From Thunberg to the L2 Classroom: Public Speaking Techniques

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Abstract

To participate in the global conversation on how to combat climate change, Japanese university students need to better utilise their English for Academic Purposes (EAP) skills outside the second language (L2) classroom. Therefore, this study seeks to enhance the public speaking skills of Japanese university students by analysing and drawing from a series of recent speeches by Swedish climate-change activist Greta Thunberg. Being of a similar age and speaking in a second language, Thunberg resonates as a public speaker that Japanese university students can model. The research design for this study consisted of two phases. Initially, a structural analysis of Thunberg's speech transcripts was conducted, exploring her use of positive and negative message framing approaches. Secondly, an analysis of the persuasive discursive techniques (PDTs) used in her speeches was conducted, focusing on identifying established rhetorical devices such as *tripling*, *contrasting,* and *personalising*, as well as the use of *inclusive language* and *exclusive language*. This paper details and analyses the approaches and techniques used by Thunberg (framing and rhetorical) and then discusses how they can be taught to Japanese university students seeking to move beyond generic English language classroom presentations.

Keywords: *Message Framing, Persuasive Discursive Techniques, Public Speaking*

Introduction

Scientific research on environmental issues such as climate change has increased substantially in the last few decades (Maslin, 2014). Analysing how climate-change researchers and activists frame their messages and utilise linguistic tools such as persuasive discursive techniques (PDTs) and metadiscourse (see Hyland, 2005) to structure and enhance their messages in public speeches has also recently become an area of burgeoning interdisciplinary research. Analysing such

speeches is important, as delivering an effective speech is considered the first step towards motivating a change in public behaviour (Pelletier & Sharp, 2008), usually one of the key goals of climate-change speakers.
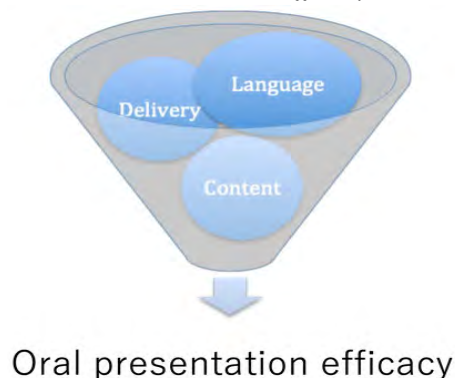
This study focuses exclusively on Swedish climate change activist Greta Thunberg and analyses six of her speeches to better understand her message framing techniques and her use of persuasive discursive techniques. The rationale for initially focusing on Thunberg is that her age and the fact that she is delivering speeches in her second language (English) mirrors the Japanese university students in the author's context. How these Japanese university students integrate the message framing approaches and persuasive discursive techniques used by Thunberg will be the focus of a follow-up study. To date, there are no known comparable studies in Japan or in the public speaking research field worldwide, making this initial study (and the follow-up study) original and potentially significant.

This study analyses six speeches delivered by Thunberg and was conducted in two phases. First, the speech transcripts were analysed to determine the overall message framing approach employed by Thunberg. In the second phase, an analysis of the persuasive discursive techniques she used was conducted. Several existing different linguistic instruments were utilised to identify and analyse the framing approach and persuasive discursive techniques employed by Thunberg. The overarching purpose of the study (and its follow-up) is two-fold: to further a better empirical understanding of how influential speakers (such as Thunberg) craft their speeches; and to then draw upon these findings so that a group of Japanese university students can model the techniques and approaches used by Thunberg, to better enhance their public speaking skills before embarking on a series of climate-change themed presentation contests.

Literature Review

Research and theorisation on the factors that determine successful public speakers dates back thousands of years to the ancient Greeks. Aristotle postulated that persuasive public speakers ideally possessed logos (logic), pathos (emotion) and ethos (ethics, morals, or character) or at least partial combinations of these modes (Stott et al., 2001). Since then, numerous models and theories have been proposed attempting to identify the key aspects of a good public speaker or a good presentation/speech. Such models include the author's own original model: The Oral Presentation Efficacy Model (see Miles, 2018). This multi-faceted but simple model breaks down an effective presentation or speech into three key components: *content*; *delivery*; and *language*. Figure 1 helps illustrate this model.

