

The Modal Verbs: A Speech Act of Request in the Speech of the President of the United States Barak Obama

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Abstract

Speech is a power in itself. The most significant thing in the speech is the message that the speaker wants to convey. When the hearer understands the function of the message he will responds or behaves positively. Language and politics are fully related, language is a tool by which the politicians can command, request, persuade and declare...etc. This paper is concerned with speech act of request in the speech of Barak Obama president of the USA, Remarks by the President at the U.S./China Strategic and Economic Dialogue, delivered at the Ronald Reagan Building and International trade Center Washington, Dec on July 27, 2009. The specified speech is available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remaks-president-uschina-strategic-and-economic-dialogue.In>. In this study the Searle's speech act theory will be adopted to analyze the speech act which occurred in the speech, modal verbs "*Can*", "*Will*", and "*Must*" will be selected to analyze as a tool used by the speaker to realize the speech act of request. This paper achieved the following conclusions: a. speech act of request is the most frequent prevailing in the political nominated speech; b. the speech acts of request are mostly happened in an indirect way.

Keywords: Modal verbs, political speech, speech act theory, request, and indirect speech act.

1. Introduction

Language is a means of communication, it is a social phenomenon by which we can interchange in different ways, feeling, persuading, advising, warning, teaching and so on. When we intend to speak or write we formulate what we say to be fit the context or situation, this means that what we say is not exactly what we intend to convey, the meaning beyond the words or sentences is sometime different from the form of words .

Discourse is a language in action, and this discipline requires an attention to language and to the action (Hanks ,1996 as cited in Blommaert,2005: 2),by other words discourse is a language

plus context, the context that that speakers bring with them when they are use the language, this context includes people experiences, assumptions and expectations, the context that we negotiate or construct our aims through the social interactions in the real life .Furthermore, people are motivated to accomplish some things when they speak or write, therefore, discourse is a social action (Woods 2006: x). Discourse deals with units of language bigger than the sentence, by another word; the discourse is sentences collected to form a big text.

Language and politics are extremely interrelated and intermingled. Due the significance of language in politics, politicians tend to use special forms of language to give their discourse charm and influence which enable them to send different messages to different people of different orientations and levels at one time and within one piece of discourse, to achieve these functions they use language in a subtle, manipulative and convincing way. Accordingly, they coat their discourse with many characteristic features to serve its multidirectional and multi-functionality simultaneously. Because of the great significance of politics in everyday life, political discourse has obtained its stature and value.

Pragmatics is the study of the language in use, or the study of the speaker meaning. Pragmatics defined as the relation of sign to their users and interpreters .Pragmatics is” how language is used in communication” (Leech, 1983: 1). Linguists and philosophers called the production of utterances as acts. These acts also play a role in revealing the main character of the speaker adding a stylistic impact on the content involved in political texts. Syntactically, political texts are realized by the utilization of the different syntactic structures (imperative, interrogative, and declarative) to express the different classes of speech acts. Pragmatically, the meaning of political texts reflects the context of the situation, and expresses the metaphorical meaning rather than literal meaning.

Modal verbs operate like other aspects of language, they can be analyzed from the pragmatic perspective, they are used to indicate different meaning or acts like request, obligation, order, permit, etc. Modal verbs in English regarded as small class of auxiliary verbs .They distinguish from other verbs in that they have not participle or infinitive forms. The modal verbs characterized by some feature like: they don't have (e) s in the third person singular, they are not used as infinitives or participles, they function like auxiliary verbs do, and they can undergo the subject auxiliary version.

The modal verb “*Can*” is used with declarative and interrogative sentences; this modal verb can express ability, possibility, and permission. The second modal verb is “*Will*”, this modal mostly talking about the future, the most frequent choice is used to make requests, promises...etc. This modal also emerges with the interrogative and declarative sentences, but when it lies with declarative it emerge with future sake (Thornburg, 2004: 30-1,192-3). The third one of modal verb which will also be tackled in this study is “*Must*”, it express obligation and necessity, it is also can express a confident and assumption; it can be located in declarative and interrogative sentences.

The three modal verb “*Can*”, “*Will*” and “*Must*” are used to be a polite request in which the declarative, interrogative sentences which the three modal verbs located in, will emerge as a tool to create an illocutionary force, the speaker use it politely especially when the speaker is talking about someone how know obviously what the speaker talk about (Azar &Hagen: 158).

