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**Oleksandr Kapranov****SELF-MENTIONS IN BRITISH PRIME MINISTER'S
SPEECHES ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

This contribution involves a quantitative study whose research aim is to learn about the occurrence of self-mentions, i.e. words like "I", "my", "me", "mine", "myself", "we", "our", "us", "ours", and "ourselves", in a corpus of speeches on the topic of climate change delivered by the current British prime minister Keir Starmer. It is argued in the study that a close examination of self-mentions could contribute to our understanding of Starmer's stance on climate change, which is a topical issue in the British corporate and political discourses. The results of the corpus analysis reveal that Starmer's speeches on the issue of climate change are marked by the frequently occurring self-mentions "we" and "our". These findings and their interpretation through the lens of climate change communication are further presented in the article.

Keywords: climate change discourse, Keir Starmer, political speeches, prime minister, self-mentions, the UK.

1. Introduction

Since the early 2000s, the issue of climate change has been one of the highly debatable topics in political discourses (Boykoff, 2008; Fløttum, 2010, 2014, 2019; Fløttum & Gjerstad, 2017; Kapranov, 2015a, 2018; Willis, 2017; Wright & Irwin, 2025) as well as in corporate communication (Burns & Cowlishaw, 2014; Dahl & Fløttum, 2019; Ferguson, de Aguiar, & Fearfull, 2016; Kapranov, 2015b, 2017; Moorcroft, Hampton, & Whitmarsh, 2025). In the United Kingdom (the UK), particularly, the issue of climate change has become a contentious problem that is regularly elucidated by the British media, the public at large, and a number of climate change protest movements (Gavin & Marshall, 2011; Hayes & O'Neill, 2021; Kapranov, 2024a, 2024b; Swain, 2025).

Whilst there are multiple and, often, competing discursive voices on the issue of climate change in the UK, it seems quite sensible to heed to the discourse on climate change by the ruling party, which is, presently, the Labour Party (Nisbett et al., 2025). The current Labour government is led by Keir Starmer, the UK's prime minister, who was sworn into office on 5 July 2024. Whereas his premiership is, so far, rather short, it seems, nevertheless, pertinent to look at Starmer's discourse on climate change in more detail, given that Starmer determines, to a substantial degree, the UK's government policies associated with the issue of climate change (Diamond, Richards, & Warner, 2025; Kapranov, 2025a). In this regard, it should be

mentioned that there are several recent studies on the lexico-syntactic peculiarities of Starmer's climate change discourse (Kapranov, 2025b, 2025c). At the same time, however, such aspect of Starmer's discourse on climate change as self-mentions has not been analysed yet.

In order to bridge the gap in our knowledge about Starmer's discourse on climate change, this contribution involves a quantitative study that examines the frequency of self-mentions, which are manifested by the first-person pronouns singular ("I", "my", "me", "myself", and "mine") and plural ("we", "our", "us", "ourselves", and "ours"), in his speeches on climate change. It is argued in the study that self-mentions may help to uncover the way Starmer frames the issue climate change, for instance, whether or not he presents himself as a team player, who looks at climate change as a challenge posed to the entire government and/or the entire British nation, or, alternatively, his use of self-mentions may reveal that he portrays himself as the sole fighter against the negative consequences of climate change. In this light, the study aims at answering the following **research question (RQ)**:

RQ: What is the frequency of self-mentions (i.e., "I", "my", "me", "mine", "myself", "we", "our", "us", "ours", and "ourselves") in Keir Starmer's political speeches on climate change?

Further, this contribution is organised as follows. First, the literature on self-mentions in political discourse is outlined. Second, the present quantitative study is given in conjunction with its methodology, results and discussion. Finally, the major findings are summarised and conclusions are presented.

