

Study on Speech Discourse in the Christmas Broadcasts Made by Queen Elizabeth II and King Charles III from Perspective of Aristotle's Rhetoric

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Abstract: The royal Christmas speeches have a history of nearly 100 years and are now an indispensable part of the British and European Christmas calendar. It began in 1932 when King George V delivered it, starting a new tradition of Christmas in Britain. For many British families, it is an annual tradition to watch the Queen's Christmas broadcasts at 3 pm on the Christmas Day. And this Christmas, the first Christmas delivery by King Charles III, is of some historical significance. Analyzing the Queen's and King's Christmas speeches from a rhetorical perspective provides an insight into Western cultural traditions. This article takes the Queen's Christmas broadcast of 2021 and King Charles's Christmas speech of 2022 as the research objects and analyses their speeches in depth based on Aristotle's rhetoric. The article shows that the two speeches are similar in style and place more emphasis on pathos. The Christmas speeches of the British Royal Family have become a source of spiritual support or solace for people.

Keywords: Aristotle's rhetoric, Christmas, Broadcasts, Pathos, Speech.

1. Introduction

The royal Christmas speeches have a history of nearly 100 years and are now an indispensable part of the British and European Christmas calendar. It began in 1932 when King George V delivered it, starting a new tradition of Christmas in Britain. The Christmas speeches have accompanied us through the most difficult times of the Second World War; through post-war reconstruction and prosperity; and through the new epidemic. In fact, the Christmas speeches of the British Royal Family have become a source of spiritual support or solace for people.

The Christmas of 2021 has a very special meaning for the Queen, as it is the first Christmas since the death of her husband Prince Philip, whom she called "beloved" in her speech. The Christmas speech of 2021 is the Queen's 69th and final Christmas speech. The death of Queen Elizabeth II in September in 2022 marked the first time that King Charles III would continue the tradition of being the Christmas speaker for the UK/Commonwealth of Nations. In the first Christmas speech delivered by the new King Charles III in 2022, Charles paid special tribute to his mother, Elizabeth II.

Public speech is an art of linguistic communication. Public speech is usually regarded as a continuation of a classical tradition of rhetoric, which is as old as the western culture. And Christmas speech of British Royal Family is one kind of public speeches which encourages British people traditionally. From rhetorical perspective, speech discourse could be a cross-cultural rhetorical process that the speaker needs to consider the speech purpose, rhetoric text, the audience, contexts and effects. In this thesis, the author attempts to study the connection of rhetoric and the speech discourse, trying to highlight the significant role the rhetorical theory played in the speech discourse of British Christmas speeches. The choice of discourse strategies has to be made in accordance with the principle that the speaker should express the rhetorical meanings of the original texts such as the logos,

ethos and pathos.

2. Organization of the Text

2.1. Literature Review

This chapter reviews literature relevant to Aristotle's rhetoric and Christmas broadcasts.

Critical discourse analysis originates from critical linguistics, first proposed by British linguists Fowler et al. in 1979 in their book *Language and Control*. Critical linguistics employs Halliday's Systematic Functional Linguistics as an analytical tool to critically analyse discourse, but is limited to texts. CDA emerged when critical linguists are aware of the above-mentioned shortcomings. CDA aims to explore the relationship between language, power and ideology by analyzing the language used in social institutions from a critical and emancipation perspective. It places more emphasis on the processes of discourse production and interpretation and regards language and society as dynamic relationships that are linked through some precise media (Fairclough, 1989).

Different scholars have defined critical discourse analysis in different ways. Fairclough states that CDA aims to establish links between textual properties, features of discursive practices (text production, consumption and distribution) and broader socio-cultural practices (Fairclough, 1995). Van Dijk argues that CDA is a type of discourse analysis research that focuses on the ways in which texts and conversations abuse, dominate, enact, reproduce and resist social power in social and political contexts (Van Dijk, 2001). Wodak and Meyer hold that critical discourse analysis is fundamentally concerned with analyzing opaque and transparent structural relations, such as linguistic representations of domination, discrimination, power and control (Wodak and Meyer, 2001).

