

SOME FUNCTIONS OF SELF-REFERENCE IN DIPLOMATIC ADDRESSES¹

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Abstract

This paper investigates some functions of pronominal self-reference in political speeches in an international institutional context, thus aiming to contribute to the study of evaluation in political discourse. A total of thirty speeches by the last three Directors-General of UNESCO is used as a corpus for the present research. The analysis – which is undertaken from the point of view of pragmatics and stylistics – studies the role of personal pronouns used for self-referencing and the expressions with which they typically collocate as markers of positioning the self, expressing stance and organizing discourse. Furthermore, it addresses idiosyncratic variation in the choice of self-reference devices in the addresses of the three speakers.

1 Introduction

A political speech can be seen as a purposeful interaction between the speaker and the audience, in which the communicative intention of the speaker is to persuade the audience to accept the speaker's views and support his/her suggestions. In order to achieve his/her communicative purpose, the speaker uses a variety of linguistic resources and discourse strategies aimed at creating a credible representation of him/herself, aligning him/herself with the views of others, modulating power relations and claiming solidarity with the audience. Since self-reference is one of the most common devices for the reconstruction and negotiation of identities and social roles, and for the definition of the participants' interpersonal relationships (Bull & Fetzer 2006: 3), it has recently been a central issue in the study of political speaking from the perspective of pragmatics (e.g. Wilson 1990, Ng & Bradac 1993, Jaworski & Galasiński 2000).

The present contribution builds upon this line of research and, sharing the view that the choice of linguistic resources is functionally and rhetorically motivated in association with particular types of social occasion (Hatim 1997), focuses on one genre – addresses by the Director-General of UNESCO at the opening of international conferences and meetings. Diplomatic addresses are an instance of what Maingueneau (2002: 322) calls 'third level instituted genres', i.e. this is a genre for which there is a 'generic scene' which assigns roles to actors, the medium to be used and the discourse structure, and in which the speaker has to obey a relatively inflexible script, though occasional distortions are tolerated. As

such, it is a genre which imposes considerable constraints on the interpretative potential of texts (Dontcheva-Navratilova 2007: 129). The aim of the present research into self-reference devices for expressing evaluation in diplomatic addresses is twofold: to describe genre-specific ways for positioning of the speaker, expressing stance and organizing discourse, and to discuss idiosyncratic variation in the addresses of the three speakers.

2 Discourse interpretation and evaluation

Interaction between co-participants in discourse is based on the construction, interpretation and negotiation of meanings encoded in a text. Since experiential, interpersonal and textual meanings are interwoven in language (Halliday & Hasan 1989), a coherent interpretation of discourse is not restricted to the perception of ‘propositional coherence’ on the experiential plane; it is also dependent on the perception of ‘evaluative coherence’ on the interpersonal plane, i.e. the way in which the speakers/writers “work to convey a consistent personal evaluation of the topic they are dealing with” (Thompson & Zhou 2000: 123).

The concept of ‘evaluation’ has recently been the subject of ongoing discussion in the linguistic community. There is considerable variation in the terminology used to refer to the linguistic resources indicating the speaker’s/writer’s opinions, attitudes and relationships to the audience, e.g. ‘attitude’ (Halliday 1994), ‘stance’ (Biber et al. 1999, Hyland 2005), ‘appraisal’ (Martin 2000), ‘evaluation’ (Hunston 1993, Hunston & Thompson 2000), ‘metadiscourse’ (Hyland 1998, Infantidou 2004). The present investigation adopts the approach suggested by Hunston and Thompson (2000), according to which ‘evaluation’ is used as a cover term for linguistic resources which perform three basic functions in discourse: “(1) to express the speaker’s or writer’s opinion, and in doing so to reflect the value system of that person and their community; (2) to construct and maintain relations between the speaker or writer and hearer or reader; (3) to organize discourse” (Hunston & Thompson 2000: 6).

3 Evaluation and self-reference in political speeches

Political speeches, and in particular addresses given by political leaders and high officials in the United Nations system, are typically scripted monologues and, since the audience’s immediate response is commonly restricted to applause at the end of the speech, unlike face-to-face conversation they do not presuppose the ongoing process of ‘negotiation’ of meaning between conversational partners, which is typical of most spoken interaction (Povolná 2006: 133). Therefore,

politicians and diplomats at the United Nations, who adopt a prescribed institutional and social role in a highly ritualised context, use language to manipulate the audience into an intended interpretation of their speech. Since controlling the level of personality is central to successful persuasion, self-reference is a key linguistic resource for enhancing the perception of ‘evaluative coherence’ in political discourse.

