

Original Paper

An Analysis of Obama's Inaugural Address from the Perspective of Halliday's Interpersonal Function

Shuying Zhou^{1*}

¹ School of English studies, Xian International Studies University, Xi'an, Shaanxi

* Shuying Zhou, School of English studies, Xian International Studies University, Xi'an, Shaanxi

Received: June 28, 2024

Accepted: July 14, 2024

Online Published: July 29, 2024

doi:10.22158/sll.v8n3p99

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/sll.v8n3p99>

Abstract

In public speaking, speakers share their thoughts, call for action, and even influence listeners' attitudes through language. This paper employs Interpersonal Function Theory of Halliday's Functional Grammar to analyze Barack Obama's inaugural address. It aims to reveal the relationship between language choice and the meaning one is inclined to express will make a thorough analysis of Barack Obama's inaugural address from the perspective of Interpersonal Function theory of Functional Grammar, finally revealing the relationship between language choice and the meaning one is inclined to express and illustrate how Obama realizes Interpersonal Function through language in his address. It is found that in Obama's inaugural address, Mood, Modality and Personal pronouns all facilitate to the intimacy between the speaker and listener in varying degrees, thus achieving the purpose of communication. In terms of Mood system, declaratives and imperatives are decidedly in the majority in Obama's speech. In the aspect of Modality system, the usage of median and high value modal auxiliary verbs predominates over that of low value modal auxiliary verbs. In terms of Person, the first personal pronoun is used more frequently than the second personal pronoun and the third personal pronoun.

Keywords

interpersonal function, public speech, mood, modality, person

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Public speeches, as an important way of communication, are of vital importance in history, which not only demonstrate the speaker's oratory eloquence, but also exert a far-reaching influence on people's social life. As a notable figure in American history, Obama's contributions and his inaugural address are worthy of attention.

Systemic Functional Grammar was developed by British linguist Halliday in the late 1950s. Many researchers employ SFG to analyze written or spoken discourses. This article will explore and evaluate the realization of Interpersonal Function by using Obama's inaugural address in 2013, based on Halliday's Interpersonal Function.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

First and foremost, Halliday's Interpersonal Function has been shown to be an efficient way to assess the social meaning of discourses from a theoretical standpoint. The paper will discover how Obama's communicational purposes can be adeptly achieved by applying theory of Interpersonal Function. What's more, it will also explain how Obama makes use of language skills to convey his feelings and enhance his persuasive communication.

To sum up, this essay is to explore how Obama use language to establish a comfortable interpersonal relationship with the listener, how speaker deliver a persuasive and inspiring speech by using the Interpersonal Function of language. Its final goal is to determine how the interpersonal implications have been properly realized by taking advantage of the features of specific linguistic elements.

1.3 Significance of the Study

Barack Obama, the first African American to reach the White House, plays a prominent role in American history. His speeches are worthy to be appreciated because they cannot only show how capable the president is in transmit his governing philosophy and standpoint, thus inspiring the listeners and following candidates. Many scholars analyzed Obama's Inaugural Address from various perspectives, but Halliday's Interpersonal Functional can better interpret the social meaning of language contained in the lines and the social contexts. Meanwhile, through this analysis, people can better appreciate the powerful, persuasive and inspiring language. What's more, this study can throw light on the efficient understanding of the discourse of public addresses to some extent.

2. Literature Review

A large number of linguists have proposed exhaustive theories about Interpersonal Function and public speech. This chapter will concentrate on the prior studies related to this theme.

2.1 Previous Studies on Halliday's Interpersonal Function

Human beings are always employing language to perform a variety of functions. They utilize language to require, apology, praise and express their implied thoughts and feelings indirectly. In linguistics, Halliday is the primary representative of Functionalism. He holds the views that the language meaning is not only influenced by the literal meaning of the words and the way they are connected, it also varies with specific context and the situation of language at the moment of speaking. Therefore, in his theoretical framework of Functional Grammar, the three meta-functions have been proposed: Ideational Function, Textual Function and the Interpersonal Function. The Interpersonal Function of language enables people to achieve interaction with one another. What's more, it also helps creates and

perpetuates interpersonal relationship with others. Interpersonal function is pivotal to human's word choice and sentimental expression. Thus, studies related to this issue deserve continuing consideration.

