

A Study of Chinese Leader's Speech at the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympics Review and Awards Ceremony from the Perspective of Transitivity System

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Abstract

On April 8, 2022, President Xi delivered an important speech at the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympics Review and Awards Ceremony. From the perspective of transitivity theory in systemic functional language, it is of great significance to study the text of President Xi's Speech at the ceremony. Exploring the distribution of various process types in the discourse can not only gain an understanding of the conceptual significance, but also know that how the speech reflects the Beijing Winter Olympics' spirit of bearing in mind the big picture, pursuing excellence, creating a better future together, rising to the challenges and being confident and open by the transitivity processes.

Keywords

Systemic functional grammar; The Beijing Winter Olympics' spirit; Transitivity analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

In February, 2022, China hosted the 24th Olympic Winter Games, namely the Beijing Winter Olympic Games. The Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympics Review and Awards Ceremony was grandly held in the Great Hall of the People on the morning of April 8, 2022. President Xi attended the ceremony and delivered an important speech. Systemic functional linguistics holds that transitivity system is an effective theoretical tool for discourse analysis, which can be used to carry out quantitative research on discourse and make the research results more objective and persuasive. Therefore, this paper takes the Chinese Leader's Speech at the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympics Review and Awards Ceremony as corpus, and uses Halliday's systemic functional grammar as a theoretical framework to explore the theme of the speech and how the speech reflects the Beijing Winter Olympics' spirit by the transitivity processes.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Systemic Functional Grammar

Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) was put forward by the world-famous linguist Mr. Halliday in the 1950s and 1960s on the basis of the revision and development of Firth's theory. Halliday's *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* published in 1985 indicates that systemic functional grammar has been relatively mature, and its integrity and systematicness have been basically formed (Zhang Delu, 2004). Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) is a kind of functional linguistics research method which takes system as the research object and society as the guidance. It regards function as "the basic principle of language system constructed in language" (Halliday, 1981). Traditionally, the research object of grammar is sentence, but

systemic functional grammar takes discourse as the center of research (Zhang Shujie, Zhang Delu, 2015), and the research object is not just clause. Thompson (2000) pointed out that systemic functional grammar is a powerful tool for analyzing discourse and revealing language features. Systemic functional grammar is regarded as one of the most prominent and effective linguistic theories in discourse analysis. At the same time, Halliday pointed out that the purpose of text analysis is interpretative, not interpretative, that is to explain the meaning and expression of the text. System grammar emphasizes that language, as the underlying relationship or meaning potential of system network, is a system network composed of several subsystems associated with meaning that can be chosen by people. As one of the symbols, language inevitably has to choose between various semantic functions when expressing the speaker's semantics (Halliday, 1978). Functional grammar regards language as a means of social communication, which is based on the fact that language system and its components are inevitably determined by the functions they provide. In other words, the existence of language is to provide a certain function, and the social requirements of language make language form its own structure.

2.2. Halliday's Three Meta-functions

Systemic functional linguistics mainly studies the meta-functions of language and provides a research tool for the descriptive stage of discourse analysis. According to Halliday, language consists of three meta-functions: ideational function, interpersonal function and textual function (Halliday, 1994). Ideational function refers to the integration of people's experience and consciousness into language. Conversely, language can directly reflect the material process of the objective world and the state and relationship of things. In other words, ideational function refers to that people express the experience world and describe the surrounding situation through language (Cheng Xiaotang, 2002). Its function can be embodied by the classification system, transitivity system and transformation system of language, which can express the speaker's or author's perception and judgment of the material world. Interpersonal function emphasizes the interaction between speakers and is used to express the position, opinion and judgment of the speaker. Discourse function refers to the mechanism of combining a series of sentences into a coherent and complete spoken or written discourse, which is different from a series of disordered sentence combinations. It mainly studies the way of cohesion between sentences and reflects the attitude and viewpoint of the speaker.

