) examines the relationship between Aristotle's *Poetics* and the metaphysics of presence, demonstrating that the transition from tragedy to the art of poetry reveals the broader operations of the philosophical reorganization of knowledge. Huang (2019) believes that *Poetics* entrenches itself into an impregnable position in Aristotle's philosophical thoughts. He thinks that based on the totality of Aristotle's philosophy, the poetic principle could be summarized as follows: firstly the actions undertaken through Logos must comply with Logos; secondly the whole-action presented in Logos differentiates itself radically into beginning, middle and end of a whole; lastly the perfect whole of Logos, which is the mimesis as such of the logos-techne, is fulfilled through “this unity”.

From the above reviewed literature, it could be observed that most of the scholars explore the use of first person pronouns in modern published essays or students' thesis, while almost no investigation delve into the use of first person pronouns in classic academic works, not to say those written by Aristotle. Besides, the function of first person pronouns in academic discourse is mainly investigated from pragmatics, with few exploring it from the perspective of rhetoric, specifically, applying the ethical appeal, to analyze the use of first person pronouns. Thus, the study revolving around the complex ethical appeal achieved by first person pronouns in academic discourses deserves further inquiry.

As a respond to the above unsettled gaps, this study aims to investigate the abundant ethical appeal achieved by first person pronouns in *Poetics*. To be specific, three questions are to be resolved in this paper:

- (1) Which elements of ethos are closely connected with first person pronouns?
- (2) How are first person pronouns distributed in Aristotle's *Poetics* ? Are they used in right time and with due measure?
- (3) In the selected data, what ethotic functions are achieved by employing the first person pronouns?

3. ETHOS, FIRST PERSON PRONOUNS, AND KAIROS

3.1 Discourse Functions of First Person Pronouns

First person pronouns play various roles in academic writing. According to Tang and John (1999), first person pronouns can front mainly six identities in academic writing. For the first kind of identity “I” as the representative, it is usually achieved by using plural “we” or “us” to represent a large group of people or a particular discourse community. “I” as the guide through the essay means that the author guides the reader to travel through the discourse which is usually signaled explicitly by the use of verbs like see, note, and observe. “I” as the architect of the essay refers to that author underlines the person who writes, organizes, structures, and outlines the material in the research article. As for “I” as the recounter of the research process, the use of first person pronouns denote the person describing the various steps of the research process. The role behind the “I” as the opinion-holder is the one who states his opinion or attitude. “I” as the originator calls for the writer to present or signal some new ideas or knowledge claim.

Kuo (1999) believes that first person pronouns is of vital significance to secure the readers support, listing a number of discourse functions performed by first person pronouns, such as stating a goal or purpose, seeking agreements, hedging a proposition or claim and so on. Moreover, Kuo holds that “exclusive we is used where writers want to stress a personal contribution to their field of research”, while inclusive we, which involves both writers and readers, can shorten the distance between the author and readers, stressing the solidarity between the two sides.

Crowley & Hawee (2004) thinks that academic written shall not exclude the use of first person pronouns. They hold the view that first person pronouns can make the voice to be more honest, allow authors to take responsibility for their position, display the author's authority and identify more readily with the reader. In Hyland's view, first person pronouns are conducive to “construct an intelligent, credible, and engaging colleague” (2001, p. 216), which also assists the author to display authority and confidence. Besides, first person pronouns show the author's distinctive contribution and commitment as well.

In the same vein, Harwood (2005) is also interested in the role of first person pronouns in academic writing. He proposes that writers can create a sense of news novelty by first person pronouns and inclusive pronouns can “act as positive politeness devices by describing and or critiquing common disciplinary practices, and elaborating arguments on behalf of the community” (p. 343). Besides, they can also organize the text for the reader.

3.2 Ethos in First Person Pronouns

First person pronouns, which are mainly used to refer to the author himself, must display the author's image to some degree. As Crowley & Hawee (2004) remark, first person pronouns can achieve complex and interesting ethical appeal in the writing, so it's worthwhile to investigate the possible ethical appeal behind first person pronouns. In this part, we will first probe into the subelement of ethos, and then summarize the possible ethical appeal realized by first person pronouns via classifying previous scholars' view about first person pronouns' function into the elements of ethos.

When it comes to the elements of ethos, it is Aristotle who first specify the three elements of ethos : “good sense, good moral character and goodwill” (Aristotle, 1954, p.