2.1.1 Studies on Interpersonal Function Abroad

The purpose of using language, according to Fasold, "is not only to make the addresser's thoughts and feelings understood, but also to define the relationship between the addresser and the addressee. Thus, it shows the addresser's identity as a member of a social group, and to arouse some speech event" (Fasold, 2000).

According to Halliday and Hasan, interpersonal meaning is concerned with the social, expressive, and conative functions of language. It expresses the speaker's angle: his attitudes and judgments, his encoding of the role relationship in the situation, and his motive in saying anything at all (Halliday, 2004).

Within the Systemic Functional Grammar, language is connected with social life and language can perform various functions which depends on context or situation in certain moment. Halliday mentions that interpersonal meaning is primarily derived from Mood and Modality in SFG. And Person can also facilitate to the expression of interpersonal meaning.

Martin also promoted the development of Interpersonal Function and it is he who founded Appraisal Theory. He holds the idea that negotiation, appraisal and involvement are the three aspects of interpersonal model of Interpersonal Function.

Interpersonal Function is also examined in pragmatics. From the perspectives of Levinson and Stephen, Face is someone's self-worth or self-image which can be damaged, maintained or enhanced in communication. It has two aspects: negative face and positive face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). No matter what kind of images one established, they all desire for approval and not want to be impeded, that is, enhancing positive face and resisting negative face. Therefore, Brown and Levinson put forward with some remedial strategies to protect face and to minimize the risk of threatening face. Thus, Low-value modal operators in modal system are employed to minimize imposition or threat.

Lemke agrees that elements in Modality system can serve the expression of Interpersonal Function. However, in contrast to Halliday, he points out that the expected speech function may not be fully achieved by the sentence choice of Mood system (Jay, 1998). According to Halliday, when the speaker using a declarative sentence, he is conveying new and unknown information to the listener, and he must know more about the topic being talked than the listener. However, that is not completely true for Lemke who argues that the speaker talking imperatively may be probably inferior to the listener.

2.1.2 Studies on Interpersonal Function at Home

Many Chinese linguists are interested in studying linguistics, and Interpersonal Function is gaining prominence in China.

Hu Zhuanglin promoted the development of Halliday's functional linguistics in China. As to Appraisal Theory, He holds that the investigation of Interpersonal Function contributes to the development of

lexeme and grammar. And it concerns the diverse attitudes that may be communicated in communication (Hu, 2016).

Huang Guowen mostly focused on the commercial advertising speech when dealing with the Interpersonal Function of language. He also says that declaratives dominating the entire text demonstrates the writer's duty as an information source. Huang Guowen contends that the applicability of SFG in discourse analysis is still limited.

From Zhang Delu's point of view, the scope of cohesion presents the concept meaning organization and also the interpersonal meaning organization in semantic relation. In the field of interpersonal meaning, cohesion comes into play within the connection between the structure of Mood structure and Modality, and the connection between the interpersonal meanings of vocabulary and the type of intonation (Zhang, 2001).

Li Zhanzi holds that only when the entire pattern of Mood is studied in the written or spoken discourse and the particular situational or social context is taken into consideration, the interpersonal meaning contained in the discourse can be understood. That means, only in the syntactic level, Mood can be used to express interpersonal meaning (Li, 2015).

However, according to Ji Hongqin, if the Interpersonal Function of Modality is studied merely on the level of syntax, one cannot fully understand Modality. Therefore, Modality selection should be investigated in different types of discourse. So one can better appreciate the interpersonal connotation of the speech realized by Modality.

2.2 Previous Studies on Political Speech

Public speeches have a variety of subcategories. Inaugural speeches are a type of public address delivered by a notable figure with specific goals, aiming to influence a certain group of people and express their attitude towards them. Political speeches can generate a sense of sentimental resonance in the audience. They serve as a motivation for people to fight for a cause and strive together for a shared goal. In public addresses, the speaker can represent a certain class, society, or group.

2.2.1 The Study of Political Speech Abroad

Public speech is an integrated strategy intending to exert specific influence on the listeners. Whenever one has a talk, discussion or deliver a speech, he is expressing his opinions towards something. One projects attitudes and reveals the world around us whenever he opens his mouth (Wilson, 1994).

John Wilson examines political speech from the angle of Pragmatics. In the book *Politically Speaking: The Pragmatic Analysis of Political Language*, he examined the ways politicians employed to convey his thoughts and ideas in the political discourse, thus highlighting the importance of pragmatics in political discourse and paying attention to politicians' use of personal pronouns.