Figure 1
The Oral Presentation Efficacy Model

Oral presentation efficacy

Within each of these three key components, there is a range of specific elements and techniques. Table 1 provides a selection of examples for the elements and techniques from each component.

Table 1
Oral Presentation Efficacy Model Components and Examples

Component	Examples
Delivery	eye contact, gestures, positioning on the stage, voice projection
Language	(persuasive discursive techniques) bookending, contrasting, doubling, inclusive language, machine-gunning, tripling
Content	back-loading, front-loading, message framing, structure, subject matter of presentation

For the purpose of simplifying the research scope, this study adopts a limited focus, which solely examines a selection of language and content related techniques. Within the language component, the focus of this study is singularly placed on persuasive discursive techniques (for a full list, see the methodology section). Within the content component, the focus of this study is limited to message framing. Persuasive discursive techniques and message framing are not strictly dependent on the content of the speech or presentation being made and can be found across a range of public speaking contexts. Therefore, potential findings drawn from an analysis of Greta Thunberg's speeches and her use of these techniques are more easily transferable to the Japanese university context, which will form the basis of a subsequent study.

Adopting the appropriate message framing approach has significant implications for any speaker hoping to make an impact on their audience. As a result, message framing has long been the focus of interdisciplinary research (e.g., psychology, advertising, and communication), although clear and conclusive answers typically remain elusive (Cesario et al., 2013). Recently, a plethora of studies has focused on how message framing can be used to enhance urgently needed sustainability and climate-change messages, with a complex set of findings being unearthed (see Bertolotti & Catellani, 2014). For this study, a 'frame' is defined as words, phrases, and images

that help shape an attitude towards an object, person, or idea (Druckman, 2001). The active process of utilising such words, phrases and images is known as 'message framing', which "involves making certain considerations salient as a way to simplify or shape the way in which an audience understands a particular problem and its potential solutions" (Bolsen & Shapiro, 2017, P. 1).

Existing theories in the literature proposed to explain the process of message framing and the effect it has on audiences typically feature two contrasting positions. Examples include *attribute framing* (positive vs negative), *goal framing* (consequences of acting or not acting) (see Akl et al., 2011), and *loss framing* and *gain framing* (see O'Keefe & Jensen, 2008) with a frequent overlap in the definition of the terms. A myriad of findings from studies across the humanities spectrum generally suggests that *positive attribute framing*, *gain framing,* and *goal framing* (focusing on the positive consequences of acting) are more effective (Davis, 1995), but that this can vary greatly, depending on the level of engagement and how closely the message resonates with the recipient. More recent findings have revealed *benefit framing* (similar to *gain framing*) can induce greater engagement from participants when the focus is on climate change-related issues (Gifford & Comeau, 2011) and that individual regulator focus can moderate the effect of message framing (Bertolottti & Catellani, 2014). Message framing can also be influenced by cultural factors (Miles, 2020b), with Western cultures typically preferring front-loaded messages (the main point stated early and then supported), with Confucian-based cultures tending to favour back-loaded messages (the main point stated at the end after supporting information has been presented). To date, though, most message-framing studies have typically focused on the message recipient and have not analysed the speaker's approach to dispensing a message.

Aside from message framing, scholars have also often examined the rhetorical or persuasive discursive techniques (PDTs) speakers employ in their messages. Studies on rhetoric date from the ancient Greeks to more current studies (see Atkinson, 2004; Lucas, 2015). Recent attention has been focused on how speakers in TED Talks (Technology, Entertainment, Design) employ PDTs (see Anderson, 2017; Donovan, 2014) or on how politicians use PDTs to better deliver persuasive campaign speeches (see Collins, 2012; Jamieson, 1996). Scholars have identified many of the PDTs used by effective speakers (see Miles, 2020a for a comprehensive list). The ten techniques that are analysed and discussed in this study are outlined in Table 2, with a definition and example(s). These were the most prominent techniques employed by Thunberg.

