

On English Ceremonial Speeches from the Perspective of Identification Theory: A Case Study of British Prime Ministers' New Year Speeches

Ying Gao

Zhejiang Gongshang University Hangzhou College of Commerce, Hangzhou, Zhejiang, 310000, China

Abstract. Ceremonial speeches play different roles on different occasions, and Kenneth Burke's rhetorical Identification Theory provides a new perspective for the study of ritual speeches. Based on this theory, this study explores British Prime Ministers' new year speeches with qualitative and quantitative methods. According to the findings, Identification by Inaccuracy is used most frequently, followed by Identification by Sympathy and Identification by Antithesis, the frequencies of which show no significant difference. The high frequency of Identification by Inaccuracy is mainly due to the repeated use of "we" and intensive depiction of future visions. Apparently, this strategy is in line with the thematic features of new year speeches, i.e., uniting people and looking into the future. This study, examining the rhetorical features of ceremonial speeches with the example of new year speeches, hopes to inspire speech enthusiasts with useful speaking strategies and rhetorical awareness.

Keywords: ceremonial speeches; Identification Theory; rhetorical strategies; new year speeches.

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Public speaking is a communication tool with significant human characteristics, and it is also an effective medium for speakers to convey information, express emotions and render atmosphere to their audiences. With the continuous development of the economy and the rapid progress of society, people are more closely connected to each other. As such, the importance of speeches is constantly rising. According to Verderber and Verderber (2021), the ceremonial speech means that on a specific occasion, a speaker speaks in the way of expression, thus achieving effective interpersonal communication. The language of ceremonial speeches has an artistic and aesthetic effect. As a special type of discourse which combines practicality and artistry, ceremonial speeches deserve attention.

1.2 Research Significance

Increasingly frequent international exchanges, cross-cultural communication and foreign trade cooperation have put forward objective requirements for further research on public speaking. According to different purpose of speeches, they can be divided into different types, each of which has its own characteristics and significance. Verderber and Verderber (2021) divided speeches into three categories: the informative speech, the persuade speech and the ceremonial speech. Ceremonial speeches play an important role in all types of special occasions and are an integral part of public speaking. They cover a wide range of topics, including memorial speeches, holiday speeches, welcome speeches, toasts, award speeches, conferral speeches, nomination speeches, tributes, etc.

In recent years, the identification theory of Kenneth Burke, a representative of the New Rhetoric, has attracted widespread attention in academic circles and gained unprecedented influence in the 20th century in the United States and even around the world, providing a new rhetorical perspective for discourse analysis. Hence, based on Burke's Identification Theory, analyzing English ceremonial speeches from a rhetorical perspective can not only lead to a clearer understanding of the speaker's intention and how they influence the audience, but also provide new ideas for English learners and speakers to improve their English speech-writing abilities.

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1.5 Research Outline

This essay is overall divided into six parts, containing introduction, literature review, theoretical framework, research methodology, the statistical results and discussion as well as conclusion.

Part One introduces the basic information about this thesis such as the research background, research significance and research outline. Part Two is the literature review that summarizes previous studies on ceremonial speeches both in China and abroad, so as to clarify the current research status of the subject. Part Three explains the theoretical framework of the study, including the definition, origins, development as well as the mechanism of Burke's identification. Part Four is research methodology which consists of data collection and sample analysis, with the latter demonstrating how the data is analyzed according to the identification theory. Based on the research methodology, Part Five shows the statistical results of identification strategies employed in all the samples and discusses possible reasons. Part Six is the conclusion part which summarizes the major findings and implication of the study.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Studies on Ceremonial Speeches Abroad

Some foreign scholars have studied ceremonial speeches from a pragmatic perspective. A case in point is Dunn (2005), based on an agent-centered approach, explored how Japanese speakers use different humble forms in ceremonial discourse to achieve myriad pragmatic functions. According to the findings, in ceremonial speech contexts, speakers use humble forms inconsistently, shifting between humble and non-humble forms, to show their changes in stance and their social roles presented to the audience.

Other foreign scholars have conducted critical discourse analyses of ceremonial speeches. García (2014) made a discourse analysis on the ceremonial speeches of Guatemalan locals during the reburying of the dead in secret graves, explaining the importance and roles of ceremonial speeches in specific activities. Prescilla and Amalia (2018), based on descriptive qualitative research, used a critical discourse analysis approach to study John May's speech at the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Ceremony from the perspective of illocutionary acts under the speech acts theory which provides more insights for investigating ceremonial speeches.