With development, it gradually shifted to three main research methods, including Fairclough's dialectical-

relational approach, Wodak's discourse-historical approach and Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach. Fairclough considers discourse as a unity consisting of 'text', 'interaction' and 'context' (Fairclough, 1992). In his book *Critical Language Awareness*, he has proposed three stages of CDA, including 'description', 'interpretation' and 'explanation' (Fairclough, 1992). The descriptive phase focuses on describing the linguistic features of a text using Halliday's Systematic Functional Grammar; the second phase 'interpretation' explores how texts are produced and disseminated and how they relate to social practices; and the final phase 'explanation' focuses on generating the relationship between social and discursive practices. It reveals in different ways how power and ideology influence and shape texts in a socio-cultural context, and explains in detail the relationship between language, power and ideology.

Van Dijk has investigated critical discourse analysis from a cognitive perspective, proposing a socio-cognitive approach in his book *Strategies of Discourse Comprehension*, also known as the discourse-cognitive-society Triangle (Van Dijk, 1984). Van Dijk holds that social representations play an important role in the relationship between language and social structures. And he argues that there are three types of social representations that are directly related to discourse comprehension, namely knowledge, attitudes and ideology (Van Dijk, 2001). Mind plays a mediating role between discourse and society, attaching great importance to the crucial role played by mental models, contextual models and knowledge devices in explaining the relationship between language, power and ideology.

Ruth Wodak draws on anthropological research methods and proposes a discourse-historical approach in her book *Discourse, Power and Ideology* (Wodak, 1989). It attempts to explain the relationship between discourse and social structure from a historical perspective (Ji Weining, 2008). This approach attempts to analyse racist ideologies and prejudices in public discourse by integrating all contextual information, and is often used to interpret implicit prejudices in discourse (Wodak, 2001). It constructs a theoretical model by examining the specific context and intertextuality of a given discourse, linking discourse, text and genre (Linjing Zhang, 2009).

Since the emergence of CDA in the late 1970s, it has been applied to various fields with great success, including the field of journalistic discourse. Fowler analyzed the headlines of British news reports to reveal the influence of ideology on the structure of discourse (Fowler, 1986). He argued that news discourse should be studied with considering social and historical contexts in order to explain the linguistic description of news discourse (Fowler, 1991). Van Dijk proposed a systematic model aimed at analyzing the textual structure of news discourse. And he held that news discourse could be studied in terms of news schemas and macro-structures. The former can be described as the grammatical structure of news discourse, and the latter refers to the semantic hierarchy of news discourse analysis. News schemas have their own system of organization. Macro-structures are transformed from semantic micro-structures, which have specific pragmatic strategies and play an important role in the construction of new discourses and semantic coherence (Van Dijk, 1988). Fairclough advocated combining linguistic textual analysis with sociological analysis, focusing on the mediating relationship between textual and social structures, in an attempt to reveal the relationship between new

discourses and socio-cultural practices. Wodak argued that discourse should be analyzed within certain contexts and intertextuality, and places discourse in historical contexts to reveal the relationship between discourse and power, while attempting to resist power imbalances in society (Wodak, 2001).

There are many scholars who have studied the application of news discourse from the perspective of critical discourse analysis. Lacerda has replicated the phenomenon of favela being out of the mainstream of society by analyzing the news coverage of the government in Rio de Janeiro (Lacerda, 2015). And Kelsey has focused on the economic crisis and analyzed the media coverage related to the economic crisis from the perspective of critical discourse analysis to reveal the underlying power relations behind the economic crisis. He has attempted to make the economic phenomenon transparent and provide some relevance from a discursive perspective (Kelsey, 2015).

2.2. Theoretical Framework

The study of persuasive techniques is the core of traditional rhetorical studies. According to Aristotle (1991), rhetoric is the faculty to identify persuasive strategies that may be applied in every situation. We might infer from this that Aristotle's rhetoric seeks to convey or find a means of persuading. The purpose of persuasion in rhetorical actions is to develop identity, which calls for significant and even costly efforts. According to Aristotle, communication should be modified based on the three main communication variables of the speaker, the listener, and the argument's content. To obtain the audience's acceptance, the speaker must take into account the three factors of rhetorical device, linguistic preference, and argumentation structure. According to the demands of the rhetorical context, Aristotle divides the methods of persuasion into ethos, pathos, and logos, which clearly correspond to the three aspects described above.