Paul Chilton believes that people can know more about human behavior after the study of the links between language and politics. Because language is closely related to the society and the culture, not

only the politics itself and human beings is also inseparable from the society. Therefore, human language ability can be revealed through the analysis of language in political context (Schaffner, 2016). According to Jonathan, a speaker expresses his opinion on the events of society by a sequence of words. He delivers a speech to the audience, make clear of his political ideas through various types of media. The study on political address contributes to people's understanding of political communication. The investigation on the internal mechanism of language can deepen one's understanding of the speech purpose and speech content. Thus, it is necessary to analyze political speech (Charteris, 2001).

Inaugural speeches have also been studied by many scholars. On the angle of view of political science, Brownstein and Moseson examine Obama's Inaugural Address. According to Pantages, Obama's Inaugural Address is related the protection environmental health. Moreover, Carr, Reynolds, Weatherson and Escudero also carry out studies on the stylistic or rhetoric features of his Inaugural Address.

2.2.2 The Study of Political Speech at Home

It is Shangshu that records a few passages about political speech in the world. Nowadays, political speech has drawing increasing attention and becoming most influential way to make clear of the speaker's political thoughts.

Wang Lei and Zheng Shuyun set up a corpus with three American presidential debate in 2012, using the wordsmith 5.0 to deal with the discourse, revealing how the candidates deal with the complex interpersonal relationship by oral debate, and how the language acts reflect the interpersonal meaning, show personality, reproduce ideology (Wang & Zheng, 2013).

Domestic scholars also analyze Obama's Inaugural Address from different perspectives. Qui Yubing claims that the aspect of rhetoric deserves much more attention in order to be faithful, expressive and elegant when understanding a material. Wang and Zhou Jianglin hold the idea that Obama's speeches should be studied with respect to transitivity and Modality in system and Functional Grammar. Additionally, according to Peng Guoshun, when discussing Obama's Inaugural Address, one should focus on the Attitude and Engagement resources in Appraisal Theory (Bu, 2011).

3. Theoretical Framework

Halliday and Simon Dik study Interpersonal Function from the perspective of interactive and attitude. The former is the interaction between the speaker and the listener, and the later means the speaker's attitude implied in the conversation which can be inferred from the Evaluations of the words. Mood and Modality are primarily utilized by the speaker. However, Interpersonal Function is also achieved by other means, such as personal pronouns, lexical words and others (Tang, 2014).

3.1 Mood System

Hu Zhuanglin claims that Mood refers to what roles the speaker intends to assume in conversation and he assign to the listener. If one uses imperative sentences in speech, he assumes himself the one who

give the commands and the other the one who obeys the order. In people's everyday communication, linguists found that the discourse content is mainly focused on giving something or requiring for something. Because only goods or services and information can be given, and demand, offer, command, statement and question are the four types of language function, so the languages functions are classified as indicative, interrogative and imperative in Mood system (Hu, 2016).

Table 1. The Classification of Language Function

	Indicative	Declarative
		Interrogative
Mood	Interrogative	Yes/no question
		Wh-question
	Imperative	Speaker included
		Speaker excluded

According to Halliday, Mood is made up of three primary ingredients: Subject, Finite and residue. The first two components are the most important two. Subject is equivalent to the nominal group in a certain sentence. The Finite elements express the tense of utterances or modality of the sentence which forms the argumentation of the proposition. Residue includes adjuncts, complements and predications. For example, in the sentence "have you been to Europe?" the subject is "you" and the Finite element is "have" and the rest of the sentence belongs to Residue.

3.2 Modality System

Another crucial factor in achieving Interpersonal Function is the Modality system. As Halliday says, Modality refers to a middle ground or an intermediate portion of a sentence which is employed to communicate one's view or thought about a specific topic. Modality does not express complete affirmation or negation and it is in the middle (Halliday, 2004). It displays the validity and correctness of a proportion and the speaker's obligation and inclination in this proportion. Modality may be separated into two types: modalization and modulation with the former comparable to indicative type and the latter equivalent to imperative type. In one discourse, when the information is exchanged, whether the statement is valid or not can be judged from the perspectives of probability or usuality, which are modalization in the Modality system. Probability can be derived from the modal operators like "probably", "certainly". Usuality can be revealed by the involvement of "often", "always". When the object exchanged is goods or service, one is using language to giving commands or showing willingness to help and thus expresses obligation and inclination, which is modulation in Modality system.