In addition, there are other scholars who have also analyzed ceremonial speeches from a phonological perspective. Setiawan (2017), for example, studied the rhyme of singer Mariah Carey's 1999 acceptance speech, and discovered new uses of rhyme elements, which have contributed to the pedagogical aspects of spoken English.

2.2 Studies on Ceremonial Speeches at Home

As a popular approach to studying ceremonial speeches, the systemic-functional framework is adopted by scholars in various studies.

Using appraisal system as a tool, Li (2018) compared and analyzed the corpus of the 2016 nomination speeches of two US presidential candidates, Donald Trump and Hillary Diane Rodham Clinton. The study compares the differences in the speech styles of the two campaigners and explores how appraisal resources can achieve interpersonal meanings and political purposes. Another scholar, Liu (2019), took the engagement subsystem of appraisal theory as her theoretical framework, used 12 award speeches of Nobel Prize for Literature and 12 corresponding award speeches of award-winning authors as her research corpus, and adopted a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods to comparatively study the use of engagement resources in ceremonial speeches and their characteristics, as well as how such ceremonial speeches can achieve interpersonal meanings through these engagement resources.

In addition to systemic-functional linguistics, cognitive linguistics also provides a theoretical perspective for the analysis of ceremonial speeches.

Conceptual metaphors are manifestations of cognitive modalities which provide scholars with new ideas to investigate into the nature of language from a cognitive perspective. Shao (2018) built a corpus with President Xi's New Year greetings from the year 2014 to 2018, identified and extracted all the conceptual metaphors, and analyzed the types of conceptual metaphors, mapping processes and roles in them. Mai and Shi (2020) used the New Year's messages of the leaders of the United States, China and Singapore as the research texts and counted the frequencies of different types of metaphors to provide reference for related studies.

There are also many domestic scholars who have studied ceremonial speeches from the perspective of discourse analysis.

Tang (2021) used a video of the British Prime Minister's Chinese New Year greeting speech as the corpus. Based on the theoretical framework for dynamic multimodal discourse analysis proposed by Zhang Delu, he used ELAN5.2 software to transcribe the selected pretext in order to make a dynamic multimodal discourse analysis of Theresa May's Chinese New Year speech. In addition to this, there are other scholars who have chosen to explore this field based on the perspective of political discourse analysis. Jiang and Yang (2019) used the function of political discourse as the theoretical basis to organize and analyze 63 Russian New Year's messages, which is a multidimensional study of the genres of this political discourse.

Apart from those conventional research perspectives mentioned above, Liu (2019) analyzed the hidden narrative patterns and features behind the award speeches of "Moving China" from the perspective of narratology, and explored its structure, state, and characteristics, providing more possibilities and insights for the study of celebrity square award words.

2.3 Summary

To sum up, scholars both at home and abroad have studied the discourse characteristics, linguistic styles, and discourse strategies of English ceremonial speeches in detail from various theoretical perspectives. However, few scholars have interpreted the rhetorical strategies and rhetorical motives of ceremonial speeches from Kenneth Burke's rhetorical theory of identification. To this end, in the light of previous studies, this study aims to provide a new theoretical perspective for relevant research, thereby effectively enhancing English learners' awareness of speech rhetoric.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 The Definition of Identification

Kenneth Burke is the major founder of the new rhetoric and is hailed as the "Aristotle II" of rhetoric. "Identification" is the core concept and central idea of Burke's new rhetoric. The so-called "identity" refers to the agreement between the speaker and the audience in communication. The term "identification" is derived from the concept of "consubstantiality" which is achieved by sharing our attitudes, beliefs, views and traits with others. According to Burke, human beings are made up of various features or characteristics, and when we share certain characteristics with others, we achieve "identification" with them (Ju, 2007). For instance, a piano player and a music composer, albeit having different specialties, both belong to the category of musicians, and both have excellent artistic cells and musical talent, thereby achieving association and even soulfulness.

3.2 Origins and Development of the Identification Theory

Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* defined rhetoric as an art of persuasion applicable to any subject matter (Aristotle, 1954:23). The new rhetoric proposed by Kenneth Burke, a 20th century American rhetorician, considers discourse as a social act from a social semiotic perspective, arguing that the purpose of rhetoric is to achieve identification rather than to exhort. On the one hand, "identity" is the inheritance of traditional rhetoric; on the other hand, it goes beyond traditional rhetoric in certain aspects. Burke sees the relationship between speaker and audience as cooperative rather than antagonistic.