Research on pronominal self-reference in political speeches has commonly been centred on the *I/we* shift as a means for indicating the footing of the speaker, while self-reference by means other than *I/we* is interpreted as a distancing strategy (e.g. Wilson 1990: 62, Jaworski & Galasiński 2000, Bull & Fetzer 2006). The analysis of powerful and powerless styles carried out by Ng and Bradac (1993) suggests further potential functions of self-reference, such as expressing judgements of certainty and authoritativeness, showing self-confidence and control of others, indicating politeness; these are more readily associated with the powerful style features we expect of professional politicians and diplomats, who are assigned the status of experts and leaders. Though Ng and Bradac’s study provides scarce examples of language devices associated with these functions, it is obvious that some of their realizations involve self-reference. A wider scope of functions of direct self-reference (*I*) is discussed by Donahue and Prosser (1979: 74). They relate self-reference to: stating, reporting on results or accepting responsibility for a policy, arguing ideas and principles, hedging or modifying the intensity of statements, making a direct appeal to the audience, facilitating comprehensible presentation, and self-disclosure by reporting personal feelings, identifying a personal state of mind, drawing on personal experience. The above list, however, does not differentiate between the experiential, interpersonal and textual meanings expressed by self-reference; furthermore, the linguistic means which typically co-occur with self-reference to perform the above listed functions are not described systematically.

The approach adopted in the present research is based on the assumption that when taken in isolation from the linguistic context in which they occur, self-reference personal pronouns cannot function as sufficient indicators of the speaker’s/writer’s opinions, attitudes and relations to the audience; therefore their function as markers of evaluation is evidenced only in combination with other language devices. Thus the present investigation focuses on first-person singular personal pronouns and possessive adjectives and the expressions with which they typically collocate, considering their functions as markers of evaluation on the interpersonal and textual planes of discourse. The analysis draws on Hyland’s framework for analysing linguistic resources of intersubjective positioning in academic discourse (Hyland 2005), which considers self-reference (‘self-

mention' in Hyland's terms), i.e. the way speakers/writers present themselves and convey their judgments, opinions and commitments (ibid.: 176), as an indication of stance. The use of first-person pronouns attributes stance explicitly to the speaker. Since evaluation is highly context-dependent and may be expressed in a wide range of ways, a language form may perform different functions on different occasions or more than one function simultaneously. Thus, self-reference can also be associated with engagement – Hyland's dimension of alignment of the speaker/writer with others and interaction with the audience, including means for focusing the attention of the audience and guiding it to intended interpretations (ibid.). Furthermore, in agreement with Ifantidou (2005), this investigation differentiates between two categories of textual functions: "intra-textual, when specific reference is made to other parts of the same text (or to the author herself)", and "inter-textual, when other texts (or other authors, or the author herself at another time) are referred to within a single text" (ibid.: 1328).

The following tentative classification of self-reference devices as markers of evaluation in political speeches is applied in the present research:

- 1) interpersonal categories
 - a) stance markers
 - hedges
 - boosters
 - attitude markers
 - b) engagement markers
 - expressive speech acts
 - personal asides
- 2) textual categories
 - a) inter-textual reference
 - appeals to shared knowledge
 - signals of textual acts
 - b) intra-textual reference
 - signals of textual acts
 - personal asides

4 Material and method

This investigation into functions of self-reference in diplomatic addresses draws on both quantitative and qualitative approaches and studies a corpus of thirty speeches given at the openings of international conferences and meetings by three diplomats from different cultural backgrounds in their capacity as Director-General of UNESCO. The speakers chosen for the present research are the last three politicians to hold the office, namely Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow (Senegal, term of office: 1974-1987), Federico Mayor Zaragoza (Spain, term of office: 1987-1999), Kod'chiro Matsuura (Japan, Director-General of UNESCO since 1999). The corpus consists of thirty speeches (the total size of the corpus is approx. 50,000 words) and includes ten speeches delivered by M'Bow (approx.

