

УДК 81.33

**ПАТТЕРНИ СІМЕЙНИХ РЕФЕРЕНЦІЙ ТА ЇХ ІДЕОЛОГІЧНІ
ІМПЛІКАЦІЇ В КОРОЛІВСЬКОМУ ДИСКУРСІ**

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**FAMILY REFERENCE PATTERNS AND THEIR IDEOLOGICAL
IMPLICATIONS IN ROYAL DISCOURSE**

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*У статті розглядаються лінгвістичні особливості промов принців Вільяма та Гаррі. Дослідження лексичних, граматичних та дискурсивних характеристик сімейних референцій проводилося на матеріалі 42 офіційних виступів, виголошених протягом 2008–2025 років. Корпусний аналіз виявив суттєві кількісні та якісні розбіжності у частотності та способах мовного обрамлення стосунків у сім'ї. Сімейні референції принца Вільяма зросли з 1475,53 до 1880,29 випадків на мільйон токенів у період після 2018 року порівняно з виступами до 2018 року, зберігаючи переважно інституційне обрамлення через лексику обов'язку, традиції та спадкоємності. Кількість згадок про сім'ю у промовах принца Гаррі збільшилася вдвічі з 2861,6 випадків на мільйон токенів у виступах до 2028 року до 5729,69 випадків на мільйон токенів у виступах після 2018 року, що супроводжується тенденцією до персоналізації та емоційного самовираження. Колокаційний аналіз демонструє, що в мовленні Вільяма лексема *family* систематично поєднується з лексичними одиницями, що належать до семантичних полів ТРАДИЦІЇ, СПАДЩИНИ та СЛУЖІННЯ. Повторюваність таких колокацій дозволяє інтерпретувати їх як мовні репрезентації відповідних інституційних концептів. Принц Гаррі використовує лексему *family* з емоційно маркованою лексикою, пов'язаною з семантичними полями ЛЮБОВІ, ЗАХИСТУ та СВОБОДИ. Це вказує на більш персоналізований концептуальний фокус. Лексико-*

граматичний аналіз сімейних номінацій показує, що Вільям віддає перевагу офіційним титулам, пасивним конструкціям та дистанційованим референціям, тоді як Гаррі використовує присвійні займенники, активний стан та реляційні терміни, що підкреслюють його емоційну близькість до членів родини. Дослідження виявляє, як лінгвістичні особливості сімейного дискурсу відображають фундаментальні ідеологічні розбіжності щодо відносин між особистою ідентичністю та інституційною роллю в межах британської монархії.

Ключові слова: сімейні референції, королівський дискурс, корпусна лінгвістика, ідеологічний аналіз, інституційна ідентичність, персоналізація дискурсу, британська монархія.

The article examines the linguistic features of the speeches of Prince William and Prince Harry. The study of lexical, grammatical, and discursive characteristics of family references was conducted on the basis of 42 official speeches delivered between 2008 and 2025. Corpus analysis identified important quantitative and qualitative differences in the frequency and framing of family relationships. References to Prince William's family increased from 1,475.53 occurrences per million tokens in speeches delivered before 2018 to 1,880.29 occurrences per million tokens in speeches delivered after 2018 per million tokens. These references were mostly institutional in nature, using vocabulary related to the concepts of DUTY, TRADITION, and SUCCESSION. References to Prince Harry's family doubled from 2,861.6 occurrences per million tokens in speeches delivered before 2018 to 5,729.69 occurrences per million tokens in speeches delivered after 2018. The shift was towards personalisation and emotional self-expression. Collocational analysis demonstrates that in William's discourse the lexeme family systematically co-occurs with lexical items belonging to the semantic fields of TRADITION, HERITAGE, and SERVICE. The repetition of these collocations facilitates their interpretation as linguistic representations of related institutional conceptions. Harry uses the lexeme family in combination with emotionally marked vocabulary associated with the semantic fields of LOVE, PROTECTION, and FREEDOM. A lexico-grammatical analysis of family nominations reveals some important distinctions between the two princes: Harry tends to use relational terms that emphasize emotional intimacy with family members, possessive pronouns, and active voice, while William prefers official titles, passive constructions, and distant references. The study demonstrates how linguistic features of family discourse reflect fundamental ideological differences in the relationship between personal identity and institutional role in the British monarchy.

