Transitivity Analysis of Chinese Leader's New Year Greeting in 2021 Based on the Systemic Functional Grammar

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Abstract: Before the New Year eve in 2021, President Xi Jinping delivered New Year Greeting through China Media Group and the Internet. From the perspective of transitivity theory in systemic functional language, it is of great significance to study the text of President Xi's New Year's greeting in 2021. Exploring the distribution of various process types and the use of main participants in the discourse can not only gain an understanding of the conceptual significance, but also know President Xi's speaking style of humorous, kind, rich in content and pragmatic, showing the unique style of national leader.

Keywords: systemic functional grammar, New Year Greeting, transitivity analysis

1. Introduction

On the eve of the New Year, state leaders usually deliver New Year greetings through the media as usual. The New Year Greeting not only expresses the festival's blessing to the public, but also conveys the current situation of China and the political position and attitude of the leading group to the people of the whole country and the world. 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. Although the New Year greetings are popular among the public, few people pay attention to the New Year greetings of leading group in the field of linguistics. This paper takes the New Year Greeting of President Xi Jinping in 2021 as corpus, and uses Halliday's systemic functional grammar as a theoretical framework to explore how the New Year Greeting reflects the transitivity system, analyzes the theme of the New Year Greeting and reveals the speaking style of President Xi.

2. Transitivity system

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 linguistics mainly studies the meta-functions of language. According to Halliday, language consists of three meta-functions: ideational function, interpersonal function and textual function (Halliday, 1994). 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, 2005), 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 a semantic system used to realize ideational function. Its function is to categorize experience through grammar and to divide people's experience in the real world into a group of easily operated process types. These processes include material process, mental process, relational process, behavioral process, verbal process and existential process. There is no difference in the sequence of these six processes, but they constitute a continuum of the cycle. Therefore, this paper analyzes the theme of New Year's Greeting and President Xi's speech style through transitivity system.

3. Transitivity analysis and discussion of New Year Greeting

The New Year Greetings of President Xi Jinping in 2021 totaled 1428 words with 78 clauses. By analyzing the process types of verbs in each sentence, it is found that the following six processes are involved (Table 1.).

Table 1. The distribution of transitivity process of New Year Greeting in 2021

Type of process	Material Process	Relational Process	Mental Process	Verbal Process	Existential Process	Behavioral Process	Total
Amount	41	19	9	5	3	1	78
Percentage(%)	52.56	24.36	11.54	6.41	3.85	1.28	100

3.1 Material process

Material process is interpreted as the process of "doing something" or "having something". It is most frequently used in New Year Greeting. It is used 41 times, accounting for 52.56%.

Table 2. The use of material process of New Year Greeting in 2021

Actor	Material Process	Goal
(7) 无数人	赴	使命
	护	苍生
(11) 英雄	来自	人民
(20) "十三五"	圆满收官	百万亿元新台阶
(25) 2020 年国内生产总值	迈上	
(40) 832 个贫困县	全部摘帽	
	携起	手
(58) 世界各国人民要	同舟	风雨
	早日驱散	疫情的阴霾
	努力建设	更加美好的地球家园
	继续	奋斗
(72) 我们	勇往直前	
	创造	更加灿烂的辉煌

It can be seen from table 2 that most of the verbs in the material process are mainly used to review the achievements made in 2020, showing the efforts and remarkable achievements made by the Communist Party of China, the government and the people in 2020. In example (20) (25) and (40), many specific affairs finished in 2020 are mentioned, which makes the greeting more pragmatic. Direction and goal of China in the following year are clearly pointed out in example (72). According to example (58), the Chinese people are also concerned about the future of the world and share the same fate with the people of other countries. In addition, in example (7) and (11), people from all walks of life made great contributions to the fight against the epidemic.

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 19 times, accounting for 24.36%.

Table 3. The use of relational process of New Year Greeting in 2021

Carrier	Attributive Relation	Attribute
(12) 每个人	都（是）	了不起
(51) 大道	（是）	不孤
Identified	Identifying Relation	Identifier
(63) 一艘小小红船	成为	领航中国行稳致远的巍巍巨轮
(65)	恰是	百年风华
(70)	惟有	奋斗

According to Table 3, in the process of attributive relation, President Xi praises everyone for being optimistic and selfless in the face of the epidemic in example (12). According to example (51), the epidemic makes us fully understand that mankind is a community of shared future. In the face of a common enemy, no country can be alone. Only by helping each other and working together can we overcome the difficulties.