Traditional rhetoric emphasizes the influence of the speaker on the audience. Also, the relationship between persuading and being persuaded, active and passive, implies a certain antagonism between them and the unidirectional nature of the process. However, identification theory suggests that the audience is actively involved in the construction of the discourse, thus achieving a two-way process. The realization of congruence is a natural consequence, and the accompanying behavior is acceptable to both parties.

3.3 Three Types of Identification

Burke's rhetorical identification theory contains three ways of obtaining identification: identification by sympathy, identification by antithesis, and identification by inaccuracy (Burke, 1969: 27-32).

Identification by sympathy emphasizes shared emotions between people. In rhetorical Scenarios, Burke gives two examples: one is a politician who kisses children; the other is encountering a friend from the same place in other places. For Identification by Sympathy, both acts of exhortation and praise are the speaker's desire for the audience to identify emotionally with him or her. The politician kisses the child in order to make the child's parents identify with him or her emotionally, thus supporting him or her. People who are far away from home meet a fellow countryman or peer will naturally show empathy and intimacy because they have something in common. These situations are persuaded by achieving a way of Identification between people based on common interests. Burke argues that though this Identification is the closest one to Aristotle's "persuasion", it in fact has a broader scope and more meanings.

Identification by antithesis is a union between two people who share a common enemy or have certain kinds of antagonism towards the same thing. For example, during World War II, the United States, and the Soviet Union, which obviously had different ideologies, formed a temporary alliance in that they had a common enemy, Germany. In this sense, the common external enemy is undoubtedly the cohesive force that makes the originally opposing sides unite.

Identification by inaccuracy is one of the most profound and influential ideas in Burke's identification theory. A distinctive feature of the new rhetoric is the inclusion of an element of unconscious persuasion. Identification by Inaccuracy often takes the form of mis-identity with one's own situation. A line in the movie *The Wandering Earth* is "There are millions of roads, but safety is the first; if you don't drive properly, your loved ones will cry twice". Notwithstanding it does not rhyme, it strongly promotes the importance of driving properly, as the audience will unconsciously reflect on how much harm and pain it will bring to their families if they do not drive properly. Hence, it arouses people's awareness to cherish life.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data Collection

The data for this study come from British Primes' New Year speeches, including Boris Johnson's 2021 and 2020 New Year speeches, Theresa May's 2019 New Year speech, and David Cameron's 2016 New Year speech, which are typically ceremonial speeches.

4.2 Research Methods

In terms of research methodology, this study is based on both qualitative and quantitative analysis. The former aims to demonstrate how the data is going to be analyzed based on the framework of identification with a sample of Boris Johnson's speech, while the latter is to show the overall rhetorical features of this speech category by calculating the different frequencies of identification strategies in the data.

4.3 Sample Analysis: Identification in Boris Johnson's 2021 New Year Speech

This part is used to demonstrate how the data of the study will be analyzed based on the theory of identification. In other words, we are going to show some typical examples of identification by sympathy, identification by antithesis, and identification by inaccuracy respectively in Boris Johnson's 2021 New Year speeches.

4.3.1 Analysis of Identification by Sympathy

Identification by sympathy is mainly achieved by a close relationship or a common goal or attitude between the speaker and the audience based on their shared interest, characteristics, and feelings. Inspiring shared values and common pursuit of well-being as well as mentioning the difficulties they are all encountering, Boris Johnson established a close rapport with British citizens, thus achieving identification by sympathy time after time.

(1)

A year in which we lost too many loved ones before their times...there will be plenty of people who will be only too happy to say goodbye to the grimness of 2020...the year when we rediscovered a spirit of togetherness, of community.

The unprecedented pandemic has brought people enormous pains and sufferings. The death of their loved families and friends shattered people's hearts, and people therefore extremely expected the end of the pandemic. Here, Boris Johnson used words and expressions such as "lost", "loved ones" and "grimness" to show that he shared the same sadness and sorrow with everyone, which brought him closer to the audience. Also, he used words "togetherness" and "community" to cheer people up, aiming to show that the government was always with them, waiting for a sound recovery of normal life.