Table 2
Persuasive Discursive Techniques (PDTs)

Technique	Definition and example
Bookending	Repeating the same word(s) at the beginning and end of a phrase. E.g., "Nobody does it better than us, nobody."
Contrasting	Using simple opposites to generate attention. E.g., "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country." – John F. Kennedy.
Doubling	Repeating a word for extra emphasis. E.g., "This is a really, really good deal."
Exclusive language	Pronouns differentiating the speaker from other people. E.g., 'you', 'their' and they'.
Inclusive language	Pronouns that include the audience with the speaker. E.g., 'we', 'us', and 'our'.

Knock-down	The use of a counter point initially, followed by a refutation. E.g., "Some people might say that this product is a little expensive, or a little large to store. However, let me show you why you need to buy it. It's…".
Machine-gunning	A string of words (usually adjectives) that are combined to maximise the impact of the speaker's message. E.g., "This was by far, the best, most exciting, most inspiring, most amazing, and greatest day of my life."
Personalising	Pronouns used to reflect the speaker's connection to a point or anecdote. E.g., 'I', 'me', and 'my'.
Rhetorical question	A question posed not to solicit an answer, but to make the audience ponder something, or to lead the audience in a certain direction. E.g., "Wouldn't you like to know how to save money and enjoy your life more?"
Tripling	The use of three similar words together, three words in a phrase, or a phrase three times – also known as 'the rule of three'. E.g., "I came, I saw, I conquered." – Julius Caesar.

The definitions are an amalgamation of accepted definitions in the literature and dictionaries and have been modified through the author's own personal research history. The above definitions were adopted as a guideline when coding the transcripts of Thunberg's speeches.

Finally, the array of persuasive discursive techniques above can be further categorised for analysis according to different existing frameworks. Two distinct frameworks for analysis will be referenced later to help illustrate how this current study can be situated within the larger field of linguistics and speech research. Firstly, research (Miles, 2020a) has demonstrated how Hyland's *Model of Interpersonal Metadiscourse* (2005) – which was intended for research on written texts – can be utilised to categorise PDTs in speech texts as either *interactional* techniques (attempts to persuade the audience) or *interactive* techniques (structural and organisational). All the techniques outlined in Table 2 can be categorised as *interactional* as their primary purpose is to persuade the audience. Examples of *interactive* techniques involve the use of signposting (e.g., "Now, to move on to my second point").

One further framework that can be used to categorise PDTs was used by Li, Ren, and Zhang (2016) and is based on work by Dechun and Chen (2001). Their study analysed a series of speeches by former US President Barrack Obama. This framework features four aspects prevalent in the field of rhetoric study: phonology, lexicology, syntax, and text. Categorisation of the PDTs into these four aspects is more ambiguous with frequent overlap between the aspects, but all the PDTs listed above in Table 2 belong to at least one of these categories, serving to enhance the impact of the speaker's message.

Methodology

The key research question framing this study is: What are the messaging framing approaches and persuasive discursive techniques utilised by Greta Thunberg to enhance her climate-change speeches? The long-term research objective of the study is: Can these techniques be taught to and then utilised by Japanese university students in national speech contests?

This study employed a qualitative approach in the research design. Transcripts of Greta Thunberg's speeches were processed and coded manually by the researcher through the use of

MAXQDA 2020 software. The six speeches were selected randomly from a total of fourteen speeches in Thunberg's book, "No one is too small to make a difference" (2019). The transcripts were imported into a MAXQDA 2020 database and then coded twice by the researcher to ensure stronger intra-rater reliability. A random sample check on a segment of the transcripts revealed 98% intra-rater reliability. Table 3 provides details of the six speeches examined in this study.