2.3. Transitivity System

Halliday believes that ideational function includes experiential function and logical function (Halliday, 2008). Among them, the experiential function is to express the various experiences of the real world including people's inner world (Hu Zhuanglin, Zhu Yongsheng, Zhang Delu, 2008), and to reflect the events, participants, time, place and other environmental factors in the subjective and objective world. It is mainly reflected through voice and transitivity. Transitivity is the core of ideational function. Transitivity system refers to the semantic system that describes the whole clause and how to express meaning in the clause (Simpson, 1993). As a semantic system of English ideographic function, it divides the whole experience world into a group of easy to operate process types, including six processes: material process, mental process, relational process, behavioral process, verbal process and existential process (Halliday, 2000). There is no difference in the sequence of these six processes, but they constitute a continuum of the cycle. And each process is composed of different participants, processes, and environmental elements, which has a specific function and significance, that is, the choice of different processes shows the author's motivation and intention. Therefore, through transitivity analysis, not only the grammatical features but also the meaning of the text can be understood better. So, this paper analyzes the theme of the speech and how the speech reflects the Beijing Winter Olympics' spirit by the transitivity processes.

3. TRANSITIVITY ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE SPEECH

The speech of President Xi at the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympics Review and Awards Ceremony totaled 3862 words with 254 clauses. By analyzing the process types of verbs in each clause, it is found that the following six processes are involved (Table 1).

Table 1. The distribution of transitivity process of the speech

Type of process	Material Process	Relational Process	Mental Process	Verbal Process	Existential Process	Behavioral Process	Total
Amount	190	37	11	10	5	1	254
Percentage(%)	74.8	14.57	4.33	3.94	1.97	0.39	100

3.1. Material Process

Material process is interpreted as the process of “doing something” or “having something”. It is most frequently used in the speech. It is used 190 times, accounting for 74.8%.

Table 2. The use of material process of the speech

Actor	Material Process	Goal
(8) Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games	worked closely with	Beijing Municipal Government, Hebei Provincial Government, the General Administration of Sport, and the China Disabled Persons' Federation
(11) All the builders, workers and volunteers	worked tirelessly and dedicatedly	
(21) Beijing and Zhangjiakou, the two host cities	deployed	their best resources
	worked closely with	global sports organizations, including the International Olympic Committee and International Paralympic Committee, to surmount challenges including the COVID-19 pandemic and present the world with streamlined, safe and splendid Games
(58) We	have built	a large amount of high-quality venues and facilities for ice and snow sports
	have held	a series of ice and snow events participated by the general public
(106) The builders	have built	marvelous, world-class venues and facilities with craftsmanship
(107) The organizers	have organized	the events meticulously and professionally to create favorable conditions for athletic competition
(140) The International Olympic Committee, the International Paralympic Committee and members of the Olympic and Paralympic families	helped a lot with	our work
(180) We	proactively prevented and addressed	risks and challenges
(184) We	adhered to	a problem-oriented approach
	stayed	alert against potential dangers
	gave	high priority to preempting and defusing risks and challenges
(238) We	will fully tap	cultural resources
	will make	China's voice heard globally
	will tell	China's stories well
(246) We	will carry forward	the Olympic spirit
	will ensure	the Olympic Games play an important role in promoting peace and development
	will offer	more Chinese wisdom and Chinese strength to the progress of human civilization

According to Table 2, in example (8) and (11), all Chinese people care about the motherland, regard national affairs as their own affairs, and unite the people of the whole country and make their own contributions to the successful hosting of the Game, showing the Beijing Winter Olympics' spirit of bearing in mind the big picture. In order to successfully host the Game, the Chinese people are meticulous, demanding themselves with the strictest preparations, and designing many high-quality venues and facilities for ice and snow sports in example (58), (106) and (107), showing the Beijing Winter Olympics' spirit of pursuing excellence. According to example (21) and (140), people all over the world unite and cooperate with each other in the process of preparing the Game, showing the Beijing Winter Olympics' spirit of creating a better future together. In example (180) and (184), in the face of difficulties and challenges during the preparation of the Game, the Chinese people rose to them with perseverance, overcame difficulties in solidarity and moved forward, showing the Beijing Winter Olympics' spirit of rising to the challenges. In addition, in example (238) and (246), Chinese people adhere to be confident in the path, theory, system and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics and pass on the concept of Chinese civilization, which promote the cultural exchanges and mutual understanding of people around the world, showing the Beijing Winter Olympics' spirit of being confident and open.

