Stylistic Analysis of Bach's Speech at the Opening Ceremony of Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022

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***Abstract*—This paper uses both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the speech of Thomas Bach, the president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), at the opening ceremony of Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 in three aspects: vocabulary, syntax, and rhetorical devices. By calculating word frequency and sentence length according to the tape script of this speech, the result shows that the language is inspiring with many short and simple sentences. Bach is good at using declarative and exclamatory sentences, flexible use of personal pronouns and rhetorical devices, and his language is vivid and imaginative, which can inspire athletes and people around the world to face challenges in a new year. Through discourse analysis, we can better understand the spirit and meaning conveyed by speeches at international gatherings.**

***Index Terms*—Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022, Bach, stylistic analysis, speech**

I. INTRODUCTION

On February 4, 2022, the opening ceremony of the Olympic Winter Games 2022 Beijing was held in the National Stadium. The President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Thomas Bach delivered a speech at the opening ceremony, saying that the world is ready to see China and the world's best athletes perform on the grandest stage, which is a great start for the opening of the Olympic Winter Games, not only to raise good expectations and inspire athletes from all over the world to compete and enjoy the event just in time for the Chinese New Year, but also to inspire people to overcome difficulties together with the ambition, courage and strength of the Year of the Tiger, to live together in peace and respect with the Olympic spirit [1–2].

Delivered in Chinese, English and French, with English as the main language (89%), the 683-word speech lasted approximately nine minutes and was broadcast live to a global audience following this world sporting event. Since Chinese and French do not make up a large part of the speech, and only include names of people and New Year wishes, which have little to do with the content discussed in this study, this article focuses on analyzing the English-speaking part of the speech.

Speech is "in a specific time and space environment, with sound language and the corresponding body language as a means, public to the audience to convey information, express opinions, clarify things, express emotions, in order to achieve the purpose of appealing to the audience" [3]. Although speeches are delivered orally, they are carefully prepared in

advance, and most of them are accompanied by a speech script. Therefore, the style of speech is largely influenced by the immediate effect of the speech. Therefore, in order to arouse the audience's interest and gain their approval and support, speakers often use rhetorical devices such as prose and repetition to make their speeches vivid, imaginative, and persuasive [4].

This paper will analyze the tape script of Bach's speech at the opening ceremony of Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 from three aspects: vocabulary, syntax and rhetorical devices, in order to understand its stylistic features and to appreciate the affirmation for China and the motivation and inspiration for the Olympic athletes in the lines of the speech.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The current research results on the stylistic analysis of speeches are as follows:

Using the dualistic analysis method in stylistics, Cheng [4] analyzed the speech delivered by Abraham Lincoln at the dedication ceremony of the Gettysburg National Martyrs' Cemetery on November 19, 1863 from four aspects: vocabulary, grammar, rhetorical devices and context. The analysis shows that the language is relatively formal and dignified.

Chen [5] uses stylistic theory to analyze the lexical and syntactic aspects of Barack Obama's re-election speech delivered on Capitol Hill in January 2013, and concludes that the speech is persuasive, attractive and motivating as a political speech that establishes good interpersonal relations with the audience.

Taking seven New Year speeches of past U.S. presidents as examples, Xiao and Hou [6] analyze the genre of these special speeches from three aspects: linguistic description, contextual factors, and emotional traps. Some characteristics of New Year speeches are found, including lexical, syntactic, semantic and other linguistic descriptions and contextual factors such as speech field, meaning, and situation, in order to open up new horizons in the stylistic analysis of speeches.

From the perspective of stylistics, Cai [7] analyzed Churchill's speech "Hitler's Invasion of the Soviet Union" in terms of syntax, vocabulary, phonetics and semantics. The results showed that the use of rhyme, phonetic symbolism, syntactic rounded sentences, balanced sentences, inverted sentences, rhetorical questions and other sentence types, as well as rhetorical prose, repetition and metaphor formed Churchill's short and strong speech style.

To sum up, the current stylistic analysis of speeches focuses mainly on political speeches, and the form is solemn and strictly worded, and there are few public speech studies of world-class large-scale entertainment gatherings, Therefore, this study selects Bach's opening speech at the

Beijing Winter Olympics, a world sports event, as a corpus and analyzes it at the lexical, syntactic and rhetorical levels using stylistic theory in order to understand its stylistic features and better appreciate the text.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. *Stylistic Analysis*

Stylistics is the science of the study of linguistic genres using the principles and analytical methods of modern linguistics. Its main task is to observe and describe the main stylistic features of language. Stylistic analysis is based on linguistic description. The expressive and communicative function of language in social situations is achieved through the selection of specific phonological, lexical, syntactic, orthographic and syntactic features. The innovation of the discourse lies in the choice of stylistic features. By describing stylistic features that have stylistic significance and aesthetic value, stylistic analysis can accurately and objectively grasp the overall meaning of a particular discourse or chapter and thus comprehend its specific communicative function and expressive effect [8].

