



REVIEW ARTICLE

A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS ON PERSON DEIXIS IN THE QUEEN'S CHRISTMAS BROADCAST 2019

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ABSTRACT

Christmas is the most important festival in the west, and the British Queen Elizabeth II makes a speech on this day every year to celebrate with the people. The Christmas speech every year involves annual domestic and international events, it is a rare opportunity for the British Queen to express personal opinions and attitudes. Based on the person deixis of the Queen's Christmas Speech in 2019, this paper intends to analyze the use of person deixis in the corpus and the pragmatic information they convey from the perspective of pragmatics, so as to further understand the pragmatic functions of person deixis. The appropriate use of person deixis in the Queen's Christmas speeches can effectively highlight the main theme of the Christmas speeches, also achieve the purpose of blessing and appealing to the masses.

KEYWORDS

The Queen's Christmas speech, person deixis, pragmatic analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

Christmas has become a worldwide festival that celebrates with everyone. Every year Christmas is a festival to commemorate the birth of Jesus, and it is also the most important and grandest festival of the year in Britain and the Commonwealth of Nations. It has become a common practice for the British Queen to make Christmas broadcast every year. The Queen will express congratulations and Christmas greetings to the whole nation and the Commonwealth. As a result, the Christmas speech is admired and concerned by the people at home and abroad. Although the Queen is only a nominal head of state and religious leader, the British generally have a strong "royal complex", thus, the Christmas speech not only expresses the celebration of the festival, but also conveys the message of the British royal family's doings in domestic and foreign affairs, shows attitudes and views on foreign hot issues, which is to consolidate relations with the public and enhance confidence and cohesion of them.

The Queen's Christmas speech is diversified in content every year, mainly covering the following four themes: (1) Christmas, the theme is to preach the Christianity and develop the traditions of Christmas, even empower the people, encourage them to face difficulties and challenges bravely, advocate for people to unite and help each other; (2) Domestic events, including royal family members' marriages and children, the Queen's wedding anniversary celebrations, succession celebrations and family history, etc., the theme directly or indirectly conveys to the public that the royal family members are committed to shoulder their responsibilities, fulfill their obligations, and provide help and services; (3) International affairs, including the experience and feelings of the Queen and members of

the royal family visiting different countries, attending commemorative activities of important international events, etc., these can show the Queen's role in protecting traditions and promoting unity; (4) People's livelihood, it includes encouragement to civilians, especially those living in wars and disasters; even the gratitude, support and praise for volunteers, especially military servicemen and their families.

The Queen's annual Christmas speeches are an effective information for us to understand British society and culture, the status of the royal family, and the diplomatic dynamics of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth. The analysis of this corpus is useful to understand of British society, politics, economy and culture, however the corpus analysis needs the basis of relevant linguistic theories. This paper takes the Queen's Christmas speech in 2019 as the corpus to analyze how the Queen uses different person deixis to achieve different pragmatic functions from the perspective of pragmatics.

2. PERSON DEIXIS

The term "deixis" is derived from the Greek word meaning "to show" or "to point out" via language (Huang, 2007). The phenomenon of deixis is meant the location and identification of person, objects, events, processes and activities being talked about of the participants in it, and it is in relation to certain contextual elements, such as time, space, etc (Huang, 2007). The speaker will choose different deixis to embody pragmatic functions based on different contexts. In pragmatics, deixis is an important way and means for the speaker to achieve the purpose of verbal communication through the meaning generated by the context created by

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language structure. There are five types of deixis, including person deixis, time deixis, place deixis, discourse deixis and social deixis (Levinson, 1983). However, person deixis is one of the essential elements of pragmatics, which usually refers to the first person (I, we), the second person (you), and the third person (he, she, it, they).

The usage of person deixis can be divided into two kinds: conventional and non-conventional. In speeches, the first person is usually referred to the speaker, the second person refers to the hearer, and the third person refers to others who has not directly participated in the speech. However, under certain circumstances, the speaker deliberately violated these conventional usages and replaced them with other types of deixis in order to achieve specific pragmatic purposes. The conventional usage of person deixis is a "self-centred" phenomenon, that is, the words or structures used to express the speaker, the hearer or others in verbal communication. It can be divided into three categories as the first person deixis, the second person deixis, the third person deixis (Levinson, 1983). The first person deixis refers to the speaker or the hearer; the second person deixis refers

to the hearer; but the third person deixis is neither the speaker nor the hearer. The choice and application of person deixis can adjust different pragmatic distances, it is an important pragmatic strategy to reflects the closeness of interpersonal relationships in a certain extent. In speeches, the speaker conveys the pragmatic information by the choice of person deixis so that he or she can achieve the purpose of the speech as its best. Therefore, the same person deixis which is restricted by different contexts has different functions.