Table 2. Halliday's Classification of the Modal Operators by Value

Value	Probability	Usuality	Obligation	Inclination
Low	Possible	Sometimes	Allowed	Willing
Median	Probable	Usually	Supposed	Keen
High	Certain	Always	Required	Determined

Additionally, apart from the modal operators and Mood adjuncts, indirect sentence or phrases like “I suppose...” and “I’m sure...” can also indicate Modality. Although they are not apparent modal operators, they can also express the same interpersonal meaning as the other modal operators. They are called metaphor by Halliday.

3.3 Personal Pronoun System

As what Halliday claims, Person system is also an effective way to realize Interpersonal Function. Personal pronouns and possessive case are the two indispensable components in it. In Person system, the personal pronouns are in majority, which relates the word to the entity it refers to. The selection of Person, Number, and Gender varies with the explicit or implied meaning or function the speaker intends to convey, which are subject to either the contexts or the substituted pronouns refer to (Partridge, 1982).

Personal pronouns include first personal pronoun, second personal pronoun and third personal pronoun. When the speaker himself states his point of views or display his own power, he will utilize the first personal pronoun. Naturally, the second personal pronoun usually referred to the listener side. Using second personal pronoun make the listener involved in the communication, thus contributing to a sense of connection with the speaker in the listener's side. It shortens the distance between them, making the speaker become more convincing while the listener more active. The last one is impartial and persuasive to a great extent because it is relevant to the other person in a certain communicative event.

4. The Realization of Interpersonal Function in Obama's Inaugural Address

Since inaugural speech is one type of political speech so it must satisfy all the features and functions that political speech owned. In that case, inaugural speech must give people a sense of excitement and have vivid language and a good command of the rhetoric skills so that it can encourage the audience and change their beliefs. This chapter will analyze Barack Obama's inauguration address in 2013 based on Halliday's Interpersonal Function. Through the entire study on this speech, people can better understand how to achieve a harmonious interpersonal relationship using the linguistic elements of Mood, Modality and Personal Pronouns.

4.1 Mood System and Interpersonal Function

Mood refers to the role the speaker chose to assume and assign to the listener and when goods or service and information are given or demanded. There are declarative mood, interrogative mood and

imperative mood. In Obama's inaugural speech in 2013, declarative sentences accounts for 97% while imperative sentences 3% and there is no interrogative sentence in this address. To realize Interpersonal Function more effectively, the best choice is the involvement of declarative mood, which plays a prominent role to the success of this address.

4.1.1 Declaratives in the Address

It is known to all that declarative sentence is used widely in people's communication because the most of our daily communication is centered around stating facts or giving needed information. Particularly, in a formal address, the speaker is expected to share their thoughts on the development of the organization and their detailed plans for it, so the involvement of declarative sentence is the most desirable way to get audience know the president's political thoughts. Based on the Mood system, the frequent use of declarative sentence means that Obama is the information giver. As a president, his speech must be delivered clearly and comprehensively, covering all facets of American life. Therefore, declarative sentences account for a large proportion.

(1) Together, we determined that a modern economy... Together, we discovered that a free market... Together, we resolved that a great nation...

(2) But the words I spoke today are not so different from the oath that is taken each time a soldier signs up for duty...

In the first example, "together" and "we" is used repeatedly. Repetition is called repetition in rhetoric, which can emphasize a certain or sentence so as to make the speaker's emotion salience. In example 1, by the repeated "together" and "who", Obama firstly showed his satisfaction towards and achievements the Americans made in the last 20 years. He demonstrated his appreciation and eulogy for the Americans hardworking. More importantly, he was stating the truth that their loyalty to their central authority was going on the right way. Therefore, by repeating "together", he not only stressed the great power people gathered but also aroused the audience's attention. In the second sentence, when putting the subject before the finite, declarative sentence is employed. Declarative mood makes the information more accurate so the speaker gave a better demonstration of his determination to devote himself to the prosperity of the nation like what a soldier would do. He was explaining that what he promised is not nonsense or gobbledygook. Declarative sentence makes this commitment more pervasive and convincing so the audience would have a positive impression of the speaker in their minds.

4.1.2 Imperatives in the Address

Imperative mood is employed to give orders or asking for goods, service or information in Mood system. As everyone knows, it is usually the parents, teachers or the one who is senior to you that would talk in an imperative manner in our daily communication. So, we know that when someone using imperative sentence, he must possess that kind of power that can make the listener obedient. Therefore, in political speeches, the speaker will be a charismatic figure who carry authority. As Halliday mentions, adopting imperatives in communication can achieve the purpose of calling for

actions, giving support and response. So, when the authoritative figure employs imperatives to persuade the listener, the effects the speaker desire for will be more powerful than the other types of sentence.