Table 3
Six Speeches by Greta Thunberg

Location – date of speech	Title of speech (word count & length of speech)
Stockholm – 2018-9-8	*Our lives are in your hands* (568 words –4:04)
London – 2018-10-31	*Almost everything is black and white* (999 words –11:57*)
Katowice – 2018-12-12	*Unpopular* (428 words –3:29)
Berlin – 2019-3-30	*A strange world* (449 words –5:15)
Washington – 2019-9-18	*Wherever I go I seem to be surrounded by fairy tales* (1483 words - 9:20)
New York – 2019-9-23	*The world is waking up* (495 words – 4:32)

*The audience repeated her utterances, thereby extending the duration of the speech

The framework for analysis followed two phases—the first phase entailed documenting the message framing approach used by Thunberg in her six speeches. In the second phase, the analysis entailed documenting the persuasive discursive techniques used by Thunberg. Coding strategies employed adhered to the principles of pattern coding and structural coding (see Saldaña, 2013).

For the message framing phase of the analysis, an amalgamation of established frames was used to code segments of the speeches as either *positive framing* or *negative messaging*. These two coding tags are drawn from a study carried out by Akl et al. (2011, p. 1) regarding framing in health messages. According to their definition, "attribute framing is positive versus negative description of a specific attribute of a single item or state". They provide an example in which the patient's survival from cancer after a certain form of treatment being administered is estimated at 2/3 (positive framing) versus the chance of mortality without treatment being estimated at 1/3 (negative framing). While their research is based on health issues, there is a parallel with climate change speeches, especially in such frames as *benefit framing* (see Gifford & Comeau, 2011), in which motivational frames that stress the benefits of taking action on climate change were found to be more persuasive than *sacrifice framing* which emphasised the calamities that would ensue if no action was taken. Definitions used to code segments of Thunberg's speeches in this study were inspired by the above research and are as follows:

Positive framing: emphasising potential future gains and benefits to be had by combating climate change and taking action.

Negative framing: emphasising the disastrous future consequences and impending problematic issues that will arise from not combatting climate change and taking no action.

Segments of the speech transcripts that dealt with future scenarios and consequences resulting from human action or inaction, as depicted by Thunberg in her speeches, were tagged as either positive framing or negative framing.

In the second phase of analysis, the PDTs (see Table 2) detailed earlier in this paper were identified by coding procedures conducted on the raw transcripts of Thunberg's speeches. This entailed coding segments of the transcripts as representing a particular technique. In some cases, there was overlap, as utterances featured a combination of techniques used. When this ensued, the segment of the transcript was coded multiple times and coded for each of the techniques prevalent. The ten most frequently used techniques were chosen for inclusion in this study. Once the PDTs had been identified and coded, they were then further sub-coded to align with Hyland's (2005) *Model of Interpersonal Metadiscourse*.

Results

Upon completion of the coding procedures, the data were processed and analysed. The findings are presented here in two sub-sections: findings related to message framing; and findings related to persuasive discursive techniques. Within each of these sub-sections, related findings are detailed and explored.

Findings related to message framing

The first finding relates to the frequency with which Thunberg utilised both *positive framing* and *negative framing* and in which speeches these approaches were exhibited. Table 5 provides a simple statistical overview of the findings.