(2)

It was a year in which we banged saucepans to celebrate the courage and self-sacrifice of our NHF staff and care home workers. A year in which working people...shopworkers, transport staff, pharmacists, emergency services, everyone, you name it.

Apart from establishing a relationship with the general audience, Boris Johnson specifically mentioned several careers and expressed sincere thanks to the contributions people working in these fields made to the UK in the past year so that he can build a deeper and closer connection with those people.

(3)

And I think it will be the overwhelming instinct of the people of this country to come together as one United Kingdom-England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland working together to express our values around the world.

The United Kingdom is a country made up of four parts including England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. There is no doubt that only under the premise of national unity can the whole country be full of vitality, with more strength and courage to face difficulties and tackle challenges now and then. It is the government's responsibility to safeguard this unity and peace. Therefore, here, Boris Johnson mentioned England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, and called on all the residents living there to work together tirelessly, to show and spread the good spirit of the United Kingdom to the world, thereby contributing to the further development of the United Kingdom in the New Year. Boris Johnson reached identification by sympathy in that he established relationships with people in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland through their common feature, being the residents of the United Kingdom.

(4)

Leading both the G7 and the COP 26 climate change summit in Glasgow, and an open, generous, outward looking, internationalist and free trading global Britain, that campaigns for 12 years of quality education for every girl in the world.

To some extent, the New Year speech addressed by British Prime Minister is not only for British people, but also for people all over the world. In other words, making a New Year speech can be considered as a chance to show the national image of the UK. Here, Boris Johnson chose words such as "open", "generous", "outward looking", "internationalist", and "free trading global", to try to show the openness and inclusiveness of the UK to the world. Besides, he proclaimed that every girl in the world should have equal access to education, which exactly named the voices of females who were still suffering from a lack of educational opportunities. Therefore, based on the wish of an open global community and the notion of equal opportunity for all in education, Boris Johnson reached a consensus with people around the world, especially with females.

4.3.2 Analysis of Identification by Antithesis

Identification by antithesis is normally achieved by mentioning a shared enemy towards the same thing. Boris Johnson used this identification strategy as well. He reached identification by antithesis several times, mainly through talking about Covid-19, its variants and other issues respectively to become closer with the audience.

(5)

And time after time as it became necessary to fight new waves of virus, we saw people united in their determination, our determination, to protect the NHS and to save lives.

(6)

With every jab that goes into the arm of every elderly or vulnerable people, we are changing the odds, in favor of humanity and against Covid.

(7)

And we know that we have a hard struggle still ahead of us for weeks and months, because we face a new variant of disease that requires a new vigilance.

These three examples were all clear application of identification by antithesis through referring to a common enemy, Covid, shared by the UK government and the UK people. The sudden outbreak of

Covid has exerted detrimental effects on people's lives, patients affected suffering from symptoms, medics sparing no effort to save, workers having to work from home and students learning online. The ramifications caused by Covid were obviously as never before. Worse still, the changing variants of the virus have kept bringing new challenges to people. As such, it must be true that everyone holds a grudge against Covid. Therefore, using expressions including "fight new waves of virus", "against Covid" and "a hard struggle", Boris Johnson stood on the side of people and accompanied people to win in the battle against Covid, thereby eliciting emotions and reactions among the audience to expect a bright new year together. Also, he aimed to call on British people to vaccinate for the sake of reducing the likelihood of infection and contributing to epidemic prevention.

(8)

From biosciences to artificial intelligence, and with our world-leading battery and wind technology we will work with partners around the world, not just to tackle climate change but to create the millions of high skilled jobs this country will need not just this year, but in the years to come.

Two issues always confronting the UK people or even the whole world are climate change and unemployment. The UK government has been trying to work these out for a long period. In terms of climate change, sea levels are rising, extreme weather is increasing and human beings are becoming unhealthier by osmosis. As such, climate change is absolutely a problem remained to be tackled. Furthermore, unemployment is another difficulty which has also worsened in the post-pandemic era. Fast development in modern society even requires more highly skilled jobs. Boris Johnson illustrated the determination of the UK government to tackle these challenges by improving scientific and technological levels as well as making joint hands with other countries. By doing so, he can touch the audience deeply and therefore reassure the audience, thus achieving Identification.