(3) Let each of us now embrace, with solemn duty and awesome joy, what is our lasting birthright.

In example 3, he was encouraging the American people to celebrate for their nation's basic right of all humans. He was also inspiring the people to depend their country against inequality and to support the government heartily. On the one hand, imperatives are more powerful and effective to inspire people to take actions for their country. On the other hand, the speaker included imperatives will also involve the speaker himself into this communication, making it more acceptable for the audience to strive for their nation because they did not feel the president's superiority over the common people.

4.2 Modality System and Interpersonal Function

Modality can be employed to judge the correctness of a proportion and show the speaker's obligation and willingness towards a certain activity. More than one way can be utilized to achieve Modality. In this address, modal verbs and adverbs are the most frequent words Obama utilized to achieve modality. The distribution of them is also demonstrated.

Table 3. Distribution of Modal Verbs and Modal Adjuncts in the Address

Value	Modal Verbs	Frequency	Percentage
Low	May	4	8%
	Could	2	3%
	Can	6	10%
Median	Will	22	37%
	Would	1	2%
High	Need	2	3%
	Must	16	27%
	Cannot	6	10%
Total		59	100%

4.2.1 "Can" and Its Interpersonal Function

As the above table illustrated, "can" is the most frequent used low modal operators. This word expresses various meanings. It can tell us the probability of the speech event, reveal whether the subject is capable or not. It can serve as a buffer when the speaker is not assured and also express permission.

(4) Nor have we succumbed to the fiction that all society's ills can be cured through government alone.

(5) For our journey is not complete until our wives, our mothers and daughters can earn a living equal to their efforts.

"Can" in example 4 indicates probability. It means that the fantasy that American government can eradicate all the social diseases only by themselves is no longer pursued by the public. It seems that

“can” express one’s ability because some may believe that the organization is all-powerful. However, the determiner “all” emphasized the complexity of the social problems and thus highlighted the impossibility solve by the government alone. In this way, the necessity and importance of solidarity cannot be overstressed. Therefore, the speaker strengthened the contagiousness of the language in this address. Example 5 demonstrates that cutting off the discrimination against women is still a long journey. Nonetheless, Obama is clear about the social discrimination and mistreat or inequity women is subjected to, so he didn’t mean to cheat on the people or to give rise to an unrealistic expectation of the public. By employing “can” here, he presented his diffidence, displaying the rigorousness of language.

4.2.2 “Will” and Its Interpersonal Function

Modal verb “will” often predict things probably happen in the future, and it can also express one’s willingness to do something.

(6) The path towards sustainable energy sources will be long and sometimes difficult.

“Will” here is a moderate and implicit way to describe the difficult situation at that time. Obama intended to say that sustainable energy sources threaten to be unavailable in the future. Instead of using “the path is still long”, which is more like an invariable fact, he employed the future tense to reduce the seriousness of the harsh reality. Therefore, he is using language to offer people the hope and confidence. What’s more, when he was putting this sentence with grave face and determined intonation, he was also making a vow that he would stretch himself to get rid of this current difficulty.

(7) We will respond to the threat of climate change.

(8) We will defend our people and uphold our values through strength of arms and rule of law.

In example 7, when it comes to the necessity to facing the threat of climate change, Obama made commitment that the government would lead to a revolution in technology so that their offspring would survive the disasters in the future. The modal verb “will” here can boost his resolution to solve the current problems. The audience will be persuaded and be encouraged to strive for their bright future. In the following example, he promised to protect the people and support democracy. “Will” displayed to the full his strong sense of responsibility, and his generosity when confronted with difficulties is also fully expressed.

4.2.3 “Must” and Its Interpersonal Function

“Must” is high value modal verbs. It symbolizes the speaker’s power, status and authority. According to Halliday, the use of “must” can relieve the sense of doubt on the listener’s side so that it makes the speaker’s statement more powerful, making the language forcefully articulate.

(9) We must be a source of hope to the poor, the sick, the marginalized, the victims of prejudice.

(10) We must faithfully execute that pledge during duration of our service.