Ethos is a key component of rhetorical persuasion theory and primarily consists of two elements. One is the speaker's moral character, and the other is the credibility established by eloquence. In particular, it entails the authority impression created prior to the speech, the trust generated by the speaker's arguments, resonance, and eye contact during the speech, and the audience's acceptance of the speaker following the speech. As a result, the qualities of ethos may be summed up as follows: authority and experience, trust and respect, and common ground with the audience. In order to employ this technique, presenters must make sure that the audience recognizes their expert qualifications. Aristotle discussed (1954) that through character whenever the speech is spoken in such a way as to make the speaker worthy of credence; for we believe fair-minded people to a greater extent and more quickly than we do others, on all subjects in general and completely so in cases where there is not exact knowledge but room for doubt. Besides, Aristotle pointed that ethos is the most powerful among the three appeals.

Pathos, according to Aristotle, is the process of influencing the audience's emotions (Aristotle, 1991). In Aristotle's view, the orator has to understand and study the audience's emotions to arouse and control their emotions. It refers to influencing the audience's attitudes, ideas, and sentiments during talks in an illogical manner in order to grab their attention. Psychologically speaking, people often have the upper hand emotionally at precise moments. With the use of that vocabulary rich in connotations and rhythmic language,

the speaker might excite or raise the hearers' sentiments of pity, indignation, and other emotions to achieve certain rhetorical aims. A strong emotional appeal can help the listener better understand the speaker's viewpoint. Additionally, the speaker can stir up the audience's emotions by using tendentious or suggestive language, which will then persuade them to accept ideas or take action. Although humans are naturally rational animals, according to Aristotle, they are frequently influenced by emotions before accepting a situation. He believes that emotions are a rational reaction to various circumstances and arguments, rather than being an irrational barrier that influences people's decision-making.

Logos means the logic of language in delivering a speech. When we demonstrate the truth or the apparent truth from whatever is persuasive in each case, this is called persuasion through arguments (logoi) (Aristotle, 1991). The achievement of rational appeal requires both description of objective facts and logical argumentation. The two are complementary to each other. The speaker must adhere to the principle of respecting the truth and making it clear when using rhetorical persuasion. This is the only principle that allows for simple persuasion of the audience. Deduction and induction are insisted to be the two primary logical techniques in Aristotle's theory of rhetorical persuasion. Deduction is the same as a syllogism, which has a conclusion, a minor premise, and a major premise. Induction also refers to the process of making inferences from examples. The speaker should use appropriate examples and logical reasoning to convey the main point of view to the audience clearly. In the application of rhetorical persuasion, speakers can use a combination of deductive reasoning and inductive reasoning to persuade the audience to accept their opinions.

2.3. The Analysis

This study analyzes two Christmas speeches based on Aristotle's three rhetoric appeals. One is the Christmas speech of 2021 or the final Christmas speech of Queen Elizabeth II, and the other is the Christmas speech of 2022 or the first Christmas speech of King Charles III. This article aims to analyze the speech strategies of the royal British Christmas speeches from the rhetorical perspective.

2.3.1. The Christmas speech of 2021

This speech is presented in simple words, mostly in short sentences. First of all, there are some emotive phrases such as "great happiness", "good cheer", "great comfort", and so on. These simple and bright expressions create a warm Christmas atmosphere. Similarly, this speech discourse frequently uses nouns with positive meaning, for example, "warmth", "affection", "curiosity", "opportunity", "remark", "tributes", "champion", "togetherness", etc. These nouns are structured in simple constructions, like "an opportunity to", "champion of", "a sense of togetherness", conveying happy time and bright hope clearly. These expressions are high-frequency words in daily life which people are familiar with. In addition, it pictures a warm and welcoming scene in the speech. "Be it the singing of carols (as long as the tune is well known); decorating the tree; giving and receiving presents; or watching a favourite film where we already know the ending..." This sentence describes British Christmas routines with parallel structure, stressing the harmonious and happy Christmas traditions. These expressions mentioned are relevant to pathos which arouse the audience's emotions, influencing their attitudes.

The point of this speech is that the Queen cherish the

memory of her beloved Philip. The introduction of Philip is mainly illustrated in these paragraphs. "Prince Philip was always mindful of this sense of passing the baton. That's why he created The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which offers young people throughout the Commonwealth and beyond the chance of exploration and adventure. It remains an astonishing success, grounded in his faith in the future. He was also an early champion of taking seriously our stewardship of the environment; and I am proud beyond words that his pioneering work has been taken on and magnified by our eldest son Charles and his eldest son William - admirably supported by Camilla and Catherine - most recently at the COP climate change summit in Glasgow." These descriptions stress Phillip's contribution, thus forming his identity and making a good impression. These contributions appeal to a sense of credibility which makes people convinced, belonging to appeals of ethos.