91). However, he neither makes a further elaboration towards these three elements nor clarifies the components of these three elements. He only mentions in Book I of Rhetoric nine related virtues: “justice, courage, temperance, magnificence, magnanimity, liberality, gentleness, prudence, and wisdom” (Aristotle, 1954, p. 57). After reviewing previous scholars’ view about the component of ethos, Wang and Yuan (2014) extract the subelements of three elements of ethos. For good sense, they pick out three subelements: experience, expertise and authority. As for good moral character, the three subelements are justice, honesty and stateliness. With regard to goodwill, they extract three subelements of understanding, empathy and responsiveness. “Understanding” is knowing others’ ideas, feelings, and needs; “empathy” is identification with the audience’s feelings; “responsiveness” signifies that the rhetor should communicate with the audience, responding to their requirements timely and properly. However, this system is somewhat rigid and may not appropriate to certain rhetoric situation. To make the model more dynamic and applicable, Yuan and Ma (2019) retain the most core subelements, which can also embrace more subelements needed in particular situations. Diagram 1 is the corresponding English version (originally published in Chinese) of this revised open model. All the subelements in the are identified by contemporary scholars. In application, the subelements in this model can be modified and new subelements can be added. For instance, in some situation, modesty and courage may be included in good moral character.

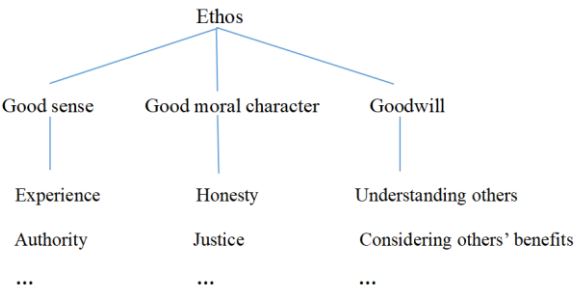


Diagram 1 Yuan and Ma’s Model of Ethos

In fact, the above mentioned functions of first person pronouns can be classified into the element of ethos. For instance, Tang & John’s (1999) six identities fronted by first person pronouns convey different subelements of ethos. For the identity of representative, it shows the author’s confidence to represent a certain community to present views. The identity of guide explicitly shows the author’s goodwill to guide the readers through the discourse. Likewise, from the identity of the architect of the essay, we could find that the author is friendly enough to introduce the outline and structure of the essay. The identity of the recounter demonstrates the author’s goodwill to illustrate various steps of the research for the readers as well. The identity of the opinion-holder displays the author’s courage to present his own opinion, which meanwhile establishes the author’s expertise. For the identity of the originator, we can see clearly the author’s courage to signal new ideas in the field, which meanwhile presents an authoritative author image. In the table 1, we review some representative functions of the first person pronouns and extract the implied elements of ethos in it.

Table I The Elements of Ethos linked with the Function of First Person Pronouns

Proposer	The Function of First Person Pronouns	The Implied Element of Ethos		
		Good Sense	Good Moral Character	Good Will
Crowley,S.& Hawhee, D (2004)	Being honest Taking responsibility for the view Identifying readily with readers		Honesty Responsibility	Empathy
Tang, R., & John, S (1999)	Representing large group of people Guiding readers Creating the structure Recounting the research process Stating opinions/views/attitude Originating new ideas	Wisdom Authority	Courage Confidence	Understanding, Communication
Hyland, K. (2001)	Constructing an intelligent, credible and engaging colleague Maintain effective engagement with readers Emphasizing writer's contribution and commitment Showing confidence Establishing authority	Wisdom Authority Expertise	Confidence	Communication
Harwood, N. (2005)	Displaying the novelty of the work Describing/critiquing disciplinary practices Organizing texts for the reader Showing the benefit for the community	Expertise Authority	Courage Confidence	Understanding Considering audiences' benefit

From the table 1, we can conclude that first person pronouns can achieve abundant ethical appeal, which can be seen clearly in the following diagram 1. As many scholars point out, first person pronouns can establish the author’s authority, we put authority under the first place of good sense. Likewise, we put courage and communication which are recognized by more scholars of the function of first person pronouns under the first place of good moral character and goodwill separately. Besides, given that in different situations, first person pronouns may realize different ethical appeal, we use ellipsis to represent other possible image of the author established by first person pronouns.