2. Literature Review

2.1 What is discourse analysis?

The term discourse analysis etymologically comes from Greek *Verbanaluein* 'to deconstruct' and from the Latin verb *discurrere* 'to run back and forth'. In recent decades the term of discourse analysis has penetrated many disciplines involving, sociology history, cultural studies, philosophy, literary studies, psychology and anthropology. Discourse analysis in all these disciplines has a distinct meaning inclusive a social science methodology, a sub discipline of linguistics, critical paradigm and so far (Krzyzanowski & Wodak, 2008: 5).

Discourse analysis is the interpretation the language in the context of using. Discourse analysis aims to study language in the contexts. Discourse analysis concerned with written texts and spoken language, in different figures of speech from conversation to highly forms of talk (McCarthy, 2000: 5).

The philosophers Austin(1962),Searle(1969) and Grice(1975) were interested with language in relation to social action, as appeared in speech act theory and cooperative principle, beside the emergence of pragmatics discipline which concerned with the study of meaning in context (Levinson 1984&Leech 1983 as cited in McCarthy,2000),discourse analysis has overripe into a different disciplines which finds the important of the context and cultural influences on the meaning of language in use, such recent disciplines are applied linguistics, second language acquisition and language teaching.

Discourse analysis implies looking at the form of language and its functions and covers the study of written texts and spoken language. Linguistic features also identified by discourse analysis to characterize different genres ,further social and cultural factors that aid in our interpretation and understanding of different texts and types of talk. Several varieties of fields have developed of discourse such, sociolinguistics, anthropology, sociology, and social psychology. Consequently, discourse analysis takes different analytic approaches and theoretical perspectives such as, speech act theory, interactional sociolinguistics, ethnography of communication, pragmatics, conversation analysis, and variance analysis (Schiffrin, 1994 as cited in Darwish, 2011). Though each approach emphasizes different aspects of language use, they all see language as social interaction.

Different types lied under the scope of discourse analysis like, conversation analysis, discursive psychology, and critical discourse analysis. (Schiffrin, 1994 as cited in Darwish, 2011: 7). Discourse analysis is not only interests with the analysis of spoken conversation but also it concerns with hundreds of written and printed words, such as newspaper articles, stories, notice, comics, letters, recipes, and so on (McCarthy,2000: 10).

The analysis of discourse means the analysis of language in use, in this sense the analysis is concerned not with a formal linguistic aspect of language (transaction) but with function of language involved in the social relations and personal attitudes (Yule & Brown, 2000: 1).

Discourse analysis in communication activities is not just required grammar but rather a far wider string of language knowledge, the social context, the relation between interactions, produced of pragmatic functions in discourse, as well as the ability of interlocutors (addressee/addressor) of assigning aspects of context to discourse used in order to negotiate the meaning successfully (Widdowson,2007: 15).

There are many definitions of discourse analysis, although the discourse analysis has different meanings according to different fields or academic disciplines, but most of them stand about the meaning beyond the sentences, language use, and the range border of social practice (Schiffrin, 1994 as cited in Darwish, 2001).

2.2 Political discourse

Since the 1980s political discourse has much attention within the academic centers, the attention to this discipline has come as a result from rising interest in connecting of social sciences to account for the overt implications of power, ideology and injustice where the language required a strong tool to cover this object. The idea that the discipline of discourse analysis started in the 1980s means its systematic emergence as a new discipline which deals with aspects of power, ideology...etc. (Chilton, 2004, ix-x as cited in Darwish, 2001).

Political discourse is a result of politics and it is historically and culturally determined. It fulfills different functions due to different political activities. It is thematic because its topics are primarily related to politics such as political activities, political ideas and political relations.

Political discourse comes under different labels but with the same intent and content. It can come under: political discourse, political rhetoric, political speech, and political language (Feldman & De Landtsheer, 1998: 1). According to Schäffner (1997 as cited in Darwish, 2011) political discourse can be seen from different theoretical standings, from one hand it can be seen as an internal political communication which covers the kind of discourses with political content, on the other hand there is external political communication which covers political ideas, discussions... etc..

Schäffner (1997) also states that political discourse can also be looked from a different perspective which is based on functional or thematic criteria. On the one hand political discourses serve certain functions in different political events; and on the other they are fundamentally related to political topics such as political ideas, activities...etc.