16,800 words), ten speeches delivered by Mayor (approx. 19,000 words) and ten speeches delivered by Matsuura (approx. 14,200 words).

Since the genre-specific set of communicative purposes imposes constraints on the choice of content and language means (Swales 1990, Bhatia 1993), competence in generic text production is considered to be a matter of social experience. Therefore, the addresses selected for the analysis were delivered during the second term of office of the three Directors-General, i.e. the speakers are expected to have extensive experience in their work within the organization, to promote established political and managerial views and to display a well-formed speaking style; furthermore, they are not under the pressure of a re-election campaign. It should be stressed that since none of these politicians is a native speaker of English and a considerable number of their speeches were made in other official UNESCO languages, or were multilingual, the choice of material was relatively restricted; since the aim of this paper is to investigate linguistic choices in the English language, only speeches the English version of which is the original have been included in the corpus.

The texts of the addresses were converted into an electronic corpus with three sub-corpora (each representing one of the speakers); the whole corpus and the sub-corpora were searched for self-reference personal pronouns, possessive adjectives and their most frequent collocates using *MicroConcord*, a concordance programme. Occurrences of self-reference personal pronouns and possessive adjectives were counted in each address, and an average frequency of occurrence per page and per address was computed. A page was defined as consisting of 40 lines of print, each line comprising an average of 68 signs; this approach is similar to the one adopted by Donahue and Proser (1997), thus enabling comparison of the results of this investigation with their findings. The most frequent collocations (i.e. collocations which occur more than four times in the whole corpus) were examined to establish their function in the discourse of addresses; however, in some cases expressions which are semantically and structurally identical to the established collocations were also taken into consideration. Collocation frequency was counted separately for the three sub-corpora in order to provide a basis for comparison of the idiosyncratic choices of the speakers.

5 Functions of self-reference in UNESCO addresses

Analysis of the speeches of the three Directors-General shows that self-reference items may collocate with a number of verbal, nominal and adjectival forms to indicate the speaker's opinions, attitudes and relations to the audience on the interpersonal and textual planes. The kinds of linguistic structures used to

express evaluation in association with self-reference and the frequency of their occurrence in the material under investigation is reported in Table 1. (The Table includes all the occurrences of the listed types of expressions.)

Self reference item	Matsuura	Mayor	M'Bow	Total
pronoun <i>I</i>				
<i>I</i> + mental verb	33	31	16	80
<i>I</i> + communication verb	9	16	10	35
<i>I</i> + modal verb (<i>should like/would like</i> + communication verb)	23	10	15	48
<i>I</i> + <i>be</i> + affective adjective	22	8	13	43
<i>I</i> + <i>be</i> + certainty adjective	4	4	1	9
<i>I</i> + <i>have</i> + stance noun	6	2	1	9
pronoun <i>me</i>				
<i>let me</i> + communication verb	15	5	0	20
<i>it is</i> + stance noun + <i>for me</i>	3	2	6	11
possessive adjective <i>my</i>				
communication verb + <i>my</i> + stance noun	15	6	5	26
<i>my</i> + stance noun	4	4	5	15
<i>my</i> + noun referring to text	4	0	0	4
<i>my</i> + noun referring to addressee	2	3	4	9
<i>my</i> + noun referring to occasion	5	1	0	6

Table 1: Linguistic structures indicating self-reference

The findings show that the most frequent realizations of self-reference expressions involve reference to the speaker by the first person singular pronoun *I* in subject position followed by a finite verb form (224 occurrences). The explicit attribution of stance and engagement to the speaker presents him as an active discourse participant, thus making the speech more interactive and contributing to greater speaker visibility (Gosden 1993: 62-67). Moreover, “with *I* as a subject the utterance has all the reliability of first-hand claim” (Hodge & Kress 1993: 92), and therefore is assigned high authority and expertise value. The occurrences of the object form of the first personal pronoun *me* are the least frequent (31 instances); they typically occur at the beginning of speeches and collocate with attitudinal stance nouns to express attitudes and personal feelings, and with communication verbs to indicate text organization or form part of expressive speech acts for thanking or welcoming. The instances of self-reference by the possessive adjective *my* (56 cases) are considerably more frequent than

the occurrences of reference by *me*, yet they are four times less frequent than the tokens including *I*. *My* typically co-occurs with stance nouns functioning as markers of epistemic or attitudinal stance.