Table 5
Positive and Negative Message Framing

Speech	Positive framing	Negative framing
1. *Our lives are in your hands*	1	3
2. *Almost everything is black and white*	0	8
3. *Unpopular*	1	4
4. *A strange world*	1	11
5. *Wherever I go I seem to be surrounded by fairy tales*	3	15
6. *The world is waking up*	0	12

The salient finding from this set of data is that Thunberg relied more predominantly on *negative framing* in her speeches than on *positive framing*. Also of note is that her three more recent speeches (Speeches 4-6) included substantially more instances of *negative framing* than the three earlier speeches (Speeches 1-3). In fact, in her sixth speech, the entire script was coded into twelve instances of *negative framing*. One possible explanation for the greater reliance on *negative framing* is the increasing frustration Thunberg exhibited in her more recent speeches with the political leaders of the world and their perceived inability to enact climate change combatting measures. This is perhaps best exemplified in her aggressive use of the phrase, "How dare you!" (in "The world is waking up") when she literally shouts at and accuses world leaders at the UN of hypocrisy and negligence.

Further examples of *negative framing* that help to illustrate Thunberg's approach include:

Nor does hardly anyone ever mention that we are in the midst of the sixth extinction, with about 200 species going extinct every day.
(Speech 2)
If I have children, maybe they will spend that day with me. Maybe they will ask me about you. Maybe they will ask why you didn't do anything while there was still time to act. You say you love your children above all else, and yet you are stealing their future in front of their very eyes.
(Speech 3)

In both examples, a negative perception of the future is clearly portrayed by Thunberg. The first example illustrates a world where 200 different species are going extinct, on a daily basis, while the second example of *negative framing* portrays an apocalyptical view of the future when Thunberg's own children ask her why nothing was previously done to combat climate change (and to prevent the ensuing disaster).

Although there was a dearth of *positive framing* instances uncovered in this study, the following two examples help to illustrate that Thunberg did occasionally utilise this approach:
…if a few children can get headlines all over the world just by not going to school, then imagine what we could all do together if we really wanted to.
(Speech 3)
…but we have not yet failed. We can still fix this. It's up to us.
(Speech 4)

As can be seen in the above examples, Thunberg occasionally adopted a more positive outlook towards the future in her speeches. In both examples, she stressed that by working together, a better future is possible for everyone. However, in both examples, she hedges her position by stating, "if we wanted to" and "we have not failed yet", which belie her ultimately sceptical view of how world leaders will address climate change.

Findings related to persuasive discursive techniques

The second set of findings in this study deals with the persuasive discursive techniques (PDTs) employed by Thunberg in her speeches. Table 6 provides a brief overview of the total number of PDTs used in each speech and reveals that she utilised a significant number of PDTs throughout the six speeches analysed in this study.

Table 6
Overall Total Usage of PDTs in Speeches

Speech	Total PDTs used
1. *Our lives are in your hands* (568 words – 4:04)	58
2. *Almost everything is black and white* (999 words – 11:57)	103
3. *Unpopular* (428 words – 3:29)	65
4. *A strange world* (449 words –5:15)	49
5. *Wherever I go I seem to be surrounded by fairy tales* (1483 words - 9:20)	122
6. *The world is waking up* (495 words – 4:32)	59

From this data, we can see that even in her shortest speech (Speech 3), Thunberg still used 65 techniques in a time frame of 3:29. Her fourth speech yielded the fewest techniques (49), which

still represents almost an average of ten techniques per minute. Her longest speech in terms of words uttered (Speech 5) predictably yielded the highest usage of techniques (122), followed in length and total techniques used by Speech 2.

Further analysis of the data reveals which of the most frequent PDTs Thunberg utilised and in which speeches she used them. Table 7 details the total frequency findings for the PDTs used in the six speeches (indicated by a corresponding number) and the frequency of techniques used per speech.

Table 7
Usage of PDTs in Speeches

PDT	Total usage	1	2	3	4	5	6
Bookending	4	0	1	0	0	3	0
Contrasting	49	4	7	9	10	13	6
Doubling	37	1	11	5	0	13	7
Exclusive language	82	8	6	18	10	16	24
Inclusive language	140	24	28	17	24	36	11
Knock-down	11	2	5	1	0	3	0
Machine-gunning	15	6	2	0	1	4	2
Personalizing	70	6	23	12	2	18	9
Rhetorical questions	17	0	11	0	0	6	0
Tripling	31	7	9	3	2	10	0
	456	58	103	65	49	122	59

It can be seen that Thunberg employed the ten PDTs examined in this study across the six speeches on a fairly consistent basis. Techniques such as *contrasting*, *doubling*, and *tripling*, which serve an emphasising purpose, were used moderately throughout almost all the speeches. Two random examples of each of these techniques are provided in Table 8 to illustrate Thunberg's exact phrasing.