3. THE FREQUENCIES OF PERSON DEIXIS IN THE QUEEN'S CHRISTMAS SPEECH 2019

This paper takes the Queen's Christmas speech in 2019 as a corpus. According to statistics by hand, the Queen's Christmas speech in 2019 is about 290 seconds long and contains a total of 618 words, among which person deixis appears 43 times. The specific frequency of person deixis is shown in Table 1.

	The first person	The second person	The third person							
Person deixis	I	we	us	my	our	you	he	it	his	them
Frequencies	6	6	6	4	7	1	1	8	3	1
Total frequencies	29	1	13							
Proportion	13.95%	13.95%	13.95%	9.3%	16.28%	2.33%	2.33%	18.6%	6.98%	2.33%

As Table 1 demonstrates, the Queen prefers to use the first-person deictic expressions in her Christmas speech. In the speech, the first person appeared 29 times, the second person only appeared once, and the third person appeared 13 times. Therefore, it can be known that the use of first person has an absolute advantage, with a frequency of 67.43%. The second person is very rarely use; it is very low at 2.33%. The frequency of the third person is 30.24%, but the singular third person "she" appeared to have no third-person pronouns. This phenomenon is consistent with Levinson who proposed "egocentric particulars", that is, deixis is centered on the speaker (Levinson, 1983).

The Queen frequently uses the first-person deictic expressions in her speeches, which indicates that the Queen has placed herself in the context of the events she is speaking about and integrated with the audience. And it can also be seen from the table that the first person "I" was used for 6 times, and "we" was also used for 6 times. In her speeches, the Queen tends to use the singular and plural first-person pronouns, which is also closely related to the multiple referential meanings of "I" and "we". The distribution of personal pronouns in this whether it is related to the purpose and the content of the speech, whether the speech conforms to the addressee's psychology, and meets the needs of the addressee. Therefore, the specific pragmatic functions will be analyzed according to the three-person deictic expressions of the Christmas speech in 2019.

4. A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS ON PERSON DEIXIS IN THE QUEEN'S CHRISTMAS SPEECH 2019

Person deixis seems simple but is actually complicate. In order to achieve communicative intentions in certain communicative situations or to reflect the relationship between the interlocutors or participants, its references and pragmatic functions will be different. In the speech, the Queen chose and used person deixis in different contexts to achieve expected effect of her speech.

4.1 A pragmatic analysis on the first-person deictic expressions

The first-person deictic expressions have two different forms, namely singular and plural. The singular first person "I" and the derivative "my" usually indicates the speaker's reference to him- or herself; the plural first person is "we" and the derivative "us", "our". The first singular and plural pronouns of person deixis have different pragmatic functions in public speaking. The singular first person "I" was used for 6 times in total, accounting for 13.95%, and "my" was 4 times, accounting for 9.3%. This

shows that the Queen wants to lower her position by sharing her own experience and insights, and shortens the distance with the hearers, she aims to call on the people to maintain peace and goodwill at all times. See the following examples (1) to (6):

- (1) **I** never imagined that one day a man would walk on the moon (The Royal, 2019).
- (2) The challenges many people face today may be different to those once faced by **my** generation, but **I** have been struck by how new generations have brought a similar sense of purpose to issues such as protecting our environment and our climate (The Royal, 2019).
- (3) **My** family and **I** are also inspired by the men and women of our emergency services and armed forces (The Royal, 2019).

The first person "I" was used to express in the central sentences of this Christmas speech. The use of "I" and "my" in the speech not only emphasizes herself but also personal reflection. In example (1), the Queen started with the Apollo landing on the moon, and introduced to the topic of the speech by recalling the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings this year. While in the second example, she had been struck by the sense of purpose younger generations have shown in tackling issues like climate change and the planet. She praised young people for their sense of mission and called for people to learn from contemporary youth. The Queen used the singular first-person "I" to lower her position and become more intimate the hearers, and then appealed the masses to keep peace and goodwill at all times, as they did in the past. In addition, she emphasized the importance of letting go of differences and moving towards reconciliation, which has achieved the effect of highlighting the theme and appealing to the masses.