The list of self-reference items with the verbal, nominal and adjectival forms with which they typically collocate, and their frequency of occurrence as used in the speeches of the three speakers under investigation, is shown in Tables 2a, 2b and 2c. (Lexical items occurring less than four times in the corpus are not included in the Tables.)

Self reference item	Matsuura		Mayor		M'Bow	
<i>I</i> + mental verb	<i>think</i>	0	<i>think</i>	5	<i>think</i>	5
	<i>believe</i>	3	<i>believe</i>	3	<i>believe</i>	2
	<i>know</i>	4	<i>know</i>	1	<i>know</i>	0
	<i>trust</i>	0	<i>trust</i>	0	<i>trust</i>	2
	<i>hope</i>	7	<i>hope</i>	9	<i>hope</i>	3
	<i>wish</i>	13	<i>wish</i>	10	<i>wish</i>	3
<i>I</i> + communication verb	<i>welcome</i>	2	<i>welcome</i>	0	<i>welcome</i>	3
	<i>repeat</i>	0	<i>repeat</i>	4	<i>repeat</i>	0
	<i>write</i>	0	<i>write</i>	2	<i>write</i>	0
	<i>refer</i>	0	<i>refer</i>	2	<i>refer</i>	3
	<i>say/note/mention</i>	2	<i>say/note/mention</i>	1	<i>say/note/mention</i>	1
	<i>talk/speak</i>	0	<i>talk/speak</i>	2	<i>talk/speak</i>	1
<i>I</i> + modal verb (<i>should like/</i> <i>would like</i> + communication verb)	<i>to congratulate</i>	1	<i>to congratulate</i>	1	<i>to congratulate</i>	1
	<i>to welcome</i>	1	<i>to welcome</i>	0	<i>to welcome</i>	0
	<i>to thank/express</i>		<i>to thank/express</i>		<i>to thank/express</i>	
	<i>gratitude</i>	10	<i>gratitude</i>	2	<i>gratitude</i>	6
	<i>to say</i>	0	<i>to say</i>	0	<i>to say</i>	5
	<i>to recall/refer to</i>	4	<i>to recall/refer to</i>	0	<i>to recall/refer to</i>	0
<i>to emphasize/stress</i>		<i>to emphasize/</i>		<i>to emphasize/</i>		
<i>underline/point</i>	3	<i>stress underline/</i>	2	<i>stress underline/</i>	2	
<i>point</i>		<i>point</i>		<i>point</i>		
<i>I</i> + <i>be</i> + affective adjective	<i>pleased</i>	5	<i>pleased</i>	4	<i>pleased</i>	6
	<i>delighted</i>	10	<i>delighted</i>	2	<i>delighted</i>	0
	<i>happy</i>	3	<i>happy</i>	0	<i>happy</i>	2
	<i>honoured</i>	2	<i>honoured</i>	1	<i>honoured</i>	0
	<i>grateful</i>	2	<i>grateful</i>	0	<i>grateful</i>	2
<i>I</i> + <i>be</i> + certainty adjective	<i>sure</i>	4	<i>sure</i>	2	<i>sure</i>	1
	<i>convinced</i>	0	<i>convinced</i>	2	<i>convinced</i>	0
<i>I</i> + <i>have</i> + stance noun	<i>honour</i>	2	<i>honour</i>	1	<i>honour</i>	1
	<i>privilege</i>	3	<i>privilege</i>	0	<i>privilege</i>	0
	<i>pleasure</i>	1	<i>pleasure</i>	1	<i>pleasure</i>	0

Table 2a: Self-reference by *I* with most frequent collocates

Self reference item	Matsuura		Mayor		M'Bow	
<i>let me + communication verb</i>	<i>begin</i>	3	<i>begin</i>	1	<i>begin</i>	0
	<i>conclude</i>	0	<i>conclude</i>	2	<i>conclude</i>	0
	<i>repeat/reiterate</i>	0	<i>repeat/reiterate</i>	2	<i>repeat/reiterate</i>	0
	<i>say</i>	2	<i>say</i>	0	<i>say</i>	0
	<i>welcome/salute</i>	2	<i>welcome/salute</i>	0	<i>welcome/salute</i>	0
	<i>thank/express</i>	2	<i>thank/express</i>	0	<i>thank/express</i>	0
	<i>gratitude</i>	3	<i>gratitude</i>	0	<i>gratitude</i>	0
<i>it is + stance noun + for me</i>	<i>pleasure</i>	1	<i>pleasure</i>	2	<i>pleasure</i>	4
	<i>honour/privilege</i>	2	<i>honour/privilege</i>	0	<i>honour/privilege</i>	1