3.2. Relational Process

Relational process refers to the process of what kind of relationship exists between two entities (Hu Zhuanglin, Zhu Yongsheng, Zhang Delu, 2005). Relational process can be divided into attributive relation and identifying relation. It is used 37 times, accounting for 14.57%.

Table 3. The use of relational process of the speech

Carrier	Attributive Relation	Attribute
(26) The opening and closing ceremonies of the Games	were	captivating, with the theme of building a community with a shared future for mankind running throughout
(66) Now the traffic across the region	is	more convenient and faster, the environment has been improved significantly, industries are linked more closely and the public services are delivered in a more equitable way
(72) The COVID-19 prevention and control	is	targeted and effective
Identified	Identifying Relation	Identifier
(27) the ceremonies	demonstrated	the beauty of nature, the beauty of humanity and the beauty of sport
	showcased	the image of China as a trustworthy, loveable and admirable country in the new era
(50) Chinese ideas	were fully exhibited at	opening and closing ceremonies in a creative and delicate way.
(167) The CPC	is	the most reliable backbone

According to Table 3, in the process of attributive relation, in example (26), the opening and closing ceremonies of the Games are attractive, and the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic Games take “building a community with a shared future for mankind” as the core expression, take “simplicity, safety and excellence” as the creative principle, and look forward to a better future from the perspective of the world, showing the Beijing Winter Olympics’ spirit of creating a better future together. In example (66), it shows that after the hard work of the Chinese people, China now has convenient transportation around the country, and the Chinese people live and work in peace and contentment, showing the rapid development of China. In example (72), it shows that Chinese government has taken effective measures to control the spread of the epidemic to ensure that the Game can be successfully hosted, showing the Beijing Winter Olympics’ spirit of rising to the challenges.

In the process of identifying relation, in example (27), integrating the Chinese culture with ice and snow elements are embodied in the opening and closing ceremonies of the Games, showing Chinese culture has a long history and it is broad and profound. According to example (50), it shows that the Chinese people passed on the country’s profound cultural heritage by innovative transformation and development in the opening and closing ceremonies, which gave people around the world a deeper understanding of Chinese culture, showing the Beijing Winter Olympics’ spirit of being confident and open. According to example (167), the Communist Party of China is the most powerful force for us to make achievements, thus we must unswervingly uphold the Party’s leadership.

3.3. Mental Process

Mental process is the process of expressing psychological activities such as perception, reaction and cognition (Hu Zhuanglin, Zhu Yongsheng, Zhang Delu, Li Zhanzi, 2005). It is used 11 times, accounting for 4.33%.

Table 4. The use of mental process of the speech

Senser	Perception	Phenomenon
(242) I	cannot see	the world
Senser	Reaction	Phenomenon
(97) I	love	you
(110) All contestants	feel	at home
Senser	Cognition	Phenomenon
(9) All the builders, workers and volunteers	bearing in mind	the trust of the Party and the people
(41) It	reminded me of	the hard-won prosperity of the motherland.
(183) We	kept in mind	the worst scenarios
(206) The participants in the Games	cherished	the opportunity

According to Table 4, according to example (97) and (110), the foreign athletes participating in the Beijing Winter Olympics expressed their gratitude and reluctance to Chinese before returning home from the competition, because the Chinese people had made arduous endeavors and overcome many difficulties only to provide a more comfortable environment for foreign athletes to better participate in the competition and achieve good results. Not only that, but also hope that foreign athletes will experience the hospitality, honesty and unity of the

Chinese people, showing the sincerity and friendliness of the Chinese people with hospitality and the Beijing Winter Olympics' spirit of being confident and open.

In example (9) and (41), all people from all walks of life who work hard for China to successfully host the Beijing Winter Olympics, don't afraid of difficulties, unite to overcome difficulties under the leadership of the Communist Party of China. And they will live up to the expectations and trust of the Communist Party of China, because every Chinese knows that prosperous and powerful China today is the result of our ancestors' hard work step by step. Therefore, we should make unremitting efforts for a better future for China. In example (183), it shows that the Chinese people stuck to the highest possible standards and requirements, refined every plan and measure to ensure that the Game can be successfully hosted, showing the Beijing Winter Olympics' spirit of pursuing excellence. According to example (206), contestants in Game express that they value the opportunity and want to try their best to win the glory for their own country.