2. Self-Mentions in Political Discourse: An Outline of the Literature

One of the definitions of self-mentions that gained currency in discourse studies belongs to Hyland (2001, 2004), who regards it as the use of the first-person pronouns in singular and plural, respectively, such as "I", "my", "me", "mine", "myself", "we", "our", "us", "ours", and "ourselves", in order to manifest the authorial voice, i.e. to mark explicitly the presence of the person who has authored the text and/or speech. Hyland's approach to self-mentions has been embraced by researchers in the fields of academic writing (Carrió-Pastor, 2020; Kapranov, 2021), corporate communication (Nervino, Wang, & Ma, 2025), and political discourse (Balog, 2022; Coesmans & De Cock, 2017; Kaewrungruang & Yaoharee, 2018; Liu & Liu, 2020; Vuković, 2012). Given that there are previous studies that provide detailed analyses of research on self-mentions in political discourses (see, for example, Albalat-Mascarell and Carrió-Pastor (2019)), the present literature outline does not pretend to be exhaustive. However, it summarises research on self-mentions in a variety of political discourses published in 2024-2025 (Abdulla & Ahmed, 2024; Junianto, 2025; Kapranov, 2024c; Korostenskiene & Žebelytė, 2024; Liu, 2024, 2025; Romadlani, 2024; Williams & Wright, 2024).

In this regard, a study of self-mentions in political discourse by Liu (2024) demonstrates that the use of self-mentions constitutes a critical aspect of institutional identity. Specifically, Liu (2024) asserts that self-mentions in political discourse signal how speakers perform actions in their particular institutional roles. Furthermore, Liu (2024) contends that self-mentions is a salient discursive means of manifesting and construing institutional identity within the context of political press conferences. Liu (2024) notes that political journalists in China use the Chinese analogue of the self-mention "we" in order to show their alignment with the

discursive tonality of the Chinese authorities. The use of the self-mention “we”, however, is less frequent in the context of independent press conferences.

Notably, Liu (2025) makes similar observations on the use of self-mentions in her most recent article published in 2025. In the article, Liu (2025) mentions that Chinese interpreters have to navigate a complex discursive and, importantly, ideological space afforded by political press conferences. Liu (2025) suggests that the interpreters have to convey journalists' questions by transforming their word choices and question forms, inclusive of self-mentions. Liu's (2025) study is reminiscent of that conducted by Phanthaphoommee and Munday (2024). Particularly, Phanthaphoommee and Munday (2024) investigate the way self-mentions are translated in political discourse by the Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha. The findings of their study reveal that the translations convey the explicitness of agency and exhibit the variation of stylistic choices involved in the rendering of political texts. Phanthaphoommee and Munday (2024) emphasise that self-mentions in the translation of political texts contribute to demonstrating the interpersonal overtones and presenting the image of the Thai government in a positive manner, which showcases its legitimacy and appeals to the international community.

Identically to Liu (2024, 2025), Korostenskiene and Žebelytė (2024) explore the use of self-mentions, as well as hedges in the context of political press conferences. These authors have found that self-mentions are actively employed at press conferences in the USA. Specifically, Korostenskiene and Žebelytė (2024) have established that self-mentions frequently occur in introductory phrases and comment clauses as the combinations “pronoun + think”, “pronoun + know”, and “pronoun + believe” (Korostenskiene & Žebelytė, 2024, p. 65). However, such combinations as “pronoun + feel”, “pronoun + view”, and “pronoun + imagine” are infrequent.

Also set in the context of political discourse in the USA, an article by Romadlani (2024) looks at self-mentions in Biden's inaugural speech. Romadlani (2024) reports that Biden's inaugural speech is marked by the frequent occurrence of the self-mention “we” (72% of all self-mentions in the speech), whilst the use of the self-mention “I” is less frequent (28%). Romadlani (2024) observes that Biden uses “I” in order to express his gratitude to the voters, whereas the self-mention “we” is employed to construe the sense of unity and togetherness. It should be noted that Biden's use of self-mentions is analysed in a similar study conducted by Abdulla and Ahmed (2024). They have discovered that the use of self-mentions is a crucial part of Biden's inaugural address. Identically to Abdulla and Ahmed (2024), as well as to Romadlani (2024), a study by Junianto (2025) testifies that self-mentions in Biden's political speeches contribute to his effort to build rapport with the audience and assert his credibility. In contrast to Biden, who seems to use the self-mention “I” sparingly, a recent study by Kapranov (2024c) illustrates that King Charles III employs “I” rather frequently, at least as far as his speeches on the issue of climate change are concerned. It has been established in the study that King Charles III utilises “I” in order to impart a personalised dimension to his discourse on climate change (Kapranov, 2024c).