- (4) **I** well remember the look of concern on **my** father's face (The Royal, 2019).
- (5) Prince Philip and **I** have been delighted to welcome our eighth great-grandchild into our family (The Royal, 2019).
- (6) And so, **I** wish you all a very happy Christmas (The Royal, 2019).

Christmas speeches have always been delivered on Christmas Day, it is an important festival in the West. The festive atmosphere is very strong and the political atmosphere is relatively weak. Therefore, in the three examples above, the Queen used "I" as deixis to show her cordiality and sincerity, share her personal experience, and further bring herself closer

to the hearers, showing her personal charisma and attitude of equality and friendship. The use of "I" adds some humility to the speech; at the same time, this also expressed her thanks and wishes, which makes the feelings more sincere, so as to create a peaceful, happy festive atmosphere. The use of the plural first person "we" accounted for 13.95%, the use of "us" accounted for 13.95%, and "our" accounted for 16.28%. The plural of the first person includes the hearer and the speaker. It can create a harmonious and friendly atmosphere, so that the content and suggestions of the speaker are more acceptable to the audience, and it also indicates the speaker's higher personal participation. See the following examples:

- (7) As **we** watched Neil Armstrong taking a small step for man and a giant leap for mankind and, indeed, for womankind (The Royal, 2019).
- (8) By being willing to put past differences behind **us** and move forward together, **we** honour the freedom and democracy once won for **us** at so great a cost (The Royal, 2019).
- (9) **We** remember all those on duty at home and abroad, who are helping those in need and keeping **us** and **our** families safe and secure (The Royal, 2019).
- (10) And, as **we** all look forward to the start of a new decade (The Royal, 2019).

From the meaning of the language itself, the singular first person "I" only refers to the speaker, while the plural first person "we, us, our" refers to the addressee including the speaker. The Queen hopes to make the hearer feel that she is in the same position as them, so as to achieve a more effective speech effect of the speech and make the hearer more agree with her views and expressions. Therefore, the speaker tends to use "we". If the speaker always uses "I", it will make the hearer feel that the speaker is deliberately emphasizing him- or herself, which of course will affect the effectiveness of the speech. Therefore, the use of the plural first person indicates that the Queen wants to shorten the distance with the masses by her speech and improve the cohesion of the UK.

The plural first person "we" not only references to the speaker and the hearer, but also extends to the people of the world. Examples (7) and (10), the Queen urged the British not to argue too much, to think the past year and celebrate the next wonderful year. In Example (9), the use of the plural first person makes the hearers feel a sense of closeness with the speaker, and a sense of mission and responsibility for common progress and struggle. The uses of the plural "we, us and our" shorten the distance between each other in Example (8). The Queen emphasizes the importance of peace and unity and highlights the theme of the speech here. In the speech, the Queen used "we" to weaken her superior social status as a member of the royal family. She believed that she is as equal to those who has served the country. It also makes the speaker invisibly lowers the position and shows her modesty.

4.2 A pragmatic analysis on the second person deictic expression "you"

Personal pronouns are egocentric, which is the conventional usage of person deixis. However, in the specific use, the speaker may not necessarily follow this convention. In order to adapt to the communication environment and meet the needs of communication purposes, the speaker will use the unconventional usage of person deixis to achieve different pragmatic effects.

The second person deictic expression "you" can refer to anyone expect the speaker. In verbal communication, "you" usually indicates the hearer. See example:

- (11) And so, I wish **you** all a very happy Christmas (The Royal, 2019).

As shown in the example, in the speech, the second-person deictic expression only appeared in the last sentence at the end of the text, that is, the Queen expressed her wishes to the nation. As mentioned earlier, the Queen's Christmas speech is mainly to shorten the distance with the people and unite the people, so the overuse of the second-person in the speech will produce negative effect. Moreover, "the first and second

person pronouns are specific in a communication situation. The one who speaks always expresses him- or herself by the first person and another one always expresses by the second person" (He, 1999). From the national conditions of the constitutional monarchy, although the social status of the people who watched the Queen's speech is high or low. The Queen used the second-person "you" in her speech to summarize, which not only shortens the distance between the Queen as a royal family and the hearer, but also it also weakens the social and political class. Regardless of high or low, it means that the British are the whole. Therefore, she just used the second person deictic expression when expressing good wishes at the end, which can not only avoid the feeling of alienation caused by overuse, but also appropriately and direct points out that the object of the blessing is the audience who watched this speech.