Diagram 2 The Ethical Appeal of First Person Pronouns

3.3 Ethos and Kairos

Kairos is a word with complicated indexes, such as “fitness”, “occasion”, “right time” “due measure” “moderation” and so on. It is said that kairos first appeared in Hesiod's *Work and Days*, which takes the meaning of “due measure” or “proportion”. Indeed the sophist Gorgias' rhetoric theory is inseparable from kairos, who underscores the importance of contingency of the situation, stressing that rhetors should accommodate their speech to the particularities of each situation (Crowley & Hawee, 2004). In *Against the Sophists*, Isocrates regards karos as “one of the most important characteristics of effective rhetorical discourse” (Sipiora, 2002, p. 9). Meanwhile, in his *Isocrates I*, kairos takes the meaning of “right moment” “occassion” and “opportunity”. From Plato's *Phaderus*, we could also discovery that Plato stresses the importance of kairos, who remarks that only by knowing the opportune moments for speaking and keeping quiet and recognizing the appropriate occasion for moving the audience, can the rhetor called perfect in his expertise (Plato, 2002).

Kairos arouses modern scholars' interests as well. Kinneavy (1986) defines rhetoric as “the right or opportune moment to do something, or right measure in doing something” (p. 86), which can be understood as “situational context” (Kinneavy& Ekin, 2000, p. 433). Hauser (2002) also believes that Kairos carries two meanings: “right time” and “right measure”. According to Rostagni (2002), various manners of expression aim at accommodating different audiences, which should suit particular audience, or it will be kakakairos.

In essence, ethos is closely correlated with kairos. Kinneavy (2002) points out clearly that from Aristotle's remark that ethical appeal “should be achieved by what the speaker says, not by what people think of his character before he begins to speak” (1356a), we could see an affirmation of the importance of the individual case, that is, the kairos of the case. Besides, Kinneavy (2002) claims that “two of the three components of the ethical argument, good character (arete) and good sense (phronesis), are intimately related to kairos (p. 71). Sipiora (2002) assumes that ethos is analyzed according to its ethos and thinks that “There must be an appropriate measure of ethos in all three subethical proofs” (p. 118). Cherry (1992) believes that “an important aspect of ethos involves assessing the characteristics of an audience and constructing the discourse in such a way as to portray oneself as embodying those same characteristics” (p. 5), which stresses the realization of ethos requires one to adapt his character to the need to the particular demand of audience.

From the above, we could see that ethos and kairos bear a cozy link. But most of the scholars focus the importance of adaptation to the situation when achieving ethical appeal. We, however, want to specify the link between ethos and kairos, thinking that the two classical components of kairos: “right time” and “due measure” are the prerequisite of ethos. Only by establishing the rhetor's image in right time and in due measure, can the rhetor achieve ethical appeal successfully. Thus, we will probe into how Aristotle uses first person pronouns in his *Poetics*, inquiring whether they appear in the right time and in due measure.

4. FIRST PERSON PRONOUNS IN ARISTOTLE'S *POETICS*

From the above, we have found that first person pronouns can realize abundant ethical. In this part, we will probe into how Aristotle uses first person pronouns in his *Poetics*, inquiring how Aristotle achieve ethos in academic discourse via first person pronouns.

4.1 Frequency of First Person Pronouns in *Poetics*

Poetics, written by Aristotle, occupies a remarkable place in the long history of Western attitudes to literature, which is “the earliest surviving work to be exclusively concerned with the discussion and analysis of poetry as an art” (Halliwell, 1998, p. 3). This research selects *Poetics* published by Havard university press in 1995 as corpus. We firstly convert the PDF version of *Poetics* into the Word version. After deleting all the supplementary information like cover, chapter, index, introduction and all the first person pronouns appear in quotation, we find that the whole corpus consists of 12,697 words. Then with the assistance of Antconc, a corpus analysis software, we look into the amount of different first person pronouns used in the book, which is showed in the following table.