As far as the use of self-mentions in British political discourses is concerned, Williams and Wright (2024) argue that British officials employ self-mentions in order to allocate or rather re-allocate responsibility. Williams and Wright (2024) have discovered that the most frequently occurring self-mention in the British political discourse on the topic of COVID-19 is represented by “we”. According to

Williams and Wright (2024), the self-mention “we” is strategically deployed by British politicians in such a way that its use creates inherent ambiguity. This rhetorical move is done in order to mitigate the politicians’ own responsibility for controlling the spread of the virus.

As shown by the literature outline, there is a substantial bulk of fairly recent studies, which have been published in 2024-2025, whose research aims involve analyses of self-mentions in various types of political discourses. Presently, however, there are no published studies on self-mentions in climate change discourse by the current British prime minister Keir Starmer. Further, in section 3 of the article, a quantitative study on self-mentions in Starmer’s climate change discourse is presented.

3. The Present Study: Its Theoretical Framework, Corpus, and Methodology

First of all, the theoretical framework of the present study should be outlined. The study is grounded in the definition of self-mentions provided by Hyland (2001, 2002, 2004, 2016). As mentioned in the introduction, Hyland (2001, 2002, 2004, 2016) defines self-mentions as the first-person pronouns that manifest the authorial presence in a text. In addition, the theoretical framework of the study is informed by the publication by Albalat-Mascarell and Carrió-Pastor (2019), who posit that self-mentions are a pragmatic means of the authorial self-projection, which is associated, typically, with a positive image of self that renders credibility. The present study shares Albalat-Mascarell and Carrió-Pastor’s (2019) view of self-mentions as a means of establishing the politician’s credibility as a competent and authoritative political actor.

In this light, the study aims at (i) collecting the corpus of Starmer’s political speeches on the issue of climate change (ii) analysing the corpus quantitatively in order to answer the RQ in the study (see introduction). The procedure of corpus collection follows the prior publications by Kapranov (2025a, 2025b, 2025c), which employ a computer-mediated search for Starmer’s speeches at <https://www.gov.uk/government/> by means of applying the following keywords: *anthropogenic climate change, climate change, climate change adaptation, climate change demonstration, climate change event, climate change mass media coverage, climate change mitigation, climate change policy, climate change protest, climate risk/risks, CO2 absorption, CO2 capture and storage, CO2 emission/emissions, CO2 emission reduction/reductions, extreme weather event/events, extreme drought, extreme rain/rainfall, global warming, green energy, greenhouse gasses/GHG, green technology, Keir Starmer, net zero, rise in sea level/levels, speech, wind energy, wind farm, the consequences of climate change, and health effects of climate change*. The search has resulted in 11 speeches (the total number of words = 14 330, mean = 1 302.7, standard deviation = 699.9) delivered by Starmer on the topic of climate change.

Methodologically, the study involves a quantitative procedure of computing the frequency of self-mentions in the corpus. To that end, the computer program AntConc (Anthony, 2022) is used in order to calculate the total number of occurrences of self-mentions in the corpus. To do so, 11 speeches in the corpus are processed separately in AntConc and, thereafter, the means and standard deviations of each type of self-mentions are computed (see Kapranov and Voloshyna (2023) as well as Kapranov (2025a, 2025b, 2025c) for more details concerning the corpus

analysis). The results of the quantitative analysis and their discussion are presented in subsection 3.1 of the article.

3.1. Results and Discussion

The results of the corpus analysis indicate that there are 548 self-mentions in total (mean (M) = 68.5, standard deviation (SD) = 83.7). The descriptive statistics of the types of self-mentions, inclusive of their total number (in absolute values) per type, means, standard deviations, as well as their maximum (Max) and minimum (Min) occurrences are given in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Self-Mentions in the Corpus

#	Self-Mentions	Total N	M	SD	Max	Min
1	I	95	9.5	9.7	28	1
2	Me	5	2.5	0.5	3	2
3	Mine	-	-	-	-	-
4	My	27	3.9	2.4	7	1
5	Myself	1	0	0	1	1
6	We	244	22.2	20.9	65	1
7	Us	18	3.0	2.2	7	1
8	Our	155	15.5	14.9	54	3
9	Ours	-	-	-	-	-
10	Ourselves	3	1.5	0.5	2	1

The results of the corpus analysis reveal that Starmer's speeches on the issue of climate change involve the following types of self-mentions: "I", "me", "my", "myself", "we", "us", "our", and "ourselves". Judging from these findings, Starmer and his speechwriters do not employ the self-mentions "mine" and "ours", respectively. Instead, they seem to capitalise on the frequent use of the self-mentions "we", "our", and "I", as illustrated by Figure 1, which plots the normalised frequencies (per 1 000 words) of the self-mentions in the present corpus.