Any practical stylistic analysis must select some linguistic features and discard others. The linguistic features to be analyzed are those that stand out as stylistic markers. Generally, stylistic features are divided into four categories: lexical, grammatical, rhetorical and contextual [9]. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the stylistic features of this speech at three levels: vocabulary, syntax and rhetorical devices.

B. *Interpersonal Function Theory*

Linguist Halliday [10] proposed the interpersonal function theory in which different interpersonal meanings can be achieved by choosing different tones, moods, and personal pronouns. The tone system has four sentence types: declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamatory, and these four forms are used in different contexts to express different attitudes and meanings. The modal system helps to achieve interpersonal functions at the sentence level, and modality can show the speaker's position and availability. Different values of different modal can express different degrees of meaning, and speakers can express different attitudes and intentions by choosing different value words. The personal pronoun system has different forms depending on lexicality, gender, person, and context.

Personal pronouns are important in speech to avoid repetition of words. Therefore, this paper will analyze the style of this speech in the context of Halliday's theory of interpersonal function.

IV. ANALYSIS

A. *Vocabulary Features*

The most used pronoun in speech is the first-person pronoun. The second- and third-person are used less frequently [4].

1) *Personal pronoun*

In English, personal pronouns can be divided into different forms based on person, number, gender, and case [10]. By choosing different personal pronouns, speakers can create different effects for listeners and achieve interpersonal meaning. The following is the distribution of the person system in the speech, as shown in Table I:

TABLE I: PERSONAL PRONOUN

	First-person				Second-person
Pronoun	I	my	we	our	You(r)
Frequency	1	0	10	8	24
Percent	2%	0%	23%	19%	56%

As we can see from Table I, only first- and second- person pronouns appear in this speech, with the second-person plural "you(r)" appearing most often at 56%.

Additionally, Table I shows that the first-person plural "we" is the most common first-person pronoun, followed by the first-person plural possessive "our" and the first-person "I". The first-person plural can show the speaker's sincerity and shorten the distance between people. In addition, the first-person plural form of "we" can make the speaker's attitude more naturally integrated into the public ideology to achieve the role of the in-group.

The first-person pronoun brings the IOC, represented by Bach, closer to the people of the world, helps to clearly state its position and attitude, makes the message clear to everyone and establishes an intimate relationship with the audience. The second person pronoun can make the speech more relevant and can call on the athletes to uphold the Olympic spirit, to live in peace and friendship, to respect each other, to compete at a world-class level in the epidemic, to inspire people all over the world to remain hopeful in this Olympic year, and to fulfill the interpersonal function of the discourse.

2) *Modal verb*

Modal verbs can be used to express the speaker's attitude and opinion about things. Halliday [10] classifies modal verbs into high, medium and low categories according to their English modal values, and the choice of different modal values can reflect the speaker's specific attitude and achieve different interpersonal meanings. Statistically, it was found that modal verbs appeared eight times in the speech, distributed as in Table II:

TABLE II: MODEL VERB

low			median		
Model verb	Frequency	Percentage	Model verb	Frequency	Percentage
can	1	12.5%	will	6	75%
may	1	12.5%	should	0	0

As shown in Table II, only the median and low value model verbs appear in this speech, and the median modal word "will" appear most frequently, 6 times, accounting for 75% of the total. Median modal words can bring people closer to each other and build good interpersonal relationships.

In Bach's speech, which shows interpersonal relations from the modal system, there are no high-value modal verbs, among which the medium-value modal verbs are used most frequently because they can convey a down-to-earth attitude and thus achieve their purpose of rallying and inspiring the

people. In addition, median modal verbs make the expression more euphemistic and make one's point more acceptable to the audience.

B. Syntax Features

1) Syntax structure

Grammatical analysis generally includes "How complex is the sentence? What kind of complex structure is it? Is there a prominent use of parallel or subordinate structures? Is there a preferred subordinate structure?" [9] etc.

In Bach's speech, we focus on the analysis of syntactic structure and the use of sentence types.

There are only 45 sentences and 683 words in the whole speech, with an average sentence length of 15 words, which is shorter than the average sentence length of 17.6 words in English [11]. The speech is a combination of long and short sentences, with the longest sentence being the first welcoming speech at the beginning, with a total of 54 words, and the shortest sentence being only four words. The specific distribution of sentence lengths is shown in Table III.