3.4. Verbal Process

Verbal process refers to the process of exchanging information through conversation (Hu Zhuanglin, Zhu Yongsheng, Zhang Delu, Li Zhanzi, 2005). It is used 10 times, accounting for 3.94%.

Table 5. The use of verbal process of the speech

Sayer	Verbal process	Receiver	Verbiage
(83) Some foreign athletes	said		if there were a gold medal for responding to the pandemic, then China would deserve it
(86) I	would say		this gold medal belongs to all the staff involved in hosting the Games.
(138) I	would also like to express	all the people of Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, as well as the overseas Chinese, who have supported the Games enthusiastically	my heartfelt gratitude
(147) I	would like to express	the International Olympic Committee, the International Paralympic Committee, members of the Olympic and Paralympic families and friends from countries and regions around the world	my sincere gratitude
(199) A Beijing citizen participating in the performance in the closing ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympics	said		we are all ordinary people

In table 5, in example (83) (86) and (199), it shows that China has overcome the impact of the epidemic and hosted a grand Winter Olympics due to the efforts of the Chinese people. China is one of the best countries in terms of epidemic prevention and control. Therefore, foreigners believe that China, which can effectively control the epidemic and successfully host the Winter

Olympics, should be awarded gold medals. This is the affirmation of foreign friends to China, but also the affirmation of the Chinese people who unite to overcome difficulties. According to example (138) and (147), President Xi expresses heartfelt gratitude to all the people who have made contributions to successfully host the Game, without the joint efforts of people all over the world, the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics would not have been so smooth and successful, showing the Beijing Winter Olympics' spirit of coordination, interaction and cooperation and creating a better future together.

3.5. Existential Process

Existential process indicates the existence of something or someone. There is only one participant in the existential process. The so-called participant is the entity or event of existence, which is simply the existent (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014). It is used 5 times, accounting for 1.97%.

Table 6. The use of existential process of the speech

Existent	Existential process	Circumstance
(6) The Chinese people	have the willingness and determination to make contributions to advancing the Olympic movement and promoting solidarity and friendship among peoples across the world	
(39) I	was full of pride	when standing at the flag-raising platform
(45) Bing Dwen Dwen	has a lively and honest personality	

As shown in Table 6, the Chinese people are determined to host an unprecedented grand Olympic Games for people all over the world according to example (6). Chinese people are proud because China becomes prosperous and strong and plays an important role in the world today in example (39). According to example (45), as the mascot of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic Games, Bing Dwen Dwen means to create extraordinary and explore the future, reflecting the infinite possibility of pursuing excellence, leading the times and facing the future. In fact, it represents the hospitality and honesty of the Chinese people, and the successful holding of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic Games is a best embodiment. The 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics' spirit of bearing in mind the big picture and having the motherland in mind is showed in Table 6.

3.6. Behavioral Process

Behavioral process usually describes human psychology and psychological activities. This process has only one participant and is undertaken by human beings, which is called behavior. It is only used 1 time, accounting for 0.39%.

Table 7. The use of behavioral process of the speech

Behaver	Behavioral process
(142) Leaders of many countries and international organizations	arrived in China to attend relevant events

According to example (142) in Table 7, it reflects that in order to successfully host the Game, people around the world provided China with great support and help, showing the Beijing Winter Olympics' spirit of creating a better future together.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the transitivity analysis of President Xi's Speech at the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympics Review and Awards Ceremony under systemic functional grammar, material process is most frequently used to review that the hosting of the Game is successful because of arduous efforts of people around the world, especially Chinese people. The relationship process is used to pass on the concept of Chinese civilization and promote the cultural exchanges of people around the world. The mental process is used to show that Chinese people stick to the highest possible standards and requirements during the preparation of hosting the Game. The verbal process is mainly to express heartfelt gratitude to all the people who have made contributions to successfully host Winter Olympics. The existential process describes the Chinese people are determined to host an unprecedented grand Olympic Games for people all over the world. The behavioral process mainly describes that in order to successfully host the Game, people around the world provide China with great support and help. In short, it shows the Beijing Winter Olympics' spirit of bearing in mind the big picture, pursuing excellence, creating a better future together, rising to the challenges and being confident and open by transitivity analysis of President Xi's speech at the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympics Review and Awards Ceremony.

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