Table 8
PDTs: Contrasting, Doubling, and Tripling

contrasting	"…you seem more frightened of the changes that can prevent climate change than the catastrophic climate change itself." – Speech 1
	"I shouldn't be up here. I should be back in school on the other side of the ocean." – Speech 6
doubling	"Some people say that I should be in school instead. Some people say that I should study to be a climate change scientist." – Speech 2
	"It tells of unspoken human sufferings, which will get worse and worse…" – Speech 5
tripling	"If people knew…" x3 – Speech 1
	"We live in a strange world…" x3 – Speech 4

The techniques of *doubling* and *tripling* essentially rely on the principle of repetition to increase the impact of what is being said. By repeating phrases such as "some people say", "if people knew", and "we live in a strange world" twice, or three times, Thunberg increases the likelihood that the audience will feel the effect of the message she is attempting to get across.

The principle of repetition is also at play with the *contrasting* technique. Even though the contrasting positions: "I shouldn't be" and "I should be", are not lexically identical, the pattern is still grounded in the principle of repetition and adds emphasis to Thunberg's position. The constant use of the repetition-based techniques (*contrasting*, *doubling*, and *tripling*) serves to help Thunberg make a more powerful impact on her audience and explains why she used these three techniques in almost every speech.

Other techniques such as *bookending* and *machine-gunning* – while simple to use – are less effective when overused and were therefore used more sparingly throughout Thunberg's speeches. Nevertheless, they serve the same purpose – to amplify her message. Table 9 provides two examples of each of these techniques.

Table 9
PDTs: Bookending and Machine-Gunning

bookending	"…an emergency, and not just any emergency" – Speech 5 "50 per cent chance of staying below a 1.5 degree Celsius of global temperature rise above pre-industrial levels. 50 per cent chance." – Speech 5
machine-gunning	"To all the newspapers… To all of you… To all the influencers… To all the political parties… To all the politicians… To all of you…" – Speech 1 "Where the people… Where politicians… Where some people… Where everyone can… Where our survival… Where a football game… Where celebrities…" – Speech 4

While the *bookending* technique above is simply an emphasising technique, the *machine-gunning* technique above serves a secondary purpose: to structure the speech into different points. Each segment of the *machine-gunning* example above is followed by several sentences of text in which Thunberg outlines her ideas and points in further detail before then returning to the next segment of the *machine-gunning* technique.

The more complex techniques explored in this study, such as *knock-downs* and rhetorical questions, were used even more sparingly, and in some cases, not at all, in many of Thunberg's speeches. Table 10 provides a couple of examples of Thunberg utilising these techniques.

Table 10
PDTs: Knock-downs and Rhetorical Questions

knock-downs	"Many people say that Sweden is just a small country, and it doesn't matter what we do. But I've learned you are never too small to make a difference." – Speech 3 "The USA is the biggest carbon polluter in history. It is also the world's number one producer of oil. And yet, you are also the only nation in the world that has signalled your strong intention to leave the Paris Agreement." – Speech 5
rhetorical questions	"…how can we expect countries like India or Nigeria to care about the climate crisis if we, who already have everything, don't care even a second about it or our actual commitments to the Paris Agreement?" – Speech 2 "Would any of you step onto a plane if you knew it had more than a 50 per cent chance of crashing?" – Speech 5

The first example of a *knock-down* provided above ("Many people say…") was used by Thunberg – in a modified manner – in the first three speeches analysed in this study. While both *knock-downs* and rhetorical questions have an element of repetition about them, their primary purpose is not to emphasise a point through lexical manipulation but rather to illustrate the hypocrisy and absurdity of the current situation along with the position world leaders are taking. Both techniques are designed to lead members of the audience to further see the status quo as negative and untenable.