Political discourse is the informal commutation of causative views as to which of various alternative courses of action should solve the social problem. It is a science that has been used through the history of the United States. It is the essence of democracy. Full of problems and persuasion, political discourse is used in many debates, candidacies and in our everyday life.

Political discourse analysis is a kind of discourse which castrates on a discourse in political forums such as, debates, speeches, hearings, and interview as the phenomenon of interest

2.3 Survey of speech act theory

In his work of monograph, *How to Do Things with Words*, the philosopher J. Austin (1962) was the first who attempted to classify the speech act, speech act theory is actually based on the series of lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955 under the title William James Lectures. Austin observed that there are some sentences designed to do something rather than to tell others. For example, uttering a sentence like: *I now pronounce you man and wife* is directed to do something; namely wedding a couple. Austin calls this kind of sentences the performatives in contrast with the constatives which stand for descriptive ones and are, at least pretheoretically, oriented towards saying something rather than doing something, in this point Austin has pointed in his lectures that every utterance has a descriptive and an effective aspects, which means that saying something is also doing something (Horn & Wood, 2004: 55). With respect to the distinction between constative and performative, Austin distinguished three kinds of acts instead of the

above two, these three acts are: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary. The locutionary act is what the speaker says with determinate sense and reference, and the illocutionary act is what the speaker doing in the speech, by other means what the speaker intends to convey by his utterance such as, offer, promise, advice, warning... etc.. While the perlocutionary act is refers to the results of the audience from that saying such as persuading, misleading, and convincing (Levinson, 1983: 263). Levinson also added that the illocutionary act is the central to the theory of speech act(as Austin interested),Austin argued that the illocutionary and locationary acts are detachable for the study of meaning may behave independently .What is important here is the illocutionary and perlocutionary, as Austin (1962) stated that the ideology of the performative and constative distinction stands to the ideology of locationary and illocutionary acts since the former stands for the speaker's/ writer's intention in uttering something while the latter is the result or the effect of the speaker's utterance on the side of the hearer/reader. This example illustrates the relationship between the locationary and illocutionary: *There may be an air strike tomorrow* ,in this sentence, we can feel a sense of warning that citizens must stay in their homes as an illocutionary act, and its perlocutionary effect might be an overwhelming fear among citizens. Austin did not put his theory in a more systematic way and thus came his student J. Searle (1969) who completed what Austin had already started. Instead of Austin's acts of il/per/locution being performed in an utterance, Searle argues that an utterance consists of two parts: "a proposition and a function indicating device which marks the illocutionary force" (Coulthard, 1985: 18-21). These functions indicating devices can be: the mood of the verb, word order ... etc, (as cited in Darwish, 2011).

In his classification of speech acts, Austin took the English illocutionary verbs (performative verbs) (Levinson, 1983), he (1962: 150) divided performative verbs into five categories: Verdictives, Exercitives, Commissives, Behabitives, and Expositives. The fifth categories are difficult to define as Austin stated, they clarify how the utterances fit into the case of conversation, and how we are using words for example: I reply, I argue, I concede, I illustrate, I assume.

Searle (1969) developed the theory of speech act as the constitutive rules to perform illocutionary acts, this means the rules that tell successfully what performing an illocutionary act consists in(as cited in Zhuanglin,2009). He considers Austin's classification as not being systematic and thus requires systemization. He argues that any taxonomy must be in accordance with certain criteria. According to Searle's speech act theory," whenever a speaker utters a sentence in an appropriate context with certain intentions, he performs one or more illocutionary acts" (Searle& Vandervken,1985: 1 as cited in Isaa,2012),Searle puts three main criteria according to which speech acts are classified into five categories. These are: *the illocutionary point, the direction of fit, and the sincerity condition*. The first criterion is *the illocutionary point* which refers to the purpose of saying something. For example, the point of a promise is that it will be an undertaking on the part of the speaker to do something in the future for the sake of the addressee. The point or purpose of an order is to get the hearer do something for the sake of the speaker. *The direction of fit criterion* is that of the direction of fit between words and the world. Some illocutionary acts have as part of their illocutionary point to get the words fit the world and vice versa. Here, promises are oriented towards making the world fit the worlds while assertions have the words to fit the world. The third criterion is the *sincerity condition* which refers to the

psychological state of the producer. For instance, a person who promises to do something expresses an intention to do that thing and so on. These three criteria are the most important ones upon which Searle's taxonomy of illocutionary acts is based (Searle, 1975: 345-8 as cited in Darwish, 2011).