4.3.3 Analysis of Identification by Inaccuracy

Mainly achieved through mis-identity with one's position, identification by inaccuracy can make most audience identify without awareness with the speaker who portrays a good image or sets an example to successfully achieve the purpose of persuasion. Therefore, identification by inaccuracy is also a powerful persuasion tool. In these two New Year speeches, Boris Johnson used this strategy quite frequently, mostly through the personal pronoun "we". To name a few:

(9)

Well folks we are coming to the end of 2020.

(10)

But just before we do, I want to remind you that this was also the year when we rediscovered a spirit of togetherness, of community.

(11)

We saw a renewed spirit of volunteering, as people delivered food to the elderly and vulnerable.

(12)

As the sun rises tomorrow in 2021, we have the certainty of those vaccines.

(13)

We have our freedom on our hands, and it is up to up to make the most of it.

(14)

2021 is the year we can do it, and I believe 2021 is above all, the year when we eventually do those everyday things that now seem lost in the past.

(15)

We can see the illuminated sign that marks the end of the journey, and even more importantly, we can see with growing clarity how we are going to get there.

The personal pronoun "we" is conducive when making a speech. Boris Johnson made extensive use of the personal pronoun "we", which brought the audience together, bridged the gap and created empathy through giving the audience a sense of intimacy and authenticity. It emphasized that they shared certain traits and perspectives, thus unconsciously enhancing the audience's identification. Besides, the personal pronoun "we" can increase the sense of intimacy in that the speaker speaks with the audience face to face, thus invariably closing the distance between the speaker and the audience.

It is also convenient for dialogue, easy to express emotion, and has the effect of appealing. In conclusion, no matter what he was addressing, Boris Johnson used first person pronouns, mostly “we”, to make the UK people believe that what the Prime Minister was talking about was closely related to their lives, and they were always with each other. Therefore, Identification by Inaccuracy was reached, and this had a positive effect on Boris Johnson’s speech as he expressed his opinions more effectively to the audience.

Besides the use of the first personal pronoun “we”, there are also other examples of Identification by Inaccuracy. Here is the analysis:

(16)

There will be a new room temperature vaccine that can be produced cheaply and at scale, and that offers literally a new lease of life to people in this country and around the world.

There is no doubt that every individual in the world strongly looks forward to the end of the pandemic. However, even though new vaccines can be provided to every citizen at an affordable price, no one can guarantee that the pandemic can be ended, nor does that mean that life will certainly be better because of the newly invented vaccine. As such, here, Boris Johnson used the expression “a new lease of life” to make people falsely believe that the new vaccine could be a life-saving straw and the symbol of the end of the pandemic. Therefore, he comforted the audience and won their support by reaching Identification by Inaccuracy.

(17)

We were bathed in a rosy glow of nostalgia, going to the pubs, concerts, theatres, restaurants, or simply holding hands with our loved ones in the normal way.

One of the aims of the Prime Minister’s annual New Year speeches is to inspire the UK people, to encourage them to welcome the new year with hope and positivity no matter how hard the past year is. Many people had lost faith and confidence during the past year full of uncertainties and unexpected difficulties. As such, Boris Johnson mentioned those happy moments where people went to pubs, concerts, theatres, restaurants together, and held hands with their loved ones in the normal way in the pre-epidemic era. By addressing so, he successfully brought people into those blissing moments and enabled them to believe that the life ahead would go back to the normal state where there would be no lockdown, no quarantines, and no distance, thereby achieving Identification by Inaccuracy.

5. Statistical Results and Discussion

After showing typical examples of three identification strategies, it is also essential to calculate the frequencies of those strategies in all the samples collected and explain possible reasons. The statistical results will provide a clearer picture of how the speakers’ rhetorical motives are achieved.

5.1 Frequencies of Identification Strategies in All the Samples

Prime Ministers used a series of Identification strategies to engage the audience and bring them closer together in their speeches, thus achieving the multiple purposes of their speeches. The frequencies of the three identification strategies in the four new year speeches mentioned in 4.1 are shown in Table 1:

Table 1 Frequencies of Three Identification Strategies

Identification Strategy	Times	Percentage (%)
Identification by Sympathy	17	17.35%
Identification by Antithesis	15	15.31%
Identification by Inaccuracy	66	67.35%

According to Table 5.1, Identification by Inaccuracy witnessed the highest frequency, nearly 70%, compared with the other two types of Identification both less than 20%, especially Identification by Antithesis, which recorded the lowest frequency (15.31%) among the three, only 2% lower than Identification by Sympathy.