Table II *The Frequency of First Person Pronouns in Poetics*

First Person Pronouns		Frequency	Per 10,000 words	Proportion
Plural first person pronouns	we	25	33	57%
	us	10		
	our	3		
	ourselves	4		
Singular first person pronouns	I	26	24	43%
	me	1		
	my	3		
Total		72	57	100%

From table 2, we could see clearly that among all the first person pronouns, “I” appears most frequently and “we” appear at most among plural first person pronouns. Compared with Hyland’s data comprised of published articles in 2001, who finds that overall first person pronouns appear roughly 51 times per 10,000 words which he thinks is pretty dense, we could find that first person pronouns in classic academic works is more dense. And the distribution of singular and plural first person pronouns is pretty moderate in *Poetics* with the proportion of 43% and 57% separately. From this we could see that Aristotle’s use of first person pronouns in *Poetics* is in due measure. Throughout the book, the author mainly uses singular first person pronouns to state his opinion which to a large degree projects an authoritative and confident author image. However, if the author uses singular first person pronouns too frequently, it will bring a sense of subjectivity. Hence the author uses singular first person pronouns and plural first person pronouns in a balanced way, which helps him construct favorable image.

4.2 Ethos behind First Person Pronouns in *Poetics*

Above all, we could find that the use of first person pronouns in *Poetics* is in due proportion. Next we will investigate when Aristotle uses first person pronouns and what ethical appeal they realize by analyzing some typical examples.

- (1)We are to discuss both poetry in general and the capacity of each of its genres; the canons of plot construction needed for poetic excellence; also the number and character of poetry’s components, together with the other topics which belong to the same enquiry—beginning, as is natural, from first principles (p. 29).
- (2)We shall later discuss the art of mimesis in hexameters, as well as comedy. But let us now discuss tragedy, taking up the definition of its essence which emerges from what has already been said (p. 47).

(3) Given these definitions, let us next discuss the required qualities of the structure of events, since this is the principal and most important factor in tragedy (p. 55).

The above three examples all occur at the beginning of the chapter where Aristotle uses inclusive plural first person pronouns. Example one is the beginning of the whole book, where the author uses “we” to inform readers of the main content of the book, including the genres and functions of poetry, the appropriate arrangement of the plot of poetry, and the number and character of poetry’s constituents. Example two occurs at the introduction of the chapter 6 of the book, which informs readers that this chapter focuses on the definition of the tragedy by using “let us now discuss...”. Meanwhile, with the assistance of “we”, the author also tells the audience that they are going to know the art of mimesis in hexameters and comedy in the following chapter. Example three occurs at the beginning of chapter 9, which tells the audience that this chapter will discuss the principle for devising reasonable structure for the event by using “us”. Using plural first person pronouns at beginning to inform the readers of the main content of the chapter paves the way for the audience to read the following content, which displays the author’s understanding readers’ reading feelings. With the help of inclusive first person pronouns, Aristotle establishes himself as a considerate person who is able to take readers’ needs into consideration, giving them hint of the main theme of the chapter so that they can follow writer’s path closely. Besides, all three examples use the verb “discuss” after “we”, which creates a sense of discussion, conveying the author’s goodwill to invite readers to discuss and communicate together. Throughout the book, Aristotle uses inclusive plural first person pronouns in the introduction of the chapter many times, which are used in right time. As Corbett (1966) points out, “The basic function then of the introduction is to lead the audience into the discourse” (p. 277), which should “disposes the audience to be receptive to what we say (p. 277). Hence, Aristotle seizes the right time to use plural first person pronouns in the beginning of the chapter, which informs the audience of the topics of the discourse so that they can set mind for it, displaying the author’s goodwill to the reader. Apart from using plural first person pronouns, Aristotle also uses them at other appropriate places, which establishes his image favorably.

(4) We have stipulated that tragedy is mimesis of an action that is complete, whole, and of magnitude (for one can have a whole which lacks magnitude) (p. 55).

(5) As too with painters: Polygnotus depicted superior people, Pauson inferior, and Dionysius -those like ourselves (p. 39).

(6) Let us, then, take up the question of what sorts of incidents strike us as terrible or pitiable (p. 75).

In example 4, Aristotle uses “we” with the verb “stipulate” to present his assertion of tragedy. Pennycook (1994) observes that “there is an instant claiming of authority and communality in the use of we”. Moreover, with the verb stipulate, Aristotle apparently assumes an authoritative position to present his statement of tragedy firmly. And although it is only Aristotle himself is stipulating, “we” could be interpreted as “to be deliberately chosen for its inclusive associations over I, which is exclusive by definition” (Harwood, 2005). Taking avail the sense of communality, Aristotle gains credibility by assuring the audience that his assertion of tragedy is shared by the whole disciplinary community. Meanwhile, this use of “we” also shows Aristotle’s confidence that his personal claim of tragedy can represent the whole community and is worthy of