As far as logos, the speech cited what the carol says, "The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight". The cited authority makes the discourse persuasive. Besides, the saying was related to the national culture, which is a strong and encouraging expression in the speech. Furthermore, the speaker is adept using the first pronoun in the speech. For example, "We see our own children and their families...I see it in my own family"; "This year, especially, I understand why"; "And for me and my family", etc. To some degree, these sentences compare the speaker with the audience. In other words, it is an analogy between the audience and the speaker. As a result, the speaker could resonate with the audience.

Besides, there are a few typical rhetorical devices in this speech discourse. In this speech, the Queen said, "in the birth of a child, there is a new dawn with endless potential". The sentence contains the ontological metaphor of hope. It means a new dawn is hope which can bring brightness, with the function of navigation. Similarly, the sentence "Jesus teachings have been the bedrock of my faith" is also an ontological metaphor which attaches great importance to Queen's faith. The speaker conveys one important information that all the people values Christmas and they have common faith. In addition, the speaker also uses one parallel structure to express good wishes and expectations. "which I hope will be an opportunity for people everywhere to enjoy a sense of togetherness; a chance to give thanks for the enormous changes of the last seventy years - social, scientific and cultural - and also to look ahead with confidence." The repetition enhances the atmosphere to concern the audience.

2.3.2. The Christmas speech of 2022

The writing style of this speech is identical to that of the Christmas speech of 2021. At the beginning of the presentation, King Charles III conveyed his respect for the late Queen and the British public with plain and simple language, for example, "... I cannot thank you enough". In the sentence "Christmas is a particularly poignant time for all of us who have lost loved ones", the speaker contrasts the happiness coming from traditional festival and sadness of losing loved ones, thus touching the audience's heart. And there are some words reflecting strong emotions such as "love and sympathy", "poignant", "cherished". The speaker also uses analogy and parallelism to describe facts, for example, "Our Churches, Synagogues, Mosques, Temples and Gurdwaras...", "We see it in the selfless dedication of our Armed Forces and Emergency Services...We see it in our

health and social care professionals, our teachers and indeed all those working in public service...". The sentences reflect the respect and importance that the King places on each of his citizens, who deserve to be remembered and seen. These all belong to the appeals of pathos.

There are also appeals of logos in this speech. The speaker cited the lyrics of carol "O Little Town of Bethlehem" -- "in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light" to arouse people's feelings. Besides, the speaker also cited the saying in the Bible, "The light that has come into the world". It is worth noting that both the two citing contains the metaphor of light, and this metaphor is also mentioned elsewhere in the discourse like "life-giving light" and "everlasting light". The repetition of light metaphor stresses that light is hope that can bring brightness and the everything is getting better.

In addition, King Charles III has established a genuine personality by narrating his own experience of visiting Bethlehem and the Church of the Nativity, especially for expressing friendship. We can get a glimpse of this sentence, "The Prince and Princess of Wales recently visited Wales, shining a light on practical examples of this community spirit". This also reflects King Charles III's identity and responsibility as king (ethos).

3. Conclusion

This study analyzes the Queen's Christmas broadcast of 2021 and King Charles's Christmas speech of 2022 from the perspective of Aristotle's rhetoric.

It's found that pathos are used most frequently in both two speeches. Since Christmas is a warm and happy festival, the speakers expect to gain the recognition of the audience by using presentations accessible to listeners that can strengthen the emotions. And most of the argumentation depends on emotions and subjective expressions.

As the official review states, King Charles III's majesty reflects on Queen Elizabeth II's faith in people and thanks those who have given their time to help others. They both have the same style of delivering speeches. At the beginning of the speech, both of them pay tributes to the beloved who passed away. It seems to be a warm and respectful tradition of Christmas. And both of them have cited the lyrics of carol to comfort people. Besides, they would like to take Jesus Christ's example to express their faith. And the metaphor of light is throughout the two speech discourses, reflecting their good blessings and wishes. Both Queen Elizabeth II and King Charles III can resonate well with the audience emotionally

through everyday honest words. The difference is that Charles III has more paragraphs to show his recognition of the work of everyone in the country, which also illustrates his identity and attitude as the new king.

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