In the process of identifying relation, according to example (63) (65) and (70), Xi Jinping recalls the hard struggle of our party, and announces the firm determination of the Communist Party of China in the new era to remain true to our original aspiration and keep our mission firmly in mind, and calls on the whole party to make new progress and create new brilliance.

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 9 times, accounting for 11.54%.

Table 4. The use of mental process of New Year Greeting in 2021

Senser	Perception	Phenomenon
(32) 我	欣喜看到	13 个省区市
Senser	**Reaction**	**Phenomenon**
(30) 广大军民	不畏	艰险
Senser	**Cognition**	**Phenomenon**
(54) 我们	深切体会到	人类命运共同体的意义
(76)（我）	惟愿	山河锦绣、国泰民安
(77)（我）	惟愿	和顺致祥、幸福美满

According to Table 4, in example (32), it describes the power of China, showing the prosperity and development of the whole country. In example (30), it shows the scene of the whole country's army and people don't fear difficulties and dangers, uniting to fight against floods. People all over the world, after a year of unity and cooperation, have jointly fought against the epidemic and have fully realized the great significance of a Community of Shared Future for Mankind in example (54). According to example (76) and (77), President Xi expresses the hope that the country will be peaceful and the people will be happy and healthy and welcome a beautiful new year together.

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 5 times, accounting for 6.41%.

Table 5. The use of verbal process of New Year Greeting in 2021

Sayer	Verbal process	Receiver	Verbiage	Circumstance
(3) 我	致以	向大家	新年的美好祝福	在北京
(13)（我）	表示	向所有不幸感染的患者	慰问	
(14)（我）	致	所有平凡的英雄	敬	

In table 5, President Xi expresses New Year's best wishes to the people of the whole country and the world in example (3). According to example (13), President Xi expresses sympathy for the patients who unfortunately infected with the COVID-19, which makes people feel President Xi's deep concern for the people. In example (14), President Xi mentions ordinary people who protected their homes in the period of anti-epidemic. These people have made contributions and President Xi shows respect to them.

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 3 times, accounting for 3.85%.

Table 6. The use of existential process of New Year Greeting in 2021

Existent	Existential process	Circumstance
(45)（我）	置身	春潮涌动的南海之滨、绚丽多姿的黄浦江畔
(67)（我）	站在	"两个一百年"的历史交汇点

As shown in Table 6, President Xi is proud of the miracle created by China's reform and opening up according to example (45). President Xi looks forward to the grand scene that China will soon build a well-off society in an all-round way, which has attracted worldwide attention, and China will soon embark on a new journey of socialist modernization in example (67).

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 behaver. It is a typical conscious existence. Just like the

perceiver, this process is grammatically more like an action（Hu Zhuanglin, 1989). It is only used 1 time, accounting for 1.28%.

Table 7. The use of behavioral process of New Year Greeting in 2021

Behaver	Behavioral process	Circumstance
(41) 我	去了	全国 14 个集中连片特困地区

According to example (41) in Table 7, President Xi's love for the people is reflected.

4. Conclusion

Based on the transitivity analysis of President Xi's New Year Greeting in 2021 under systemic functional grammar, material process is most frequently used to review China's achievements in the past year and look forward to the New Year's goals. The relationship process is used to call on the whole world to join hands in the fight against the epidemic and promote the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind. The mental process is used to describe President Xi's feelings and thoughts over the past year, reflecting his consistent friendly speaking style. The verbal process is mainly to express New Year's blessings and thanks to the people of all ethnic groups and the world as well as respect to countless selfless people, which narrows the distance between national leaders and people. The existential process describes the new changes of the motherland in the past year. The behavioral process mainly describes President Xi's visit to families in extremely poor areas, reflecting his love for the people. In short, President Xi's New Year Greeting is humorous, kind, rich in content and pragmatic, showing the unique style of national leader.

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