Table 2b: Self-reference by *me* with most frequent collocates

Self reference item	Matsuura		Mayor		M'Bow	
<i>communication verb (express/extend) + my + stance noun</i>	<i>gratitude</i>	6	<i>gratitude</i>	2	<i>gratitude</i>	3
	<i>thanks</i>	7	<i>thanks</i>	1	<i>thanks</i>	1
	<i>hope</i>	1	<i>hope</i>	1	<i>hope</i>	0
	<i>belief</i>	1	<i>belief</i>	2	<i>belief</i>	0
<i>my + stance noun</i>	<i>view/opinion</i>	0	<i>view/opinion</i>	1	<i>view/opinion</i>	3
<i>my + noun referring to text</i>	<i>remarks</i>	4	<i>remarks</i>	0	<i>remarks</i>	0
<i>my + noun referring to addressee</i>	<i>friend</i>	0	<i>friend</i>	1	<i>friend</i>	3
	<i>colleague/function</i>	2	<i>colleague/function</i>	2	<i>colleague/function</i>	1
	<i>(first/last) visit/stay</i>	5	<i>(first/last) visit/stay</i>	1	<i>(first/last) visit/stay</i>	0

Table 2c: Self-reference by *my* with most frequent collocates

The following discussion of the functions of self-reference on the interpersonal and textual planes of discourse draws on the tentative classification of self-reference devices as markers of evaluation, as suggested in Section 3 above.

Since stance concerns speaker-oriented features of interaction, in political discourse it refers primarily to the level of commitment of the speaker to personal and institutional views and actions (epistemic stance) and to his/her emotional involvement with the audience and the issue at hand (attitudinal stance). The most frequent syntactic realizations of stance in the speeches are matrix clauses, adjectival predicates, nominal forms and extraposed structures:

Epistemic stance - *I + think, believe, trust, know*
 - *I am sure, convinced*
 - *express my belief, view, opinion*

Attitudinal stance - *I + hope, wish*
 - *I am pleased, delighted, happy, grateful, honoured*

- *It is a pleasure, honour, privilege for me*
- *express my hope*

Matrix clauses consisting of a first-person singular form supported by mental-process verbs, e.g. *think, know, wish*, may be regarded as introductory signals in indirect statements which introduce into the sentence the person presenting his/her evaluation on the proposition in the following *that*-clause (Poldauf 1964: 251). According to Wilson (1990: 62), they are typically associated with the communication of sincerity and deep personal involvement.

The findings of the analysis indicate that the Directors-General tend to use matrix clauses frequently as both hedges and boosters to express involvement with the ideas and aims of UNESCO and to establish solidarity with their audience. In the speeches under investigation, the choice of verbs, nouns and adjectives expressing a high degree of authorial commitment and certainty (*think, believe, trust, know; belief; sure, convinced*) reflects the institutional role of the Director-General, who has to create an impression of high authority, integrity and credibility, which, on the one hand, should persuade the audience to accept and support the views of the organization, and on the other should help him to promote his managerial policy. Thus, the use of *I think* to indicate a personal attribution of judgement in (1) below, which according to Brown and Levinson (1987: 164) is regarded as a hedge suggesting that the speaker is not taking full responsibility for the truth of the utterance, may be interpreted in an institutional context as a persuasive device putting forward a strong position which draws on the expertise and institutional authority of the Director-General and is in agreement with the shared values and views of the organization he represents. A similar interpretation of *I think* and *I believe* in political discourse is suggested by Miššiková (2007) who claims that the function of these hedges is metalinguistic, since they “refer to the ‘quality’ of the language used by the speaker and thus are concerned with ‘telling the truth’” (ibid.: 147). (A similar use of *I think* in academic discourse is reported in Hyland 2005: 180.) In addition, since *I think* invites the listener’s judgement and thus enhances listener involvement, it also functions as an engagement marker, which is stressed by the shift to the inclusive *we* in the following example:

- (1) *I think that we must explore this approach of considering drug addicts as persons who need care and to whom such care should be provided in the same way as any other kind of medical assistance.* (Mayor, International Narcotics Control Board, Vienna, 9 May 1995)

The use of self-reference forms for the expression of attitudinal stance attributes the emotive assessment overtly to the speaker. Highly frequent realizations of attitudinal stance are the matrix clauses *I hope* with *that*-clause and

I wish with *to*-infinitive complementation; while *I hope* may also be considered to infer epistemic meaning, *I wish* is frequently used as an alternative to the modal expression *would like* to indicate tentativeness and politeness. The choice of strongly positive affective adjectives (e.g. *delighted*, *happy*), which indicate emotional intensity or the extremes of a value scale and belong to the category of ‘highly emotive’ lexical units (Kačmárová 2006: 51), is associated with the evaluation of speaker-audience relations. Since affective adjectives have positive connotations and signal an assumption of shared attitudes, beliefs and values, they are related to the politeness strategy of claiming common ground (Brown and Levinson 1987), as in:

- (2) *I am delighted to be with you again today in another beautiful city, whose living past is preserved in the site of Bryggen, protected under UNESCO’s World Heritage Convention.* (Mayor, Third International Symposium of the World Heritage Cities, Bergen, 28 June 1995)

The choice of the extraposed structure *It is a privilege for me + to*-infinitive clause achieves backgrounding of the speaker, while foregrounding the affective-stance noun, indicating the attitude expressed and achieving end-focus on the item positively evaluated:

- (3) *It is a great pleasure for me to open the first session of the Conference of Parties to the International Convention against Doping in Sport.* (Matsuura, International Convention against Doping in Sport, Paris, 5 February 2007)

Engagement markers are used to enable the speaker to relate to the audience by establishing relationships of solidarity and by guiding the listeners towards an intended interpretation of the discourse. The most significant self-reference expressions used to indicate engagement are expressive speech acts, which may be realized with or without modal structures, while personal asides are not very frequent.

- Expressive speech acts - *I welcome*
 - *I should/would like to congratulate, welcome, thank*
 - *express my gratitude, thanks*
 Personal asides - *I believe, I think, I hope*

Expressive speech acts of welcoming, thanking and congratulating, which are considered unambivalently polite by Leech (1983: 140), are a form of direct dialogic involvement with the listener. As example (4) suggests, they usually include explicit reference to others which takes the form of vocatives and listener pronouns.

- (4) *It is with the greatest joy, Mr. President of the Republic, that I welcome you this evening to the Headquarters of UNESCO on the occasion of the Third International Forum on the Environment organized by the French Ministry of the Environment*

and the Quality of Life. (M'Bow, Third International Forum on the Environment, Paris, 11 December 1980)

The expression of personal involvement is typically enhanced by boosters (*greatest joy*) and is associated with the discourse strategy of self-disclosure, which contributes to the existential coherence of the speaker by making explicit his attitude to people, facts and ideas, thus allowing him to represent these as continuous (Duranti 2006).

Involvement with the audience or particular addressees is further enhanced by occurrences of the possessive pronoun *my* with nouns referring to the addressee (*friend, colleague, mentor*) or to an encounter (*stay, visit*), thus indicating the existence of established and continuous relationships between the participants in the interaction.

Personal asides may be seen as a complex highly context-dependent strategy which involves the speaker's comments interrupting the flow of the argument; these make a direct appeal to the listener, thus inviting his/her reaction. The most frequent realisation of personal asides in the material is comment clauses functioning as opine markers (5); according to Povolná's classification (Povolná 2007), these are speaker-oriented discourse items used to "emphasize that what is being uttered is just the current speaker's own opinion or attitude" (ibid.: 116), thus reflecting a culture-specific preference for tentativeness, which is considered to be characteristic of spoken English (Urbanová & Oakland 2002: 17).