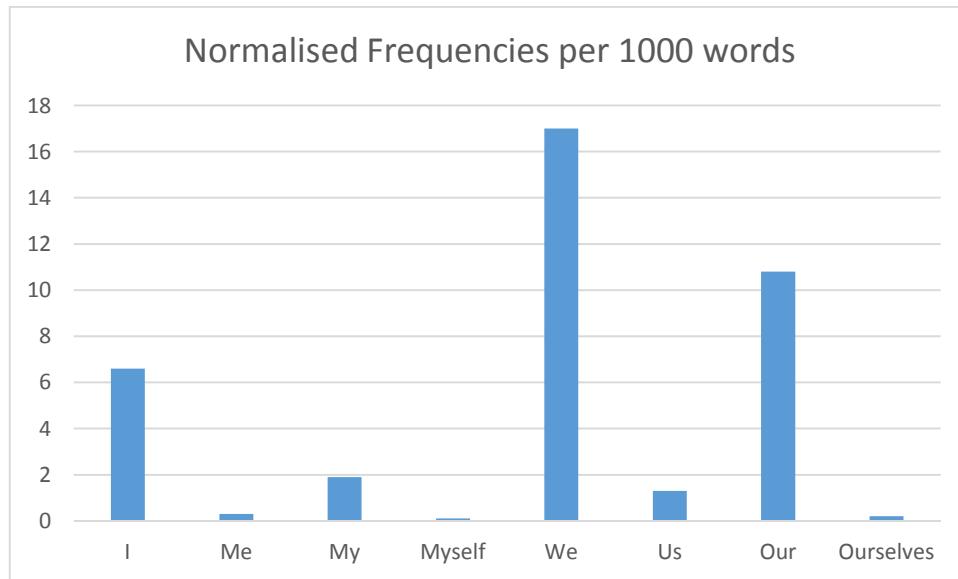


Figure 1. The Normalised Frequencies of Self-Mentions

As exemplified by Figure 1, the self-mentions “we” and “our” seem to dominate the corpus of speeches on climate change by Starmer. Let us discuss these self-mentions and illustrate their use. The self-mention “we” both in absolute values (see Table 1) and in normalised values per 1 000 words (see Figure 1) is the most frequently occurring self-mention in the corpus. This finding lends indirect support to the prior literature (Abdulla & Ahmed, 2024; Junianto, 2025; Liu, 2024; Phanthaphoommee & Munday, 2024; Romadlani, 2024; Williams & Wright, 2024), which posits that “we” is a highly frequent self-mention in political discourses, especially in the Anglophone ones. As shown by Table 1, Starmer’s speeches on the issue of climate change are clearly marked by his preference to use the self-mention “we”, as illustrated by excerpt (1) below.

(1) To deliver on the Paris Agreement and keep 1.5 degrees within reach, in the first 100 days of my government **we** launched Great British Energy – to create clean British power. **We** created a National Wealth Fund – to invest in the green industries and jobs of the future. **We** scrapped the ban on onshore wind, committed to no new North Sea oil and gas licences and closed the UK’s final coal power plant at the end of September – becoming the first G7 economy to phase out coal power. (Starmer, 2024a)

In (1), the self-mention “we” is employed in its exclusive form. In this regard, it should be observed that the literature (Hyland, 2001, 2002, 2004; Kapranov, 2024c) distinguishes between two forms of the self-mention “we”, the so-called inclusive “we” and exclusive “we”, respectively. The inclusive “we” presupposes such communicative situations, in which the speaker involves the addressee into the same domain, i.e. creates discursive togetherness with the audience, in which the speaker and the audience are treated as one collective body of people. In contrast to the inclusive “we”, the exclusive “we” pertains to such communicative situations, in which the speaker does not involve the addressee into the “communal we”, but emphasises the fact that the speaker and the group of people that the speaker represents are different from the audience. Starmer’s use of the exclusive “we” is evident from (1), in which all of the instances of “we” are exclusive.