The final finding related to the PDTs is that the more subtle and easily used techniques, such as *exclusive language*, *inclusive language*, and *personalising*, were the most prolifically used. In terms of how these three techniques were used, there are a few observations worth highlighting. Firstly, it is interesting to see how Thunberg relied heavily on the use of *inclusive language* in her first speech, in addition to a sprinkling of other techniques. In a sense, she seemed to be trying to build a consensus between her and the audience. However, by the time she delivered her sixth speech (with the now famous line; "How dare you!"), she had transitioned to a decidedly more aggressive and combative tone and was using a great deal more *exclusive language* as she put the focus and emphasis for her desired change squarely on world leaders and members of the audience, and in turn, clearly differentiated her positioning from them.

Perhaps the biggest takeaway from the analysis of Thunberg's use of PDTs, though, is how she intertwined an array of simple techniques to maximise the impact of her point, message, and speech. Very few techniques were used in a stand-alone manner. This is evident in the following example:

So, a 50 per cent chance – a statistical flip of a coin – will most definitely not be enough. That would be impossible to morally defend. Would anyone of you step onto a plane if you knew it had more than a 50 per cent chance of crashing? More to the point: Would you put your children on that flight? And why is it so important to stay below the 1.5-degree limit?
(Speech 5)

The whole passage above was coded as *negative framing* for the obvious imagery that it induced. There are also three consecutive rhetorical questions to end the passage, which was additionally coded as *tripling*. There are also four instances of *exclusive language* ("you" x3 and "your" x1). The overall impression created by this combination of techniques is a powerful and negative one, which makes Thunberg's overall message clear: 'You' (the leaders of the world) are greatly responsible for doing something to combat climate change, and failure to do so, is impossible to justify.

When Thunberg's choice of PDTs is analysed with Hyland's (2005) *Model of Interpersonal Metadiscourse*, further finding becomes apparent. Firstly, Hyland's model (initially intended for analysing written texts but also applicable for speech texts) differentiates between interactive techniques (structural and organisational) and interactional techniques (attempts to persuade the audience). As seen from the findings above, the ten most utilised techniques in Thunberg's speeches can all be classified as interactional techniques. The techniques were used to emphasise Thunberg's message and to persuade the audience to either agree with her position or to take

action. Conversely, there were few instances of any interactive techniques being used in the six speeches analysed in this study. This is not overtly surprising as public speeches tend to be less structured compared with university language class presentations, which typically feature interactive techniques such as signposting (e.g., "to move on to my second point…").

Discussion

The most obvious implication that can be drawn from these findings pertains to Thunberg's effectiveness as a public speaker. Her meteoric rise to notoriety in such a short time frame indicates that her speeches resonated with a worldwide audience, and her message framing has generated attention from researchers (see Murray, 2020). A lot of this can obviously be attributed to the timely content of her speeches. However, her speeches are also comprised of very simple English, with few if any instances of the technical or specialised terminology frequently employed in more scientific speeches on climate change. This means her speeches are more readily accessible to audiences for whom English is not a first language (such as Japanese university students). It is also quite likely that her use of *inclusive language* and *exclusive language*, as well as frequent *personalising,* served to clearly establish her position in the climate change discussion but also clearly positioned the audience and the world leaders to whom she was addressing her speeches as distinctly separate from her position.

While her use of a range of established rhetorical techniques (PDTs) may have also enhanced Thunberg's reputation as a good speaker, it is still debatable whether or not she succeeded in her ultimate objective of inducing a change in the policies of world leaders. Time will eventually reveal if she contributed to the growing global push by a host of speakers and groups, all lobbying for change. However, it has been shown that carefully worded speeches by Thunberg are likely to influence young people in particular (Skilbeck, 2020).