In the above examples, the high value modal operator gives the audience a sense of obligation, making them feel that it is their responsibility to change the American history. Because it is the president who employed “must” which is much stronger and more powerful, it is easier for the audience to listen to

his order and act accordingly, and the speaker's social status and authority is fully displayed. What's more, when "must" is frequently used, the importance of the information and the necessity of taking action is protruded.

(11) We believe that America's prosperity must rest upon the broad shoulders of a rising middle class.

Apart from the above-mentioned functions of "must", it can also put forth some useful and urgent information at the same time. In the above example, as the national president, his suggestion was powerful itself. With the word "must", the audience will feel the strong obligation to bring prosperity to their nation.

4.2.4 Modal Adjuncts in the Address

The low value modal adverb "sometimes" occurred once and the high value modal adverbs "always" and "surely" are used three times. Modal adjuncts can help to achieve interpersonal meaning. Modal adjuncts usually precede the main verbs and thus can emphasize the whole sentence. Modal adjuncts can perform various function, it can provide the frequency of occurrence of the action and express the degree of certainty of it.

(12) The way to sustainable sources is sometimes not even.

(13) But we have always kept that in mind that we have to change with the pace of the world.

(14) Our journey has not accomplished until people with who are gay or lesbian are equally treated and then surely the love is regarded fairly.

In example 12, Obama meant that the sustainable sources are not east to get. With the modal adjuncts "sometimes", he suggested that the people should prepare for the unpredictable difficulties or frustrations that may happen in the future. However, "sometimes" states an occasional situation so he still conveyed hope and confidence that they had opportunity to overcome the current obstacle. Using "always" in example 13, he highlighted the significance of keeping peace with the world, and the adverb "always" makes it a rule of living to the Americans, which is equivalent to "must". In example 14, "surely", or definitely, is also at high value, which renders the audience a sense of obligation. Moreover, it also reveals Obama's political thoughts and ideas: creating an equal world without prejudice and segregation.

4.2.5 Other Modal Operators in the Address

In SFG, Modality is also expressed by indirect sentences. Based on Halliday's idea, this expression has the same function with that of modal operators because they can equally express obligation and probability.

(15) We believe that our perpetual security and peaceful life do not require the existence of the lasting war.

(16) A modern economy requires railways and highways to speed travel and commerce.

"Require" is special word to realize modality. It has the same function and usage as "need". However, compared with "need", "require" is more powerful and obligatory. In example 15, Obama claimed that

security and peace should not rely on violence or war. With strong power and force, he displayed his resolved attitude towards war and peace. Similarly, in example 16, the high value modal operators highlight the strong obligation and necessity of developing railways and highways so he displayed his determined resolution to fight for the modern economy.

4.3 Person System and Interpersonal Function

As a part of Person system, personal pronouns make clear of the relationship between the words and its referents. Personal pronouns can not only refer the entity mentioned before, but also give hint of the speakers to the audience. It can create a close interaction between addresser and addressee. As to the distribution of Personal pronouns in Obama's inaugural speech in 2013, the first-person pronoun occupies 80.59%. The distribution of the other is relatively lower. Among the first-person pronouns, "We" and "Our" are the most frequent used two words.

4.3.1 First Person Pronouns in the Address

"We" is the plural forms of "I". "Our" is the plural form of "My". When the single form is used, the speaker is usually expressing his own opinions and thoughts, naturally displaying his social status and authority. Since the plural form covers both the speaker and the listener, it is easily to generate emotional similarity and resonance in both the two sides involved. Thus, it reveals speaker's sympathetic feeling towards the current situation. What's more, "We" can be separated to the listen-included and the listener-excluded.

(17) My fellow Americans, we are made foe this moment, and we will seize it.

(18) We will show the courage to try and resolve our difference with other nations peacefully.

(19) We will renew those institutions that extend our capacity to manage crisis abroad.

Personal pronoun "we" indicates a variety of meanings. In example 17, Obama was emphasizing that this era is a good time for Americans to strive for. "We" refers to not only Obama himself, but also the government and the public. Meanwhile, in political speech, the speaker included "We" made this proposal in example 18 effective, powerful and persuasive. In the next sentence, "We" concerns the government, not including the audience. He made solemn commitment to the whole nation and also conveyed his political thoughts on the national institution and his persistent ambition to revamp the organizational framework.

4.3.2 The Second and Third Personal Pronouns in the Address

"You" directly refers to the listener. When the speaker speaks with "You", he may long for the interaction with the audience, intend to influence the listener directly or make his attitude known by the listener.