Now, let us explain why “we” in excerpt (1) can be considered exclusive. Excerpt (1) is taken from Starmer’s speech on climate change, which he delivered at the UN Climate Change Conference in Baku (Azerbaijan) on 12 November 2024. Obviously, Starmer addresses the international audiences there, which are comprised of the attendees from all over the world. Accordingly, we may contend that his use of “we” refers to his government and his party, thus excluding the participants who attend the UN Climate Change Conference in Baku. In other words, he explains to the audience what he and his government are doing and refers to that as a communal effort, or a team effort for that matter, which excludes the audience. Hence, the use of “we” in (1) is exclusive. In this regard, the analysis of the corpus shows that nearly all the instances of his use of “we” in relation to the issue of climate change are exclusive. Only on rare occasions, he employs the inclusive “we” in a rhetorical attempt to address the whole of humankind or to emphasise that the UK and one more or several countries are involved in climate change-related measures to mitigate the negative consequences of climate change.

In conjunction with the frequency of “we”, it could be argued that a relatively high occurrence of the self-mention “our” seems to be quite logical in the present corpus. Its use is illustrated by excerpt (2) below.

(2) That is in addition to the recent investment in carbon capture in Teesside and Merseyside, which will create 4,000 jobs, and the investment announced by My Rt Hon Friend the Chancellor for 11 new green hydrogen projects across Britain. Tackling climate change is, of course, a global effort so at the G20, together with Brazil and 10 other countries, I launched **our** global clean power alliance to speed up the international roll-out of clean power, accelerate investment and cut emissions around the world. (Starmer, 2024b)

In (2), we can argue that the self-mention “our” is used in its inclusive form, given that Starmer talks about a global alliance with Brazil and other G20 countries whose aim is to tackle the climate crisis. As mentioned before, however, the inclusive use of “our” and “we” is rather infrequent in the corpus.

Finally, let us discuss another major finding that consists in Starmer’s relatively frequent use of the self-mention “I”. Whilst “I” is the third frequently occurring self-mention in the corpus after “we” and “our”, Starmer’s political speeches on the issue of climate change can hardly be defined in terms of the “I” stance. This finding seems to be in contrast to the prior study conducted by Kapranov (2024c), who has discovered that the currently reigning British monarch King Charles III uses or, perhaps, overuses the self-mention “I” in his discourse on climate change. Unlike King Charles III, Starmer employs the self-mention “I” more frugally. Starmer’s use of “I” is emblematised by excerpt (3) below.

(3) Meanwhile climate change hits economic growth, leaves us exposed to catastrophic flooding and both of these forces drive unsustainable levels of migration. It all manifests in a feeling amongst very many people that the system isn’t working for them. That it’s time to take back control of our lives, our borders, our livelihoods. And **I** hear that. People want action – and they want change. So, we will not dismiss those concerns. We will answer them. And we will do it by acting at home, absolutely, and also by using our strength abroad. Because in this new era we need to do things differently. (Starmer, 2024c)

In (3), Starmer resorts to the use of “I” in an attempt to amplify the fact that he actually listens to people’s concerns in relation to the current climate crisis. Arguably, he tries to emphasise that not only his government and the Labour Party attend to the vox populi, but he himself listens to the voters as the British prime minister as far as the issue of climate change is concerned. In other words, whilst normally Starmer showcases the team effort of tackling the climate crisis and, accordingly, employs “we”, he also avails himself of the use of “I” when it is needed to depict a picture of him as the party leader and, concurrently, as the incumbent British prime minister who is aware of the magnitude of the climate crisis.

4. Conclusions

This contribution involves a quantitative study that aims to learn about Keir Starmer’s use of self-mentions in the context of his political speeches on climate change. Having analysed the corpus of his speeches, it seems possible to conclude that Starmer employs the self-mention “we” and “our” the most. This finding is supported by a number of prior studies, which point to the frequent occurrence of “we” in political discourses. Evidently, Starmer’s frequent use of “we” in his speeches on climate change aligns his climate change discourse with the analogous

discourses by Anglophone and international political actors. Furthermore, the frequent use of “we” by Starmer is indicative of his rhetorical strategy to portray himself as a team player, who is engaged in combatting the climate crisis together with his government and the Labour Party. In other words, Starmer’s strategic choice of using the self-mention “we” provides a deeper insight into the way he sees and talks about the issue of climate change, which he, apparently, regards as a challenge that requires a substantial team effort. We may conclude this study by contending that Starmer deploys self-mentions, especially, the self-mention “we” and its forms in order to portray his public image as a team player. Presumably, his image as a team player is built by his communication team in order to present a relatable and positive image that could resonate with the public at large, at least as far as the issue of climate change is concerned.