To analyze the utterance by S (the speaker) to H (the hearer) to count as a promise, Searle stated that it must meet the following conditions (Zhuanglin, 2009: 188):

- 1.The propositional content performs some future action A by S.
- 2.The hearer H prefers Speaker's doing A to her not doing it, and the speaker S believes that to be so, and it is not clear to either S or H that S will do A in the normal course of events.
- 3.The speaker seeks to do A.

Promising counts as the understanding of an adherence of S to do A.

Based on the above conditions and intention of the speaker in performing an illocutionary act, Searle (1975) proposes a taxonomy of illocutionary acts as five kinds of action that one can perform in speaking, these are *assertives*, *directives*, *commissives*, *expressive* and *declarations* (also cited in Levinson,1983: 240 & Yule ,1996: 53-54).

1-Assertives (Representatives): The speaker commits to the truth of the expressed proposition as in asserting, concluding...etc. He commits to do something. The words here are supposed to fit the world. The psychological state expressed is that of belief. Under this category of speech acts Searle puts: boast, assert, claim, characterize, state, diagnose, class, complain, conclude, deduce, predict, describe, call, classify and identify. He argues that representatives are assessable in terms of the true/false dimension.

2-Directives: This category of speech act is represented by the fact that the speaker attempt to get the hearer (or addressee) to do something. With this kind of speech acts, the world is assumed to fit the words being uttered and the psychological state is that of a will (wish or desire). Typical examples of this category put in the following: invite, suggest, insist, order, command, request, ask, question, beg, plead, pray, entreat, permit, advise, dare, and challenge. Furthermore, that the propositional content is that the hearer is supposed to do some future course of action, this action should take place in the future whether near or far.

3-Commissives: The illocutionary point of this kind of acts is that the speaker commits her/himself to some future course of action. The speaker's intention to match the world of his words is essential here. Under this category comes: promise, pledge, threaten, vow and any other verbs that matches the criteria of commissives.

4-Expressives: In this kind of speech acts the speaker is capable of expressing some kinds of psychological state such as feeling sorry or thanking. With this category of speech acts, there is no direction of fit between the world and the words being uttered. The speaker expresses rather than asserts or presupposes. The truth of what is expressed by the speaker is a presupposed one because it starts from within the speaker her/himself. The speech acts of this category are: apologize, welcome, thank, congratulate, condole, deplore and any verb that matches the above criteria of expressives.

5-Declarations: In this category, the speaker change the external condition of an object, by other words changes the world. This category of speech acts is characterized by the fact that the successful performance of any of them matches the propositional content with the reality and vice versa. This means not only are the words assumed to fit the world but also the world is assumed

to fit the words concurrently. Under this class of speech acts Searle puts: fire, resign, appoint, excommunicate, christen, declare, name, call, define, abbreviate, give, bequeath one's possessions, marry, nominate, and dub. Unlike other speech acts, there is no sincerity condition with declaratives.

(Searle, 1975 as cited in Darwish 2011, Issa, 2012).

2.4 Indirect speech acts

According to Searle, there are two kinds of speech acts: direct and indirect. In order indirect speech acts to be understood, and how it is potential for the hearer to arrive to the exact meaning of the utterance, by other means the intended meaning that the speaker wants to convey. Searle viewed that we combine our knowledge of three elements to support a spectrum of inference, these elements are: *the felicity conditions of direct speech acts, the context of the utterance, and principle of conversational cooperation*, such as Grice's maxims. The following example clarifies how these elements are used in the spectrum of reasoning: *Can you pass the salt?* According to the situation, the context will tell the hearer that the speaker already knows that he can pass the salt, as a result he recognizes that the question violates the felicity conditions for a question, The results of the cooperative principle leads the hearer to search for some other points of the utterance, this is basically the search for indirect speech act, this means the hearer will ask himself what is the aim of this utterance? The hearer knows that a condition of requests is that the hearer can carry out the desired act A and to say yes is to confirm that a preparatory condition for doing A has been met. As a part of general knowledge, the hearer knows that passing salt around a table is a usual part of meals. According to background of knowledge the hearer infers that what the speaker says is request not a question (Saeed, 1997: 232).