5.2 Reasons for Different Frequencies

Overall, there are several reasons for different frequencies of three types of Identification, especially the reason why the frequency of Identification by Inaccuracy outnumbered that of the other two types.

First of all, the reason why Identification by Inaccuracy was applied most lies in the extensive use of the first personal pronoun “we”. Anyone with rational thinking will not disagree with the fact that if authorities want to win the trust of the people, they must always stand with the people, not to feel that they are to manage people and govern the country, but to realize that the most significant thing is to share both blessings and sufferings with their people. On behalf of the UK government, the Prime Minister is supposed to be with residents and make decisions for the sake of them. Bearing in mind this responsibility, Prime Ministers unconsciously repeated the personal pronoun “we” when delivering their speeches during the air of the New Year, thereby achieving Identification by Inaccuracy many times. Also, to enable people to welcome the new year, oblivious of all the difficulties afflicting them during the past year, Prime Ministers had to convince people by describing hopeful and happy moments that they could go back to the good old days and enjoy a bright future. Provided that residents cannot imagine life will be better, chances are that they will not be inspired even though they are kept being told life will be. Therefore, in this way, Prime Ministers lured them into an imaginary future by visualizing these delightful moments and identification was therefore reached.

Furthermore, Prime Ministers used Identification by Antithesis the least of all three times in that the Antithesis he and the UK citizens had in common were only a few, usually one or two main opposite sides during the past year. For example, the Covid in the year 2020 and the referendums in the year 2019. As such, the limited number of opposite things certainly restricted the frequencies of the use of this strategy. Besides, New Year, which tends to contain warmth, reunion and felicity, is an important and signifies a fresh start of life. Therefore, the purpose of addressing New Year speeches supposed to theme positivity and reassurance should be greeting and comforting people, expecting the coming new year together with them. Hence, Identification by Antithesis was used the least because mentioning opposite sides should be the means, not the end.

Last, though the frequency of Identification by Sympathy was slightly higher than that of Identification by Antithesis according to data, it saw the median because it is true that Prime Ministers and the masses have a lot of direct contact, myriads of common feelings, common aspirations, and common ideals. All of these in common are overall more than their common antithesis but are far less than the use of the personal pronoun “we”. On top of that, everything Prime Ministers said was related to the UK and the citizens, no matter about daily life or economic development, easily relatable to the audience. Therefore, the frequency of Identification was between that of the other two types.

Although the frequencies of these three strategies were different, all of them played an important role in helping the speakers with the speeches. Identification by Sympathy is used to put the speaker in the audience's shoes to create a shared value. Identification by Antithesis is used to point out the antagonist in order to achieve a cohesive effect. Identification by Inaccuracy is a deeper strategy used to make the audience unconsciously bring themselves into a certain scene.

6. Conclusion

As a core element of Burke's new rhetorical theory, identification plays an indispensable part in strengthening the persuasive power of ceremonial speeches. Based on the above analysis, the Identification Theory run through Prime Ministers' New Year speeches, with Identification by Inaccuracy used the most, Identification by Sympathy used less, and Identification by Antithesis used the least.

The most frequent use of Identification by Inaccuracy was because Prime Ministers unconsciously used the first-person pronoun "we" a lot. This was because they understood that winning the trust of the people needed them to emphasize the message that they care about them, work for them, and stand

with them through thick and thin. In other words, the government needs to convince people in a subtle way that it embraces its people as “we”. In addition, looking into the future is integral to new year speeches, thus providing a perfect scenario where imaginary moments and hopes can be presented.

Identification by Antithesis had the lowest frequency because common enemies between Prime Ministers and residents were inherently limited, and the main theme of the New Year speech should be positive and inspiring. Identification by sympathy was slightly more frequent than Identification by Antithesis because there was still a lot of common ground between the Prime Ministers and the people.

All in all, this study illuminates the understanding of ceremonial speeches from the perspective of Identification Theory, and provides new insights for speech writers and English learners to improve their speaking abilities. Be that as it may, this study has some unavoidable limitations that can be improved. First, this study did not use professional data collection and statistical tools. The data were collected and analyzed manually, which would affect the authenticity and reliability of the data. Second, the four speech samples mainly came from male speakers, which may lead the findings to be generalizable to males. It is hoped that in the future, relevant research should improve its methodology and be more inclusive in terms of data collection.

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