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Резюме

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САМОЗГАДКИ У ПРОМОВАХ ПРЕМ'ЄР-МІНІСТРА ВЕЛИКОБРИТАНІЇ ПРО ЗМІНУ КЛІМАТУ

Постановка проблеми. У Великій Британії питання зміни клімату стало спірною проблемою, яку регулярно висвітлюють британські ЗМІ, широка громадськість та низка протестних рухів. Незважаючи на те, що у Великій Британії звичайно зувають конкуруючі дискурсивні голоси щодо зміни клімату, видається цілком розумним прислухатися до дискурсу щодо зміни клімату, який проводить нинішній лейбористський уряд на чолі з Кіром Стармером. Хоча його прем'єрство недовге, тим не менш, видається доречним розглянути дискурс Стармера щодо зміни клімату детальніше, враховуючи, що саме Стармер визначає політику уряду Великої Британії, пов'язану з цим питанням. Варто зазначити, що існує кілька нещодавніх досліджень лексико-сintаксичних особливостей дискурсу Стармера щодо зміни клімату. Водночас, багато дискурсивних та риторичних аспектів дискурсу Стармера щодо зміни клімату ще не було проаналізовано.

Мета. У статті подано результати кількісного дослідження, яке вивчає частоту самозгадок, що проявляються через займенники першої особи в промовах Стармера про зміну клімату. Стверджується, що самозгадки можуть допомогти розкрити те, як Стармер формулює проблему зміни клімату, наприклад, чи позиціонує він себе як командного гравця, який розглядає зміну клімату як виклик, що стоїть перед усім урядом та/або всією британською нацією, або, навпаки, його використання самозгадок може свідчити про те, що він зображує себе як єдиного борця проти негативних наслідків зміни клімату. У цьому світлі стаття має на меті відповісти на таке дослідницьке питання: якою є частота самозгадок (тобто, "I", "my", "me", "mine", "myself", "we", "our", "us", "ours", and "ourselves") у політичних промовах Кіра Стармера про зміну клімату.

Методи. Методологічно дослідження передбачає кількісну процедуру обчислення частоти самозгадувань у корпусі. Для цього використано комп'ютерну програму AntConc для обчислення загальної кількості випадків самозгадувань у корпусі. Для цього промови Стармера в корпусі оброблено окремо в AntConc, а потім обчислено середні значення та стандартні відхилення кожного типу самозгадувань.

Результати. Результати аналізу показують, що промови Стармера з питань зміни клімату містять такі типи самозгадок: "I", "me", "my", "myself", "we",

“us”, “our”, and “ourselves”. Судячи з цих висновків, Стармер та/або його спічрайтери не використовують самозгадки “mine” та “ours”, відповідно. Натомість вони, здається, використовують “we”, “our” та “I”.

Дискусія. Самозгадування “we” як в абсолютних значеннях, так і в нормалізованих значеннях на 1000 слів є найчастішим самозгадуванням у корпусі. Цей висновок опосередковано підтверджує попередні дослідження (Abdulla & Ahmed, 2024; Junianto, 2025; Liu, 2024; Phanthaphoommee & Munday, 2024; Romadlan, 2024; Williams & Wright, 2024), в яких стверджується, що “we” є дуже частим самозгадуванням у політичних дискурсах, особливо в англомовних. Стармер досить часто використовує “we” у його ексклюзивній формі. У зв’язку з цим у літературі (Hyland, 2001, 2002, 2004; Kapranov, 2024c) розрізнюють дві форми самозгадування “we”: так зване інклюзивне “we” та ексклюзивне “we” відповідно. Інклюзивне “we” передбачає такі комунікативні ситуації, в яких мовець залучає адресата до тієї ж сфери, тобто створює дискурсивну єдність з аудиторією, в якій мовець та аудиторія розглядаються як єдиний колектив людей. На відміну від інклюзивного “we”, ексклюзивне “we” стосується таких комунікативних ситуацій, в яких мовець не залучає адресата до “спільного we”, а підкреслює той факт, що мовець та група людей, яку він представляє, не є тим самим, що й адресат, тобто мовець відрізняється від аудиторії. Використання Стармером ексклюзивного «ми» підтверджено результатами аналізу корпусу, в якому майже всі випадки вживання “we” є ексклюзивними.