TABLE III: SENTENCE LENGTH

Words per sentence	Number of sentences	Percentage
2–9	13	29%
10–19	18	40%
20–29	13	29%
29+	1	2%
Total	45	

As the Table III shows, most of the sentences in this speech contain between 10 and 19 words, accounting for 41% of the total number of sentences. From the syntactic point of view, Bach uses short sentences throughout the speech, which are rhythmic, short and powerful to express his expectations for the Olympic Winter Games and his hopes for the athletes, and the juxtaposition of short sentences has an inspiring power and effect, which adds to the momentum of the speech, expressing his determination to cheer the athletes and his appeal to snow sports all over the world in a clear and concise way.

2) Sentence types

Sentence types can be analyzed in two ways: from the perspective of grammatical structure and from the perspective of linguistic function [4]. According to the grammatical structure, sentences can be divided into simple, parallel and compound sentences. In Bach's speech, the author mainly uses simple sentences (84%), compound sentences (7%) and parallel sentences (9%) are used less. As shown in Table IV.

TABLE IV: SENTENCE TYPES

Sentence types	Number	percentage
Simple sentence	38	84%
Compound sentence	3	7%
Parallel sentence	4	9%

Sample 1: In the same spirit, our heart goes out to all the athletes who because of the pandemic could not make their Olympic dream come true.

Sample 2: But now your moment has come: the moment you have been longing for—the moment we all have been longing for.

In the above examples, the author uses subordinate clauses and parallel clauses in the compound sentences. For example, Sample 2 is a parallel sentence, which is Bach's speech to the athletes, emphasizing that "your moment" has come (the moment everyone is waiting for) to motivate the athletes to express themselves in Olympic Winter Games and not to leave any regrets on the field.

From the point of view of language function [4], sentences can be divided into declarative, interrogative, exclamatory and imperative sentences, and the distribution of the tone system in Bach's opening speech is shown in Table V:

TABLE V: TONE SYSTEM

	declarative	interrogative	exclamatory	imperative
Frequency	30	0	8	0
Percentage	79%	0	21%	0

As in Table V, the proportion of declarative sentences in the whole speech is the largest, accounting for about 79%, indicating that the main focus is on expressing opinions and describing facts. In declarative sentences, the speaker, as the owner and transmitter of information, can make his speech appear more objective, fair, and persuasive. What's more, the exclamatory tone makes the speaker's emotion full and the speaker's attitude more intense, which are intended to express feelings, indicate attitudes, euphemistically imply and other pragmatic functions.

Sample 3: Welcome to the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022! To all our Chinese friends: a very happy new year. Happy New Year! Best wishes for the Year of the Tiger!

Sample 3 is the first sentence of Bach's speech, as the beginning of a speech, especially for a global event like the Olympic Games, the exclamatory tone can be well used to drive the atmosphere and mobilize the emotions of the audience, this exclamatory expression of welcome and New Year wishes is infectious and appealing, combined with Chinese characteristics, emphasizing the hope of the New Year of the Tiger in the context of the ice and snow sports competition.

However, the speech does not contain interrogative or imperative sentences, which are rarely used in speeches, and the tone of the interrogative sentence is relatively strong in order to seek the listener's agreement. The imperative tone, on the other hand, tends to be more of a call for response or action.

In summary, Bach used the most declarative sentences, followed by exclamatory sentences, in the opening ceremony of the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022. Through declarative statements, Bach can directly state facts and express attitudes, while showing his gratitude and appreciation to the Chinese people and government, expressing motivation and inspiration to the athletes, and achieving interpersonal meaning.

C. Rhetorical Devices

Rhetorical devices or rhetorical patterns are some special methods of expression to achieve a particular rhetorical effect. The use of rhetorical devices can make language more lively, infectious, and persuasive [4].

In the speech, Bach uses three main structural rhetorical devices: repetition, parallelism, and antithesis.

1) Repetition

Repetition is often used to enhance tone, keep sentences balanced and symmetrical, make lines vivid, look eye-catching, sound pleasant, read with a strong sense of rhythm, impress people, and be easy to remember [12]. When used well, it can also create a sense of ups and downs and increase the power of the style. Repetition and parallel structure often go hand in hand, and both are used.

In this speech, Bach used these three repetitions: at the beginning, the phrase "New Year" was repeated twice, and "the Year of the Tiger" was repeated three times to impress the audience. What's more, at the opening ceremony, he also sent New Year greetings to people around the world, emphasizing that this is the year of the Olympic Games and also the year of the Tiger in the Chinese zodiac.