audiences' attention. Hence, Aristotle's use of "we" under this circumstance is suitable. In example 5, to certify his assertion that mimetic artists represent both elevated people and base people, Aristotle takes the example of painters, who depict superior, normal and inferior people all. When mentioning the normal people, Aristotle uses "like ourselves" which inclusively identifies himself as someone ordinary, which clearly shows his modesty. As the tutor of Alexander the Great and the founder of lyceum, the Peripatetic school of philosophy, Aristotle does not extol himself as someone superior, but only as an ordinary people, which clearly leaves a humble impression on the reader's mind. In example 6, Aristotle projects his goodwill by using "let us take the question of...", which invites the reader to communicate with the author together about things making people feel terrible and pitiable. The inclusive "us" here unites the author and his readers in a common quest for the things strike them as terrible and pitiable. And the second "us" inclusively includes readers, which shows the author's empathy of the readers' feelings, looking from readers' angle what will rouse their fear or pity. Under this occasion, it is apt to use plural first person pronouns, which displays the author's empathy for the reader's feeling and paves the way for striking the chord of readers' minds. However, if the author uses singular first person pronoun or generalized person pronoun like "one" at this situation, it would not be unsuitable for it cannot reflect readers' feeling of what will make them terrible and pitiable.

(7) Fourth is the diction of the spoken sections: as stated earlier, I define diction as expression through choice of words—something which has the same capacity in both verse and prose (p. 53) .

(8) Now, one cannot break up the transmitted stories (I mean, e.g., Clytemnestra's death at Orestes' hands, and Eriphyle's at Alcmaeon's), but the poet should be inventive as well as making good use of traditional stories. (p. 75).

The above three examples arise from the appropriate occasion where Aristotle uses singular first person pronouns to define a term or state his opinion, which assists him to construct favorable authorial image.

In example 7, by using the word "I", Aristotle clearly intrudes himself into the discourse, defining diction as expression through choice of words. With explicit authorial involvement, Aristotle aligns himself with his claim, which establishes his authority. Meanwhile, as Hyland (2002) puts forward, pledging personal conviction with a first person pronoun is a risky choice, which needs confidence and courage. Hence, Aristotle also displays his courage and confidence when he associates himself with his claim for the definition of diction, showing that he is confident for his personal claim and is open to criticism. Besides, Hyland (2002) also believes that using first person pronouns, especially singular first person pronouns places a heavy burden on the writer for them to take a responsibility for their assertion. Therefore, we could see that Aristotle projects an responsible image when he presents his assertion of diction with explicit personal authorial involvement. In example 8, with the pronouns "I", Aristotle presents his view that poets should not totally change the classical stories, but could make appropriate use of them. Here, singular first person pronouns acts as significant ingredient for the author to assert their claim as an authority. Besides, Aristotle lists some classical stories after "I", which explicitly projects himself as someone with wide experience in poetry, hence gaining accreditation for his claim.

Above all, we think that Aristotle uses singular first person pronouns in opportune moment to present his assertion and view, which aptly displays his

authority, confidence, courage and experience. As illustrated by Hyland (2001), citing previous works is a valuable strategy for the academic writers to demonstrate his disciplinary credentials and credibility. So here Aristotle successfully

(9) These things are to be watched, as also are points arising from the perceptions necessarily attending the art of poetry: one can commit many errors in respect of these; I have discussed them sufficiently in my published discourses (p. 83) .

(10) The other components have now been discussed; it remains to speak about diction and thought. The discussion of thought can be left to my discourses on rhetoric, for it is more integral to that enquiry (pp. 95-97).

In the above two examples, we could see that Aristotle does not use first person pronouns in an unmediated way, but manipulate their use to rhetorical advantage when he mentions his preceding published work. In example 9, Aristotle clearly mentions that he has sufficient discussion towards errors that poets may commit in the art of perceptions. In example 10, the author mentions his work on rhetoric, which contains very detailed discussion of thought. As Crowley and Hawee (2004) maintain, mentioning of other publications assure readers that the writer have sufficient knowledge to give trustworthy information. Authorial presence through first person pronouns provide a powerful vehicle for the author to reassure readers of the author's professional credentials with authority which demonstrates his involvement in academic. Hence, we think that it is appropriate for the author to use singular first person pronouns when mentions his previous publications, which favorably justify their expertise and authority in a certain field, assuring readers that what they say are trustworthy.