Searle(1975) pointed out that the most commentators on indirect speech acts have remarked on the role of politeness, he stated "In the field of indirect illocutionary acts, the area of directives is the most useful to study because ordinary conversational requirements of politeness normally make it awkward to issue flat imperative statements(e.g. Leave the room) or explicit performatives (e.g. I order you to leave the room),and we therefore seek to find indirect means to our illocutionary ends (e.g. I wonder if you would mind leaving the room).In directives, politeness is the chief motivation for indirectness." (Cited in Saeed, 1997: 234).

Yule (1996) recognized a relationship between the structural forms and communicative functions, he pointed out that a direct speech act is a result of a direct relationship between the structure and its function, on the other hand the indirect speech act is yielded from the an indirect relationship between a structure and a function,. For example a declarative sentence which is used to make a statement is actually a direct speech act, whereas a declarative sentence which used to make a request is regarded as an indirect speech act. Yule (1996, 54) also noted that the speakers are behaving indirectly in their speech basically associated with the aim of politeness in English than direct speech acts.

Gazdar (1981) has pointed out that the idea indirect speech act make sense if one subscribes to the notion of a literal force (illocutionary force),this means that the illocutionary force built into sentence form, he said that the literal force will amount to subscribing to the following (cited in Levinson,1983: 265):

1. Explicit performatives have the force named by the performative verb in the matrix clause.

2. Otherwise, the three major sentence-types in English, namely the imperative, interrogative and declarative, have the forces traditionally associated with them, namely ordering (or requesting), questioning and stating respectively.

According to the two above rules, the sentence that have rule associated force as its literal force, has in addition indirect force, thus any usages in accordance with (1), (2) are indirect speech acts.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data collection

The data for this study are restricted to the political speech of the president of the United States Barak Obama, *remarks at the U.S./China Strategic and Economic Dialogue*, delivered at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center Washington, Dec. The modal verbs “Can”, “Will” and “Must” which frequented in the political speech will be the object of analysis. “Can”, “Will” and “Must” are a kind of auxiliary verbs. They can formulate in a declarative, interrogative, imperative sentences, in the same time they can serve, according to the speakers’ attitudes, social situation ...etc, as advice, permission, probable, request, and ability, each one of the modal verbs can serve more than one meaning (Azar & Hagen, 1981: 157).

3.2 Research procedures

The analysis involves the pragmatic level focusing on the theory of speech act remarked by Searle (1975). The focus will be on the speech act of the request in which it emerges as a kind of directive speech acts. The analysis will be centered on the frequency of the three modal verbs “Can”, “will” and “Must” in which they are occurring in the political text in different locations. The pragmatic analysis of the political texts will involve the explanation of the politician’s way to use the speech act regarded as a request. The quotation in which the modal verbs lie in will cut and analyze one by one, the analytical way will show the kind of sentence, the role of illocutionary force in the text I mean the meaning of an utterance as intended by the speaker, kind of speech acts. After analyzing the data, a table will be drawn to show the frequency of collecting modal verbs, kind of sentences, the number of each modal occurred in the text.

3.3 Results analysis and discussion

The whole text of selected speech will be tackled in the study, seventeen quotations in which the modal verbs lie in have been taken herein and will analyze one by one to show the modal verbs used by the speaker to be acting as request.

1. Will growth be stalled by events like our current financial crisis, or will we cooperate to create balanced and sustainable growth lifting more people out of poverty and creating a broader prosperity around the world? (p.7)

This utterance shows an indirect speech act of request, the interrogative sentence in which the speaker said hold embed meaning seems to say if we will not cooperate, the growth will be stalled, therefore, the speaker seems to request from the hearer to cooperate in order to create balanced and sustainable growth. According to the context of this text the modal verb “Will” (in the second sentence) do as a verb make the addressee understand the core of his speaking as a request, the first sentence and the word (or) in the second sentence help to understand the speaker aims to cooperate.

2. Will the need for energy breed competition and climate change, or will we build partnerships to produce clean power and to protect our planet? (p.7)

By this utterance, Obama attempts to shift attention to the hearer the dangers of energy breed competition and climate change, by asking question sentence beginning with modal verb “Will” which implies an indirect speech act of the request, the speaker requested to build partnerships to produce clean power in order to protect our planet.