In terms of implications for the L2 classroom in universities, there are several key points that need to be highlighted here. The first is that for students who are speaking in English (as their L2) and who are worried about their lack of vocabulary, Thunberg's speeches are evidence that simple words can still be utilised in an effective manner to convey a powerful message. Students studying English as a second language often tend to believe that the use of technical terms and more sophisticated lexical choices serve to enhance their presentation and frequently bemoan their inability to do this effectively. However, from analysing Thunberg's speeches, it can be said that her non-usage of such complex and difficult terms is likely one underlying reason for the widespread success of her speeches on the international stage.

Another possible important factor underscoring Thunberg's success as a public speaker is her widespread use of a range of PDTs. While university students studying English as their second language may be unfamiliar with these techniques, they are not difficult to integrate into a presentation. Many of the techniques require just a few words and often work best when the words are simple. These techniques are also mostly limited to spoken English and can reinforce the notion that speeches and presentations should not be based on scripted text adhering to written traditions, which L2 students are frequently guilty of doing.

Another finding that could help university students preparing for presentations is reflecting on how Thunberg utilised a substantial range of interactional techniques. Students can sometimes focus on interactive techniques to help structure their presentations (e.g., signposting), but tend to be unaware of the importance of also integrating interactional techniques. While interactive techniques ensure clarity, they do not amplify the speaker's message or make the speech/presentation particularly memorable. In the L2 classroom, interactive techniques should be seen as the essential base of language techniques, but interactional techniques should also be taught to students.

One final PDT-related finding with implications for instructors of presentation skills classes is that the simplest techniques to use (*exclusive language*, *inclusive language*, and *personalising*) is perhaps is the most important. As Adystianto, Jayantini, and Suastini (2020) showed, Thunberg relies heavily on these techniques to strengthen her message. Even beginner-level students can use these simple pronouns to emphasise their position in an argument and to either align or differentiate their position with that of the audience and the relevant parties being discussed in their presentations.

Finally, the message framing approach one adopts is another important aspect of delivering a presentation. This study cannot advocate either a *positive framing* or *negative framing* approach to presenting as each presentation is very much context dependant and such findings are beyond the scope of this paper. However, simply being aware of the option and considering which approach to adopt may assist speakers.

The next objective of this ongoing project is simple: Can a group of Japanese university students presenting in English (L2) utilise the techniques highlighted in this study on Greta Thunberg effectively in appropriate contexts, both in the university language classroom and outside of the university language classroom? Analysing how students employ certain techniques and which techniques they employ will determine whether Thunberg's speeches (and other established speakers on the world stage) can serve as a model for teaching university students the art of public speaking.

Lastly, there are a few limitations to this study that need to be noted here. Firstly, the limited scope of inquiry (only six speeches were analysed, all delivered by the same speaker) necessitates further research to more accurately determine how (or if) Thunberg continues to use the techniques highlighted in this paper, in other speeches. Furthermore, continued research into how other speakers use these techniques would also lead to obtaining a more generalisable set of data.

Conclusion

This study analysed six speeches delivered by Swedish climate-change activist Greta Thunberg. The initial purpose of the study was to ascertain the message framing approach adopted by Thunberg, which PDTs she utilised to amplify her message, and whether or not the techniques could be classified as interactional or interactive. Findings indicate that Thunberg employed an almost exclusively *negative framing* approach in her speeches and that these speeches were

punctuated with a range of PDTs (interactional techniques) designed to emphasise and clarify her positioning in the climate change debate in relation to the positioning of the audience and world leaders. The implications drawn from this study are that these techniques and the simple language used by Thunberg to express an opinion on a complex topic could easily be incorporated into presentations by university students in the L2 classroom.

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Competing Interests

No, there are no conflicting interests.

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