- (5) *And the greatest part of this challenge, I believe, is to learn the lessons of interdependence.* (Matsuura, United Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development, New York, 1 March 2005)

It is interesting to note that while occurrences of the discourse item *I believe* are not reported by Povolná (2007), who includes in her corpus informal face-to-face and telephone conversations and radio discussions, instances of *I believe* as opine marker are present in the MICASE corpus of spoken academic English. We might therefore assume that *I believe* is associated with more formal contexts and the expression of a high level of certainty, authority and expertise.

On the textual plane, self-reference expressions function as metadiscourse markers by guiding the listener through the argumentation presented in the political speech and by activating relevant intertextual connections based on the participants' background knowledge, thus contributing to the coherent interpretation of discourse. (For the role of background knowledge in discourse interpretation, see Miššíková 2005.) The present classification of self-reference devices as markers of evaluation in political speeches does not adopt the categories 'directives' and 'questions' as suggested by Hyland (2005), since

typically these do not involve self-reference; instead the category ‘textual acts’ is used to accommodate the range of devices identified in the material.

Self-reference expressions indicating inter-textual reference are not particularly frequent in the corpus.

Appeals to shared knowledge - *I should/would like to recall*

Signals of textual acts - *I refer to, repeat, quote*

- *I have said, emphasized, written*

The speaker may activate the participant’s shared knowledge by referring to the values and ideas promoted by UNESCO without specifying the source document, or he may quote or refer to a specific text, typically a resolution or convention. In addition, the speaker may refer to his own ideas or speeches delivered on previous occasions, thus underlining the continuity of his views, values and actions, as illustrated in:

- (6) *As I recently emphasized from the rostrum of the General Conference in Sofia, this is not the first time that the United Nations has faced such challenges.* (M’Bow, Commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of UNESCO, Paris, 12 December 1985)

Intra-textual reference markers are used in the material to indicate discourse organization, to emphasize an important point or idea, to guide the listener towards a particular interpretation of the discourse, or to refer to another part of the same text:

Signals of textual acts - *I should/would like to stress, underline, point out*

- *Let me begin, conclude*

- *my remarks*

Personal asides

- *in my view*

In the material, most self-reference expressions function as markers of emphasis and point of view, thus guiding the listener towards an intended interpretation of the discourse. In addition, intra-textual reference markers indicate the beginning or closing part of a speech. As with academic English, the first-person imperative *Let me* is “common when the speaker/writer is signalling an upcoming aspect of the text” (Carter & McCarthy 2006: 288); the sense of *allow* of the introductory signal *let me*, however, is considered to be preserved to a certain extent, thus contributing to the expression of politeness, as in:

- (7) *Let me begin by extending a special welcome to our distinguished guests from Iraq.* (Matsuura, International Conference “Freedom of Expression and Media Development in Iraq”, Paris, 8 January 2007)

Finally, it is pertinent to mention that the findings of the present analysis show that most of the self-reference expressions, namely markers of epistemic and

attitudinal stance, expressive speech acts and intra-textual reference markers, tend to cluster; this is observed most frequently in the salutation part of the addresses, which serves an important interpersonal function, i.e. it indicates the alignment of the speaker with the audience by asserting common ground and shared values, indicating in-group membership and showing approval and sympathy with the hearer (Dontcheva-Navratilova 2007).

5 Variation in the choice of self-reference devices

A comparative analysis of the three sub-corpora evidences that the three Directors-General differ in the frequency rate of personal reference used in the addresses (Table 3). The most prominent in this respect is the speaking style of Matsuura, whose personal reference rate is similar to the highest rates for UN addresses delivered by heads of state or government as reported by Donahue and Proser (1997: 72); 3.86 per page for representatives of the United Kingdom and 4.16 per page for Anglo States, i.e. western industrialised English-speaking countries which according to Hofstede (1991) are typically seen as individualist cultures. Mayor has the lowest personal reference rate, which is unexpected, as his sociocultural background – that of a highly successful Spanish scientist and diplomat – would presuppose a stronger tendency towards individualism. However, since analysis of the speeches from a cross-cultural point of view is outside the scope of the present paper, it is sufficient to point out here that individualism and collectivism should not be overgeneralized because their values may be affected by various contextual factors as well as by human personality.