By repeating the word "happen" twice, Bach expressed his great appreciation and gratitude to the Chinese people and government for safely and successfully hosting the Winter Olympic Games in Beijing, China, at a time when the global epidemic is raging.

2) Parallelism

Parallel structure means that when two or more concepts in a sentence are related in function and purpose, they should be represented by the same grammatical structure. This method of representing several concepts of equal importance with the same grammatical structure is called parallel rhetoric, and it is a rhetorical method that emphasizes the semantic meaning and makes the concepts clear and coherent. Parallel structure can make the rhythm of the text iterative to undulating, especially in the case of expressing complex concepts [4].

In Bach's speech, parallel structures are used four times. For instance:

Sample 4: Over the next two weeks you will compete with each other for the highest prize. At the same time, you will live peacefully together under one roof in the Olympic Village.

Sample 5: Dear athletes, we all are standing with you. We all are supporting you. We all are cheering you on.

As in Sample 4, Bach emphasizes "over the next weeks", athletes will compete, and "at the same time", they are supposed to be in a harmonious relationship with each other. The parallelism used here conveys the slogan of Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022, "one world, one family". Then in Sample 5, Bach inspires athletes, and the parallel structure "we all are…" seems to order us all to be on the same side to challenge ourselves.

The author's use of repetition or parallelism not only indicates "semantic precision and solemnity, which facilitate the expression of strong feelings and majestic momentum" [13], but also enhances the rhythmic beauty of language, evokes emotional resonance, attracts people's attention, and leaves a deep impression on the audience because of the neat and clear rhythm of the sentences.

3) Antithesis

Antithesis deliberately place opposing words, phrases, and sentences in parallel or in balance to express opposite or opposing concepts for the purpose of heightening tone [4].

Antithesis is one of the most common rhetorical patterns used in English public speaking. In speeches, speakers often use it not as a single rhetorical pattern but as a mixture with other rhetorical patterns in order to make their speeches strong, persuasive, expressive and evocative, which can be complementary [4].

There are three places in the speech where the author uses the technique of antithesis. Such as: "the global pandemic is still a reality for all of us" and "happen in a safe way for everyone"; "fierce rivals" and "living peacefully and respectfully together"; "Always building bridges" and "never erecting walls".

The contrast of these antithetical phrases achieves the effect of strengthening the tone, mobilizing emotions and enhancing vividness. Through the antithesis, Bach expresses both his appreciation for China's ability to successfully host the Olympic Winter Games at a time of serious global epidemics and the fact that, at a time when the world situation is not stable, athletes from all over the world gathered in Beijing should actively fulfill the Olympic spirit of openness, tolerance, peace and friendly coexistence.

V. Conclusion

This paper uses both qualitative and quantitative method to analyze Bach's speech at the opening ceremony of Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 in three aspects: vocabulary, syntax, and rhetorical devices. It finds that the first-person pronoun "we" and its plural "our" account for a large proportion of the speech, help to clearly state addresser's position and attitude, make the message clear to everyone and more acceptable as well as appropriately appealing and motivating; Declarative sentences account for a large proportion of tone types, the use of it can make the speech more objective and persuasive; in addition, exclamatory sentences are also used in large numbers, so that the emotion of the speech reaches a climax and makes the speech content more exciting. What's more, the choice of different degrees of modal verbs can also express the speaker's different attitudes and intentions. Median and low value modal auxiliary verbs are used more frequently in the speech, which can make the speech more objective and easier to accept, shortening the distance between the speaker and the audience; Consequently, this speech with simple words, a combination of long and short sentences and the use of rhetoric devices greatly strengthens the tone, making the language more vivid image, and the content of the speech is extremely motivating.

In this speech, Bach expressed his gratitude to the Chinese people, his tribute to the medical workers and volunteers, and his encouragement to the athletes, reaffirming the Olympic spirit and calling for "one world, one family". The content of the speech is extremely inspiring. Furthermore, the discourse is good at implying emotion, thus as the opening speech of the international sports event, the speech can move the audience and cause strong resonance.

However, there are still shortcomings in this study. First of all, the stylistic analysis of the speech is not sufficient, and there are other aspects to be discussed, such as context, articulation, etc., which remain to be improved in future studies. Second, because of the short length of the corpus, the data collection was done with the Microsoft Office "search" function, which may have some bias. Third, the corpus

analysis is not so thorough. And for next time, the authors will try to improve these disadvantages in their study.

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