Keywords: *family references, royal discourse, corpus linguistics, ideological analysis, institutional identity, discourse personalization, British monarchy.*

Statement of the problem. The discourse produced by the British royal family is a site of performance at which tradition and identity converge in a unique linguistic space where speakers must mediate between established tradition and modern ideals of authenticity and accessibility. The linguistic choices made by speakers of the royal family in referring to other family members show more than simply factual information and/or personal feelings. Such linguistic practices serve as ideological tools in which speakers position themselves in relation to the institution of the monarchy and shape their public selves in relation to the blurred lines of private and public institution.

References to family members in the discourse of the royal family are the domain of linguistic study, as they expose the underlying contradictions of the contemporary constitutional monarchy. Modern societies increasingly require the greatest public figures to demonstrate the presence of relatable human experience, human emotion, and recognition of the preeminence of human relationships. Simultaneously, the British monarchy is built on the principles of being a symbolic representative. It includes having continuity and being an institution that stays strong, all of which go beyond the role of just one person. Therefore, the royal speakers must navigate the discourse of the family in order to meet the contradictory requirements of showing enough human presence to maintain public support while maintaining enough distance to preserve the necessary monarchical mystique. Different members of the royal family handle the contradictions through different patterns of communicative practice, which lead to different patterns of linguistic construction of familial relationships.

The corpus for analysis includes 22 speeches by Prince William, containing 16,715 words, and 20 speeches by Prince Harry, containing 14,737 words. The data has been divided by the year 2018, enabling comparisons before and after significant events in both princes' individual and institutional lives. The year 2018 was chosen as a starting point, marking Prince Harry's marriage to Meghan Markle and subsequent shift in his institutional position within the royal family. The analysis of the development of patterns of reference in families over time makes it possible to identify the way in which external factors and internal decisions impact the communication styles of particular royal speakers. Events in life such as marrying, having children, experiencing bereavement, or changes in institutional position are related to changes in discourse as speakers adjust their communication at this level in accordance with their new life situation and position. Some members of the royal family react

to changes in society and are eager to combine personal identity with institutional roles. Meanwhile, others begin to personalise and express their emotions. Indeed, it promotes better relationships with society and helps to improve the status from the perspective of the audience. These contrasting tendencies demonstrate different ideological positions: personal happiness versus institutional duties and contemporary norms versus aristocratic standards. Corpus linguistic techniques help to analyse family references and provide empirical support for these ideological distinctions. It is done to highlight statistical trends in large corpora of speeches. Quantitative studies indicate who increases and who decreases their speeches about their families, and in-depth studies of concordance lines provide insight into how speakers refer to their families in their speeches, often using lexical, metaphoric, and grammatical devices. In combination with critical discourse studies, corpus linguistic methods allow us to understand how descriptive language style, which is far from purely descriptive, expresses particular ideological positions on private life, institutional responsibilities, traditions, authenticity, and the concept of family.

Literature review. Corpus-based discourse analysis has enabled the development of very sophisticated tools to investigate language use. Baker (2006) demonstrates that corpus linguistics provides empirical methods for identifying systematic patterns in large language datasets, while McEnery and Hardie (2012) emphasise that frequency data acquire analytical value only through contextualised interpretation of concordances and attention to genre conventions. Consequently, researchers are now able to identify not only linguistic features but also ideological meanings encoded in lexical choices and grammatical structures by comparing systematically. Thus Baker and McEnery (2015) have demonstrated that by combining corpus analysis and discourse analysis, scholars can go beyond simple impressionistic observation and come to empirically grounded observations about discursive practices. Their study has also shown that statistically significant linguistic differences between subcorpora indicate very significant ideological shifts that emerge only if and when the corpus is properly constructed and analysed statistically. In its turn, the study by McEnery and Hardie (2012) further improved corpus linguistic analysis by emphasising that statistics have no meaning without contextualising of concordances and attention to genres.

Functional grammar studies provide a set of analytical techniques for understanding how language constructs interpersonal contexts and represents social reality through lexical-grammatical choices. The works of Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) have provided information on how speakers construct self-audience relationships and representation of participants in discourse through choices made in transitivity, mood, and theme structures.

This methodological tool can be effectively employed to analyse family citations. It helps to understand how grammatical choices regarding agency, relational processes, and participants encode ideologies regarding family organization, hierarchy, and individuality. Hunston and Thompson's (2000) study has further expanded functionalist views in discourse analysis. It is studied in order to develop tools for analysing evaluation in discourse and it leads to understanding how speakers encode attitudes, opinions, and self-positions through linguistic choices.