3. Will nuclear weapons spread unchecked or will we forge a new consensus to use this power for only peaceful purpose? (p.7)

In this utterance there is obvious indirection by the speaker to use “Will” in the second part of the text of indirect speech act of request, the intention of the speaker in this context as if he say let us forge a new consensus in order to use nuclear weapons for peaceful purpose, or unless we cooperate, the nuclear weapons will spread unchecked.

4. Will extremists be able to stir conflict and division or will we unite on behalf of our shared security? (p.7)

The speech act of request in this utterance was produced indirectly through the use of interrogative sentence “Will” and used the dangerous word “extremists” in the beginning helps to understand the core of saying. The illocutionary force here states if we don't unite for security favor, the extremists will be able to stir conflict and division, therefore, I request you to unite.

5. Will nations and peoples define themselves solely by their differences, or can we find common ground necessary to meet our common challenges, and to respect the dignity of every human being?

The second part of the text is an interrogative sentence raised by the modal verb ‘Can’, according to the context the modal verb “Can” here do as speech act of request it is said indirectly to attract the hearer attention to the aim of the request, the illocutionary force of this request may said as [let us find common ground necessary to meet our common challenges...].

6. We can cooperate to advance our mutual interests in a lasting economic recovery. (p.12)

This declarative sentence indicates an indirect speech act of request, the illocutionary force of this sentence hold meaning that the speaker has the ability to cooperate; the modal verb here “Can” states the ability of Obama to cooperate and at the same time this modal verb holds invisible meaning to ask the hearer to be the partner of cooperation.

7. Going forward, we can deepen this cooperation. We can promote financial stability through greater transparency and regulatory reform. We can pursue trade that is free and fair, and seek to conclude an ambitious and balanced Doha Round Agreement (p.13)

Once again, Obama uses his ability by repeating modal verb “Can” three times in three declarative sentences to express desired the United State to cooperate with China, from the above context of the political speech, Obama here prompt his willing to cooperate by order his request to China this request said indirectly, from the illocutionary force perspective the three modal verbs in this text do as if the speaker wants to say I request you to cooperate or let us cooperate to promote our cooperation.

8. We can update international institutions so that growing economies like China play a greater role that matches their greater responsibility.

Furthermore, the speaker here uses the modal verb ‘Can’, which lies in the declarative sentences, as a tool to request the hearer to cooperate. The speaker know that China play a greater role of growing economies, therefore, the speaker said this request indirectly ,the illocutionary

force do as if he said [because you(China)play a greater role in the economic world, I request you to update international institutions].

9. And as Americans save more and Chinese are able to spend more, we can put growth on a more sustainable foundation.. Because just as, china has benefited from substantial investment and profitable exports china can also be enormous market for American goods. (p.13)

From the pragmatic point of view, these declarative sentences indicates indirect speech act of request realized by the modal verb “Can”, the speaker used effective words “Chinese spend more, American save more” to stimulate the addressee to the such economic differences between two nations as a tool to promote the cooperation request. The sentences can be reformulated as [because Americans save more and Chinese are able to spend more, I request you to put growth on a more sustainable foundation, and because China has benefited from substantial investment and profitable exports, therefore China can also be enormous market for Americans goods].

10. We can cooperate to advance our mutual interest in a clean, secure, and prosperous energy future. The United States and china are the two largest consumes of energy in the world. We are also the two largest emitters of greenhouse gases in the world. (p.14)

This utterance indicates an indirect speech act of request through the use of the declarative sentence via the modal verb “Can” as the ability modal. The illocutionary force holds meaning that China and United states share the same problem of energy. The speaker wants the hearer to be attention to the problem of energy which cannot solve without cooperation. The text can be realized as follows [Because the Unite State and China are the two largest consumes of energy in the world. and because we are the two largest emitters of greenhouse gases in the world, I request you to cooperate to advance our mutual interest in a clean, secure, and prosperous energy future].

11. We can cooperate to expand joint efforts at research and development to promote the clean and efficient use of energy, and we can work together to forge a global response at the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen and beyond. (P 15)

The high tone of cooperation repeated many times in this speech which reveals desire and power of United State to built good relations with China, once again the two declarative sentences behold indirect speech act of request represented by using the modal verb “Can” lied in declarative sentence, these two utterances can be interpreted as [Let us cooperate and work together to expand joint at efforts at research and development to promote the clean and efficient use of energy, and to for forge a global response at the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen and beyond].