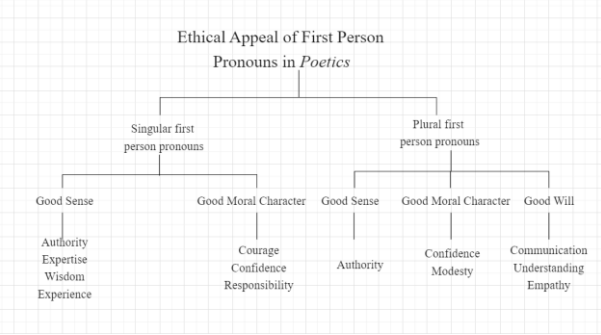
(11) But the difference it makes to use them fittingly in epic should be studied by introducing the standard words into the verse. Likewise with loan words, metaphors, and the other classes, one could observe the truth of my argument by substituting the standard terms (p. 113).

(12) Hence, as I said previously, not many families provide subjects for tragedies (p. 79).

The above two examples' first person pronouns all appear at the right place which establishes the writer's intelligence powerfully and displays his confidence. In example 11, Aristotle states that the fitting use of metaphors, loan words and others alike could render the verse flavor with a firm voice, as he says that the readers can testify the truth of his argument by substituting the standard terms with metaphors or loan words, which manifests that Aristotle is confident enough about his argument. Meanwhile, Aristotle displays his wisdom by credit himself with intelligent observations. In example 12, after prior listing of some traditional stories in the tragedy, Aristotle justifies his previous assertion that only a limited number of subject provides subjects for tragedies, which manifests his intelligence as well.

In a nutshell, we could observe that Aristotle is adept at the appropriate use of first person pronouns, which assists him to construct a favorable author image and enhances his credibility. After detailed analysis, it could be observed that Aristotle mainly uses singular first person pronouns to make an assertion, present his view and mention his previous academic achievement, which can construct an intelligent, authoritative, experienced authorial persona firmly established in the norms of discipline. Meanwhile, it also reflects an appropriate degree of the writer's confidence and courage to take responsibility for his unique original claim. Plural first person

pronouns are mainly employed for informing the readers of the subject of the discourse, inviting readers to set foot on the journey of discussing a certain issue and considering problem from the reader’s perspective, which displays the author’s goodwill to understand, communicate and empathize with readers. The author also takes advantage of plural first person pronouns to state his view in a firm voice, which establishes his authority and reflects his confidence to represent the academic community to state a view. Apart from these situations, Aristotle also tends to use plural reflexive plural first person pronouns to bond him and his readers together as ordinary people, reflecting a certain degree of modesty. From the following diagram, we could see clearly what kind of ethical appeal Aristotle achieves by using first person pronouns in *Poetics*.



The Ethical Appeal of First Person Pronouns in *Poetics*

5. CONCLUSION

First person pronouns are not just stylistic option in academic discourses, but significant vehicle for writers to promote their scholar persona. Through probing into the academic classic *Poetics*, we discovery that instead of eradicating authorship from the discourse he creates, Aristotle opts to directly present himself into the discourse by using first person pronouns, which helps him display his good moral character, good sense and good will so that wins the readers favor. Besides, Aristotle does not use first person pronouns without limit, but balances the proportion of singular and plural first person pronouns and can seize the right moment to use first person pronouns, which is conducive for him to realizing ethical appeal.

Dwelling on the rhetorical effect of first person pronouns in classic academic works throws light on the present academic writing. In arranging their writings, academic writers do not create in a context-free way, but need to mediate their relationship with the target reader and the whole academic readers, which requires them to invoke a real distinctive trustworthy writer persona. “The conventions of personal, particular the use of first person pronouns, are powerful means of self-representation”(Hyland, 2001, p. 209). Therefore, academic writers, especially novice writers, should not deliberately shun from the discourse they devise, but announce their presence via first person pronouns to display attractive authorial image, thus eliciting credence from the readers. However, the writers should maintain an appropriate degree when create their own voice. Only by using first person pronouns in right time and with due measure, can the academic writers interact successfully with the reader and gain control over their writing. Theoretically, this studies aligns first

person pronouns with the rhetorical concept ethos, exploring the possible ethotic function of first person pronouns, which is conducive to specifying the element of ethos and broadening the application of ethos. Besides, this study also probes into the relationship between two classic rhetorical concepts: ethos and kairos, which may deepen the understanding of these two rhetorical concepts.

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