Aim of the study. This study aims to determine the distinctive features of family references in public speeches by Prince William and Prince Harry.

Research objectives:

1. To determine the frequency of references to family in speeches by Prince William and Prince Harry before and after 2018 and to establish basic patterns and temporal trends.
2. To analyse the linguistic framing of family relationships in royal discourse, applying the Sketch Engine software. This involves a comparison of institutional and personal representations of family identity through the study of collocation patterns and concordance lines.
3. To define how changes in family reference models correspond to changes in institutional positions and individual circumstances of speakers, especially around the turning point of 2018.
4. To outline the ideological implications of different patterns of family discourse, particularly regarding concepts of privacy, duty, tradition, and authenticity in royal communication.
5. To determine how family references function as strategic resources for constructing public identity and negotiating the boundaries between institutional representation and personal expression.

Results. Analyzing the corpus data for occurrences of references to the family in 42 official speeches by Prince William and Prince Harry between 2008 and 2025 reveals both quantitative and qualitative differences. They are a result of variation in communication strategy and ideological stances on the relationship between individual identity and institutional roles. The analysis will focus on lexemes and multiword units that refer to members of the family, investigating their occurrences and discourse contexts using concordance and collocation analysis.

A frequency analysis reveals that the use of lexical items referring to immediate and extended family members (for example, *mother, father, children, wife and family*) by the two

princes has increased over time across the analysed public speeches, although the level of increase is very contrasting. It is indicative of the different patterns of integrating the family identity into the discourse. A corpus analysis performed using Sketch Engine shows that the frequency of family-related vocabulary in Prince William's speeches rises from 1,475.53 to 1,880.29, which is an increase of 27.4%. In Prince Harry's speeches, family mentions increase from 2,861.6 to 5,729.69 occurrences of vocabulary related to family per million, which corresponds to a 100.2% increase. To make sure that corpora of different sizes can be compared, frequencies are normalised per million words. So, Prince Harry's family-related references are growing at a rate that is more than three times faster than those in Prince William's speeches. As shown in Table 1, there are not only the differences in the level of increase, but also in their qualitative use. An examination of the concordance lines shows that the two princes use lexical references to family relationships in very different ways.

Table 1: Frequency of Family References in Royal Speeches (per million tokens)

Speaker	Period	Family References	Percentage Change
Prince William	Before 2018	1,475.53	—
Prince William	After 2018	1,880.29	+27.4%
Prince Harry	Before 2018	2,861.6	—
Prince Harry	After 2018	5,729.69	+100.2%

Prince William's use of family-related vocabulary serves as an image of institutional continuity and historical legitimacy rather than his emotional or personal experiences. Concordance reveals that William uses his father's name, his grandmother's name, or his grandfather's name within discussions about succession, duty, and the passing down of values through generations. His family is used as a model he is following or a legacy he is continuing. The family-related vocabulary is associated with broader thematic patterns such as *TRADITION*, *LEGACY*, *DUTY*, *HONOR*, and *SERVICE*. Examples within William's speeches preceding 2018 include: *My grandmother has shown us what it means to serve* and *Following in my father's footsteps, I want to continue this important work*. Following 2018, while the references to family-related vocabulary occur more often, they are framed from an institutional perspective: *The Duke of Edinburgh taught us the importance of conservation* and *As Catherine and I raise our children, we are mindful of the traditions passed down*

through generations. As depicted in Figure 1, the concordance lines for the lexemes *royal* and *duty* in Prince William's speeches prior to 2018 show a consistent correlation with institutional and hierarchical themes. These tendencies validate the institutional framing inherent in his discourse.

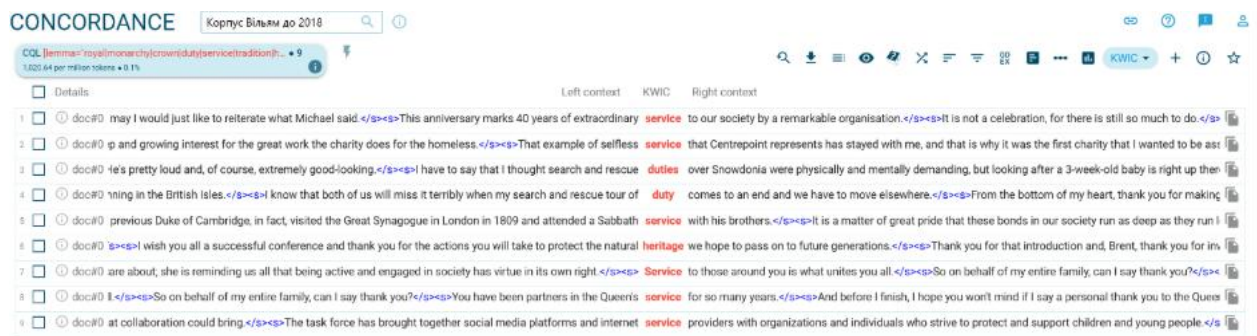


Fig. 1 Results of concordance search for the lexemes *royal* and *duty* in the corpus of prince William in speeches before 2018