4.3 A pragmatic analysis on the third person deictic expressions

From the perspective of pragmatics, in the first, second, third person pronoun category, the usage of the first- and second-person deictic expressions is indicative (the first person indicates the speaker, the second person indicates the hearer), the third person deictic expressions are used for endophoric reference (He, 1999; Chen and Chen, 2011; Wang and Song, 2013; Yang and Guan, 2015; Zhao and Liu, 2019). In this analysis of the 2019 Queen's Christmas speech, the third-person appeared 5 times in total. Although the number of occurrences is second only to the first person, but they can all be subsumed anaphora and cataphora within the discourse. The specific application and pragmatic analysis of these third person deictic expressions are as follows.

In the third person, both "he" and "it" belong to the singular, as well as the derivative "his". They indicate participants other than the speaker and the hearer. The singular of the third person in a speech refers to someone or something mentioned above.

- (12) I well remember the look of concern on my father's face. **He** knew the secret D-Day plans but could of course share that burden with no one (The Royal, 2019).

In the example, the third person "he" is the anaphora referring to the father of the Queen mentioned in the previous discourse. The use of "he" here avoids repetition with the previous expression and makes the whole speech smooth and no ambiguity.

- (13) But in time, through **his** teaching and by **his** example, Jesus Christ would show the world how small steps taken in faith and in hope can overcome long-held differences and deep-seated divisions to bring harmony and understanding (The Royal, 2019).

- (14) Many of us already try to follow in **his** footsteps (The Royal, 2019).

In examples (13) and (14), the third person "his" refers to the Jesus mentioned in the speech. The deixis "his" plays a good role in the context, expressing the main theme of this Queen's Christmas speech, the Queen said the Christmas message of peace and goodwill still has relevance today.

- (15) **It's** a reminder for us all that giant leaps often start with small steps (The Royal, 2019).

- (16) **It's** a timely reminder of what positive things can be achieved when people set aside past differences and come together in the spirit of friendship and reconciliation (The Royal, 2019).

- (17) **It's** worth remembering that **it** is often the small steps, not the giant leaps that bring about the most lasting change (The Royal, 2019).

In examples (15) to (17), the pragmatic purposes of "it" have different meanings. The third person "it" in the Christmas speech refers to different objects, which can be abstract principles, person, or as the formal subjects. In addition, the Queen added the use of the third person pronoun "it" in her speech when she narrated the important events in 2019, which giving it a deeper meaning and makes the speech more profound and interesting. In the Queen's Christmas speech 2019, the plural third person deictic expression "they" did not appear, but the derivative "them" appeared once.

- (18) For the 75th anniversary of that decisive battle, in a true spirit of reconciliation, those who had formally been sworn enemies came

together in friendly commemorations either side of the Channel, putting past differences behind **them** (The Royal, 2019).

In this example, the plural of the third person in the speech refers to the differences or the turmoil faced by the country, the royal family, or the people in the past. The deixis calls on everyone to put the past behind him or her and look forward to the future to enhance the persuasiveness of the speech. In general, the third person deictic expressions all indicate the anaphora in the Queen's speech. The frequent use of the third person has played a role in the context within the preceding and the following of the discourse, making the speech more coherent and prominent.

5. CONCLUSION

Person deixis is widely used in speeches as an indispensable part of speeches, the distribution of different person deixis shows in the British Queen's Christmas speech 2019. The first person deixis is mostly used by the speaker which accounts for 67.43%, the first person "I" is used for 6 times by the speaker which accounts for 13.95% of the total number, in order to shorten the psychological and social distance between the royal family and the people in Britain. At the same time, considering the Christmas message is to unite and bless for the public, the plural first person "we" also occurs 6 times, accounting for 13.95% of the total frequency. The repeated use of "we" achieved the purpose of appealing to the masses in speech. Then, the second person deixis only takes up 2.33%, a small number of second person deixis are used to close the relations with the masses, or accurately convey the celebration of the festival and wish to everyone.

In addition, the third person deixis has a percentage of 30.24%, a number of the third person deixis are used to refer to different contents so as to connect the context, avoid the rigidity caused by overuse of conjunctions, and make the discourse more coherent and fluent for expressing the main

theme of the Queen's, that is, she appealed to the public to maintain goodwill, love and peace in this short and concise speech. The three different person deixis have their own unique features, and each of person deixis has completely different pragmatic functions in speeches. Therefore, the speaker chooses appropriate person deixis in certain context, which can not only convey information accurately and achieve specific pragmatic purposes, but also make the speech more infectious and persuasive.

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