(20) You and I, as citizens, have the power to set this country's course.

"You and I" means "we", the president and the audience. "You" has the function of demand and will make the order goal-oriented and effective to the audience. However, to avoid rudeness, the plural form "we" will make that order more acceptable and respectful.

In political speeches, the third personal pronoun is usually used to refer to their own referent so it is not easy to find a common meaning of the third personal pronoun, which is also true of the pronoun “it”. The one thing assured is that third personal pronoun is more objective, indifferent and changeable than the other two.

5. Conclusion

After a thorough study of Obama’s inaugural address in 2013, it is found that Modality, Mood and Personal Pronouns all played important part in conveying the Interpersonal meaning of language in political speech. First of all, different Mood indicates different role the speaker and the listener chose to assume. There are declarative mood, interrogative mood and imperative mood in the mood system. The type of mood is determined by the placement of the subject and residue and different type of mood serve different function respectively. In this address, the most frequent used one is declarative mood by which Obama makes his information more accurate, effective and convincing.

Additionally, the speaker’s extra meaning can be derived from the various choice of high, median and low value modal operators and modal adjuncts. Among which, the “can”, “will”, “must” are frequently used.

Lastly, the different choices of personal pronouns also influence the expression of interpersonal meaning. In this address, the first-person pronoun is in majority. Especially the speaker included and the listener excluded pronoun “we” serves to the success of the speech.

Language can perform diverse functions in a communicative situation. Therefore, the study in political speech from the perspectives of Pragmatics should be taken into consideration so that the links between the language choice and the intended meaning could be better understood.

References

- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some linguistic universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bu, M. (2011). *Analysis of interpersonal function in Obama’s inaugural speech* (Master’s thesis, Changchun University of Technology).
- Fasold, R. (2000). *The sociolinguistics of language*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching & Research Press.
- Guan, Y. (2021). Analysis of modality system from the perspective of systemic functional linguistics. *English Square*, 2021(36), 40-42.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). *An introduction to functional grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). *An introduction to functional grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (2000). *An introduction to functional grammar*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching & Research Press.

- Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. (2004). *An introduction to functional grammar*. London: Arnold.
- Hu, Z. (2016). *Introduction to linguistics*. Beijing: Peking University Press.
- Liu, S. (2011). *Evaluation of interpersonal meaning function in Obama's political speeches* (Master's thesis, Central China Normal University).
- Ma, L. (2008). *Interpretation of interpersonal function in discourse expression* (Master's thesis, Heilongjiang University).
- Partridge, J. G. (1982). *Semantic, pragmatic and syntactic correlate: An analysis of performative verbs based on English data*. New York: Gunter Narr Verlag Tübingen.
- Peng, G. (2010). An analysis of Obama's inaugural speech from the perspective of appraisal theory. *Journal of Southeast University*, 12(Supplement), 173-177.
- Qiu, Y. (2006). Rhetorical analysis and translation of Obama's inaugural address. *Journal of Hubei Second Normal University*, 2006(6), 126-129.
- Tao, H. (2022). Discourse analysis from the perspective of interpersonal function: A case study of First Lady Jill Biden's speech at George Mason University's 2021 commencement. *English Square*, 2022(02), 54-57.
- Tang, L. (2014). *Interpersonal function analysis of English political speech discourse* (Master's thesis, Jilin University).
- Wang, X., & Gao, Y. (2021). A comparative study of inaugural speeches by British and American leaders from the perspective of interpersonal function. *Journal of Luliang University*, 11(04), 28-32.
- Wei, C. (2020). *A comparative study of the realization of interpersonal meaning in the first State of the Union addresses by Obama and Trump* (Master's thesis, Xinjiang Normal University).
- Wu, Q. (2017). *An analysis of the English translation of political speeches from the perspective of interpersonal function* (Master's thesis, Zhengzhou University).
- Yang, S., & Chang, C. (2021). A comparative study of English and Chinese modality systems from the perspective of systemic functional linguistics. *Journal of PLA University of Foreign Languages*, 44(04), 1-9+159.
- Zhang, C. (2010). Language feature analysis of Obama's victory speech: A systemic functional perspective. *Shandong Foreign Language Teaching Journal*, 31(03), 36-40.
- Zhang, Y. (2019). *Realization of interpersonal function in President Trump's public speeches* (Master's thesis, Changchun University of Technology).