In order to examine the semantic environment of family references, the collocational behaviour of the lexeme *family* was analysed in both corpora. Table 2 displays the most common collocates of the lexeme *family* among speakers and timeframes, categorised by their primary semantic links.

Table 2. Collocational Patterns of the Lexeme *Family* in Royal Discourse

Speaker	Period	Top Collocates of "family"	Semantic Field
Prince William	Before 2018	tradition, legacy, service, honour, continue	Institutional duty
Prince William	After 2018	values, responsibility, generations, commitment, heritage	Historical continuity
Prince Harry	Before 2018	support, proud, honor, together, grateful	Moderate formality
Prince Harry	After 2018	love, protect, safe, truth, freedom, choose	Personal emotion

Table 2 illustrates that the collocational environment of the lexeme *family* varies systematically between the two speakers. In Prince William's speeches prior to 2018, *family* predominantly is associated with lexical items such as *tradition*, *legacy*, *service*, and *honour*. It creates a semantic cluster linked to institutional duty. Post-2018, the predominant

collocates move towards *values, duty, generations, and heritage*. They emphasise views of historical continuity over personal intimacy. The quantitative results establish the empirical basis for the subsequent qualitative examination.

Since 2018, William's usage of examples of family-related vocabulary in his speeches has reflected his increased position in the line of succession and his growing family commitments as his children grow up. The examples involving his wife, Catherine, are largely formal and recognise her role in official events with little information about his personal relationships and feelings as a husband and spouse. The mentions involving his children are more frequent than before, but remain strictly framed around institutional and formal issues. When William talks about his children, his main concern is his parental role to raise them for future roles and not about his personal family experiences and feelings about fatherhood and parenting. Even when discussing matters such as mental health and childhood experiences where personal information might be more fitting and appropriate, William maintains his personal remove either through generalized personal experiences and lessons learned rather than personal feelings and emotions about them.

The corpus-based analysis of family-related vocabulary in Prince William's discourse supports a consistent correlation between institutional themes, including *service, duty, continuity*, and references to family members. This tendency supports the idea of conventional aristocratic principles with a difference between public and private aspects of life. Speaking of this context, personal emotions are generally omitted from public discourse, especially in discussions regarding familial issues. Thus, Prince William's family members are portrayed as integral elements of the monarchy, and each of them are fulfilling a specific job within a hierarchical framework.

First-person plural pronouns (*we, us*) are used by William when speaking of his family, but context analysis indicates that such pronouns are more commonly associated with the royal family or the people of Britain than his nuclear family: *It has been instilled in us*, or *The values that we hold dear*.

Table 2 illustrates that the collocational patterns of the lexeme *family* in Prince Harry's corpus are different from his brother's in both number and nature. Before 2018, the lexeme *family* most frequently combines with *support, proud, and grateful*. It suggests a semantic orientation toward interpersonal appreciation and collective solidarity. After 2018, the dominant collocates shift toward *love, protect, safe, freedom, and choose*, and they form a cluster centred on personal emotion and individual agency. This quantitative change aligns with qualitative changes in his discourse. There are many more family references in Harry's

speeches, and the increase after 2018 indicates a new trend of emphasizing family relationships as being fundamental to his public identity and his work as a campaigner. Unlike his brother's institutional perspective on family, Harry focuses on his family from the perspective of his own relationships and experiences: *My grandmother and family have been incredibly supportive of the Invictus Games*, and *Following my brother's example in conservation work*. However, even in earlier speeches, Harry exhibited more personalization in terms of family relations, sometimes including personal stories or feelings that are not common in traditional royal speeches. After 2018, and particularly since his marriage to Meghan Markle and stepping down from royal duties, there is a clear shift in Harry's speeches about his family. In speeches since 2018, Harry regularly mentions his wife and son in a way that emphasizes intimacy and significance over institutional obligations: *Meghan and I are committed to raising Archie in an environment where he feels safe and loved*, *My wife has shown me the importance of speaking your truth*, and *The moment you become a father everything really does change because you start to realise, what is the point a bringing a new person into the world*. Meghan Markle is present in Harry's discourse not simply as the Duchess of Sussex undertaking institutional obligations, but rather as Harry's wife, source of support, and collaborator in bringing up their children.