	I		Me		My		Total	
	Per address	Per page	Per address	Per page	Per address	Per page	Per address	Per page
M'Bow	8.2	2.1	2.3	0.59	1.8	0.46	12.3	3.16
Mayor	8.2	1.76	1.6	0.34	1.5	0.33	11.3	2.42
Matsuura	11.7	3.27	2.9	0.81	3.7	1.03	18.3	5.12

Table 3: Comparison of self-reference in the addresses of the three speakers

The data reported in Tables 2a, 2b and 2c indicates frequency and functional differences in the use of evaluation markers – including self-reference devices – by the three speakers. On the interpersonal plane, Matsuura's speeches are characterised by the highest frequency of personal reference expressions functioning as attitudinal-stance markers in both clausal and adjectival

structures; in fact, they show twice the number of occurrences of such markers when compared with the speeches of Mayor and M'Bow. This is in conformity with the prominent self-reference rate in Matsuura's addresses and is associated with the discourse strategy of self-disclosure typical of his speaking style, i.e. reporting personal feelings, identifying a personal state of mind, or drawing on personal experience. Moreover, expressive speech acts functioning as markers of engagement which involve the direct addressing of the audience and are closely associated with politeness considerations, are also most prominent in Matsuura's addresses. Equally important for his speaking style is the frequent use of the introductory signal *let me* as a marker of involvement and politeness on the interpersonal and textual planes. By contrast, the introductory signal *let me* does not occur at all in M'Bow's speeches, while Mayor restricts its use to expressions indicating discourse organization, e.g. *let me conclude with a quotation*.

Epistemic stance is attended to in a similar way by the three Directors-General. M'Bow shows a preference for clausal epistemic stance markers, while Matsuura and Mayor use personal reference with both clausal and adjectival expression of epistemic stance. In addition, the verb used by Matsuura with the highest frequency in matrix clauses expressing epistemic stance is *know*, which indicates a higher level of certainty than *think*, the verb used most frequently by M'Bow and Mayor in this kind of structure.

The speakers also differ in their use of the expression *I should/would like to*. Mayor uses the structure the least frequently and oscillates between *should* and *would*: most instances of *should* in his speeches occur within expressive speech acts, so the choice of *should* may be interpreted as an indicator of a higher degree of politeness; *would* is primarily associated with indicating emphasis and point of view on the intra-textual level of discourse. In the addresses of M'Bow the structure is realized exclusively as *I should like to* and typically introduces expressive speech acts, thus functioning as an indicator of formality and politeness. Matsuura, who uses the structure the most frequently, opts exclusively for *would* in both expressive speech acts and textual acts indicating cross-reference and emphasis; this choice reflects a higher degree of involvement with the audience and, probably, the heavier influence of American English in international political discourse.

Finally, on the textual plane, it is Mayor who shows the highest rate of personal reference expressions indicating textual acts; moreover, he uses the widest range of communication verbs, typically without the introductory modal expression *I should/would like to*; this higher level of certainty and preference for explicit text organization may be attributed to his extensive experience as a writer (apart from numerous academic publications, Mayor is the author of four

books of poetry and various collections of essays). Matsuura and M'Bow use a considerably lower number of personal reference expressions indicating textual acts and tend to use the verbs *say* and *refer* prefaced by *I should/would like to*.

6 Conclusion

Drawing on the assumption that, taken in isolation from the linguistic context in which they occur, self-reference items cannot function as sufficient indicators of the speaker's opinions, attitudes and relation to the audience, the present investigation has analysed the functions and formal realizations of self-reference expressions in combination with other language devices as markers of evaluation in diplomatic discourse. A tentative classification of self-reference devices as markers of evaluation in the genre of addresses in UNESCO settings has been applied to the description of genre-specific ways for positioning of the speaker, expressing stance and organizing discourse. The findings have proved that self-reference items may collocate with a number of clausal, nominal and adjectival forms to indicate the speaker's opinions, attitudes and relation to the audience on the interpersonal and textual planes. In addition, the analysis has identified some idiosyncratic features of the speaking styles of the three speakers under investigation.

In conclusion, it should be stated that despite the narrow scope of the present research, its findings have proved that self-reference expressions as markers of evaluation are a key linguistic resource in enhancing persuasion and guiding the audience towards an intended perception of evaluative coherence in political discourse. Further research will reveal new insights into genre-specific features of public speeches in institutional settings as well as into the style of speaking employed by diplomats and politicians at the United Nations.

Endnote

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