Ключові слова: дискурс щодо зміни клімату, Кір Стармер, політичні промови, прем’єр-міністр, самозгадки, Велика Британія.

Abstract

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SELF-MENTIONS IN BRITISH PRIME MINISTER’S SPEECHES ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Background. In the United Kingdom (the UK), the issue of climate change has become a contentious problem that is regularly elucidated by the British media, the public at large, and by a number of climate change protest movements. Whilst there are competing discursive voices on climate change in the UK, it seems quite sensible to heed to the discourse on climate change by the current Labour government, which is led by Keir Starmer. Whereas his premiership is short, it seems, nevertheless, pertinent to look at Starmer’s discourse on climate change in more detail, given that Starmer determines the UK’s government policies associated with the issue of climate change. In this regard, it should be mentioned that there are several recent studies on the lexico-syntactic peculiarities of Starmer’s climate change discourse. At the same time, however, a score of other discursive and rhetorical aspects of Starmer’s discourse on climate change have not been analysed yet.

Purpose. The article involves a quantitative study that examines the frequency of self-mentions, which are manifested by the first person pronouns in Starmer’s speeches on climate change. It is argued in the study self-mentions may help to uncover the way Starmer frames the issue climate change, for instance, whether or not he presents himself as a team player, who looks at climate change as a challenge posed to the entire government and/or the entire British nation, or, alternatively, his use of self-mentions may reveal that he portrays himself as the sole fighter against

the negative consequences of climate change. In this light, the study aims at answering the following **research question**: What is the frequency of self-mentions (i.e., “I”, “my”, “me”, “mine”, “myself”, “we”, “our”, “us”, “ours”, and “ourselves”) in Keir Starmer’s political speeches on climate change?

Methods. Methodologically, the study involves a quantitative procedure of computing the frequency of self-mentions in the corpus. To that end, the computer program AntConc is used in order to calculate the total number of occurrences of self-mentions in the corpus. To do so, Starmer’s speeches in corpus are processed separately in AntConc and, thereafter, the respective means and standard deviations of each type of self-mentions are computed.

Results. The results of the corpus analysis reveal that Starmer’s speeches on the issue of climate change involve the following types of self-mentions: “I”, “me”, “my”, “myself”, “we”, “us”, “our”, and “ourselves”. Judging from these findings, Starmer and his speechwriters do not employ the self-mentions “mine” and “ours”, respectively. Instead, they seem to capitalise on the frequent use of the self-mentions “we”, “our”, and “I”.

Discussion. The self-mention “we” both in absolute values and in normalised values per 1 000 words is the most frequently occurring self-mention in the corpus. This finding lends indirect support to the prior literature (Abdulla & Ahmed, 2024; Junianto, 2025; Liu, 2024; Phanthaphoommee & Munday, 2024; Romadlani, 2024; Williams & Wright, 2024), which posits that “we” seems to be a highly frequent self-mention in political discourses, especially in the Anglophone ones. “We” is employed by Starmer in its exclusive form rather often. In this regard, the literature (Hyland, 2001, 2002, 2004; Kapranov, 2024c) distinguishes between two forms of the self-mention “we”, the so-called inclusive “we” and exclusive “we”, respectively. The inclusive “we” presupposes such communicative situations, in which the speaker involves the addressee into the same domain, i.e. creates discursive togetherness with the audience, in which the speaker and the audience are treated as one collective body of people. In contrast to the inclusive “we”, the exclusive “we” pertains to such communicative situations, in which the speaker does not involve the addressee into the “communal we”, but emphasises the fact that the speaker and the group of people that the speaker represents are not the same as the addressee, i.e. the speaker is different from the audience. Starmer’s use of the exclusive “we” is evident from the corpus, in which nearly all of the instances of “we” are exclusive.

Keywords: climate change discourse, Keir Starmer, political speeches, prime minister, self-mentions, the UK.

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