The collocational and concordance analyses reveal that Prince William's employment of family-related terminology underscores institutional continuity and hierarchical duty. Prince Harry's speeches frame family as an important aspect of personal identity.

Harry's personalisation is particularly evident in Prince Harry's references to his mother, Princess Diana. In Harry's discourse, Princess Diana appears both as the private mother whose loss influenced Harry's emotional biography and as a symbolic figure for the harmful consequences of exposure to continuous media attention and inflexible structures. Harry's frequent references to his mother's experience serve as a way to validate Harry's own decision to move away from the traditional royal way of life and present his decision as a protective one rather than a rebellious one. A qualitative analysis of the usage of references to the speaker's family members and their activities reveals that Harry increasingly uses references to family members in order to validate his own views as an advocate. For instance, talking about his mental health, Harry uses references both to his own experience as a person who has struggled with grief and the lack of emotional care provided by his family: *I spent years in total denial, refusing to accept that my mother was gone, and my family thought the best approach was to stay silent*. When criticizing media behavior, Harry refers both to the

influence that has been exerted upon his wife and the similarity between the two situations: *I lost my mother to this. And I will not allow the same forces to destroy my wife.*

In showing his reasons for stepping down from royal duties, he articulates it as a choice to protect his family: *I had to make a choice between the institution and my family, and I chose my family.* In this case, family relationships become a rhetorical tool for motivation and evidence for supporting his views regarding changes to royal practices and regulation of the media.

Grammatical analysis reveals Harry's tendency to use the active voice and personal agency in talking about the family, in contrast to William's passive and distant tone: *I chose to protect my family* (individual decision-making) versus William's *It is important that families are protected* (avoids direct personal attachment). Harry tends to use first-person singular possessive determiners in references such as: *my wife, my son, my mother*. The determiner *my* is grammatically typical; nevertheless, its frequent use in emotionally charged settings frames family members as integral to Harry's individuality rather than as elements of an institutional system.

These opposing ideologies regarding family, privacy, and the dichotomy between individual versus institution are rooted in broader context regarding the function of monarchy in a modern democratic system. William is rather on the side of conservative ideologies that emphasize tradition, continuity, and the importance of preserving institutional frameworks and their meanings. His ability to distinguish between his public and private life, his emphasis on obligation as opposed to personal desire, and his explanation of family in terms of institutional frameworks are all representative of his vision for the monarchy as a social institution in which sacrifices must be made by those who are part of it for it to function in terms of social needs.

The ideals Harry stands for are progressive in promoting the interests of the individual about rights, emotions, truth, and individual welfare. His decision to prioritise family happiness over institutional obligations, his condemnation of royal and media practices concerning what he sees as harmful to his family reflect the evolving social culture concerning the obligations owed to institutions: *It's fundamentally wrong to put all of us through all of this again. What's required is an apology and some accountability. It's a horrible experience.* Mental health and family welfare are non-negotiable needs and not privileges to be sacrificed in the interests of institutional continuity. Institutions should adjust to serve the individual instead of requiring the individual to make sacrifices in the interests of

continuity. Harry believes that the monarchy must change radically to respect privacy, mental health, and personal interests to thrive in the modern world of a democratic state.

There is a gradual development of references to family, which reflects the influence of personal and institutional factors in the formation of communication models. Both princes increasingly reference families, reflecting general trends in society toward personalization in public communication. However, William's development is tempered and carefully managed, incorporating mentions of families within an institutional setting and maintaining a strict border between public and personal life. Prince Harry's significant shift is due to his transition from being a part of the royal family to being an independent voice. This shows how his new role and position in society have changed the way he connects with people. This is evident in the case of Harry's wedding to Meghan Markle and the conflicts that led to his stepping down as a senior member of the royal family. Nevertheless, before 2018, there was general comparability in communication styles.

On the other hand, there is significant divergence in communication styles after 2018, with William maintaining and deepening institutional markers and Harry making significant moves toward authenticity and opening up emotionally. Linguistic study of the use of references to members of William's family further supports the presence of ideological variation. William prefers to use last names and titles, maintaining linguistic distance in order to preserve their institutional identities. Use of *The Queen*, *The Duke of Edinburgh*, or *The Prince of Wales* is more about institutional affiliation than affection. William, even in discussing members of his immediate family, prefers relatively formal constructions, referring to *Catherine* in institutional contexts and to children's activities in a way that keeps their privacy intact yet acknowledges their presence: *As parents, Catherine and I believe in the value of outdoor activities for children* rather than *George enjoys playing outside*. William prefers third-person forms even in discussing members of his immediate family, thus maintaining a rhetorical distance between speaker and referent. Harry is using more and more informal relational language and possessives that highlight emotional ties rather than institutional roles. The use of *my wife*, *my son*, *my mother* is very common in his speeches. He also relates personal stories that help build a close relationship with his audience: *Meghan and I were sitting on the couch when we heard the news* or *Archie's first word was crocodile, which makes us laugh every time*.

His use of the active voice puts the focus on himself as the subject acting on his own based on family considerations: *I protect my family*, *I chose to leave*, *I refuse to subject my wife to what my mother experienced*. These patterns illustrate how the princes' family

discourse contributes to the formation of unique public selves for the two princes. William presents himself as a future monarch who represents institutional continuity but, at the same time, is modernising the style of monarchical communication without rejecting the values of honour and restraint. References to William's family portray him as a caring father and devoted husband who takes his responsibilities seriously. It is evident that Prince William keeps a balance between his personal life and his duties to the monarchy. In contrast, Harry gives the impression of being a humanitarian defender who values authenticity and truth rather than institutional norms. His references to his family show his understanding of personal issues and rigid institutional setting rather than political ideology.

Conclusions and discussion. A study of family reference in public speeches by Prince William and Prince Harry indicates that the linguistic decisions speakers make regarding the use of mentions and framing of family references function as important signals of ideological position. It underscores basic ideological differences between the princes' perceptions of their own personal identities and their institutional roles as components of the British monarchy. A corpus analysis of 42 speeches from 2008 to 2025 indicates that there are important discrepancies between the princes' use of family references both regarding their relative frequency and their framing patterns. William's references increase moderately from 1,475.53 to 1,880.29 mentions per million words while remaining largely within an institutional framework. By contrast, Harry's family references increase substantially from 2,861.6 to 5,729.69 mentions per million words, moving decisively more toward personal and emotional framing patterns. These numbers reflect important discrepancies regarding collocational patterns, grammar, and rhetorical purposes and appear to indicate that family references function differently for purposes of communication. William primarily utilizes his family references to reinforce notions of institutional continuity and legitimacy and to support ideas of dynastic succession. He frames his references from the perspective of familial obligations and service rather than personal feelings of connection and affection. By contrast, Prince Harry increasingly turns to family references as a rhetorical means of authorising his own advocacy. For him, it is of high importance to establish his own personal identity and institutional role within the monarchy, and he frames his references from the perspective of familial connections that are primarily sources of his own personal feelings of affection. His connections within the family offer important reasons for institutional nonconformity with traditional expectations of his role as a member of the monarchy.

From a temporal perspective, it is clear that the most pronounced split in the discourse of the two princes occurs after 2018. It is in tandem with significant personal and institutional

developments, namely Harry's marriage to Meghan Markle and the fallout that ensued, culminating in his stepping back from senior royal responsibilities. Before 2018, both princes functioned in broadly comparable communicative contexts characterised by institutional language styles, a lack of personal revelation, and a focus on a collective sense of royal identity rather than personal experience. After 2018, the two princes' discursive patterns diverge considerably: William consolidates his institutional language patterns, maintains a strong personal boundary on privacy issues, and subordinates personal feeling to institutional representation. Harry makes a clear transition towards personal feeling expression, personal narrative expansion, and a strong focus on family health above institutional expectations. This difference can be observed in a variety of linguistic features, including the way in which they grammatically refer to members of his family: William tends to use official titles, passive voice, and third-person references that indicate a strong personal distance, whereas Harry tends to use possessive pronouns, active voice, and relational references that indicate strong personal closeness.

Further research could include speeches by other members of the royal family, namely Catherine, Princess of Wales, and Meghan Markle, Duchess of Sussex, to see how gender roles play a part in royal speeches. Additional research might include a comparison of British royal speeches with English-language addresses by monarchs or royal representatives in other European monarchies, to figure out whether the identified patterns represent a general monarchical norm or a culturally specific British tradition.

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