12. We can cooperate to advance our mutual interests in stopping the spread of nuclear weapons. Make no mistake. The more nations acquire these weapons, the more likely it is that they will be used. (p.16)

The illocutionary force of this text represents the indirect speech of request recognized through the declarative sentence beginning with the modal verb ‘Can” to refer to the ability of the United states to cooperate, the intended meaning of the speaker can be represented as [To prevent the nations from using the nuclear weapons, I request you to cooperate to advance our mutual interests....].

13. This is why we must continue our collaboration to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and make it clear to North Korea that the path to security and respect can be traveled if they meet their obligations. (p.16)

The interrogative sentence shows an indirect speech act of request, the speaker used the modal verb “*must*” to promote asking cooperation, ask himself and then reply as if he requests from the hearer to continue cooperation. The utterance can be reformulated into [The way to achieve denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, and make it clear to North Korea that the path to security and respect can be traveled if they meet their obligations, is to continue our collaboration].

14. And that is why we must to be united in preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, and urging the Islamic republic to live up to its international obligations. (p.16)

Once again, Obama wandering *why* and then gives the reason. From a pragmatic point of view, the utterance constitutes an indirect speech act of request. The interrogative sentence implies the modal verb “*Must*”, the speaker asked himself question as if he wants to convey message to the hearer to importance the cooperation. This text can be reconstructed as [let us unite to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon and urging the Islamic Republic to live up to its international obligations].

15. We can cooperate to advance our mutual interests in confronting transnational threats. (P.18)

This utterance includes an indirect speech act of request through implying the modal verb “*Can*” which is used in the declarative sentence to show the ability to cooperate. The speaker wants the hearer to be attention to the transnational threats, therefore he requests from China to cooperate in confronting such threats.

16. Through increased ties between our militaries, we can diminish the causes for dispute while providing a framework for cooperation. (p.19)

The declarative sentence above state indirect speech act of request, the president Obama wants China to increase ties with the United States. The modal verb “*Can*” herein play an essential role to be acting the sentence into the request, the verb “*Can*” gives the hearer power to cooperate. This sentence can be restated as [let us diminish the causes for dispute while providing a framework for cooperation under increased...].

17. Through continued intelligence – sharing, we can disrupt terrorist plots and dismantle terrorist networks. (p.19)

From a pragmatic perspective, this sentence implies the indirect speech act of request realized in the declarative sentence which implies the modal verb “*Can*” to create the request. Obama shows the spirit of cooperation that is the intelligence cooperation in the face of terrorism. This sentence can be reformulated as [I request you to continued intelligence to disrupt terrorist plots and dismantle terrorist networks].

Table No. (1) The frequency of modal verbs in the text of discourse

No. Of text	The modal verb	Kind of sentence	Function	Direct	Indirect
1	Will	Interrogative	Request	Interrogative	Request
2	Will	Interrogative	Request	Interrogative	Request
3	Will	Interrogative	Request	Interrogative	Request
4	Will	Interrogative	Request	Interrogative	Request
5	Can	Interrogative	Request	Interrogative	Request

6.	Can	Declarative	Request	Declarative	Request
7	Can Can Can	Declarative Declarative Declarative	Request Request Request	Declarative Declarative Declarative	Request Request Request
8	Can	Declarative	Request	Declarative	Request
9.	Can	Declarative	Request	Declarative	Request
10.	Can	Declarative	Request	Declarative	Request
11	Can Can	Declarative Declarative	Request Request	Declarative Declarative	Request Request
12	Can	Declarative	Request	Declarative	Request
13	Must	Interrogative	Request	Interrogative	Request
14	Must	Interrogative	Request	Interrogative	Request
15	Can	Declarative	Request	Declarative	Request
16	Can	Declarative	Request	Declarative	Request
17	Can	Declarative	Request	Declarative	Request

The above table illustrates the frequency of modal verbs as they occurred in the political speech the subject of analysis. The study shows that the modal verb “*Can*” frequented more than two other, it registered 14 times and most of them fall in the declarative sentences. The second modal verb is “*Will*” frequented 4 times and they fall in interrogative sentences, and the last modal verb is “*Must*” which frequented two times and falls in declarative sentences.

This paper attempted to explore the speech acts of request of political speech which has been delivered by president Obama .The study was adopted the speech act theory tackled by Searle. The modal verbs as a general used as auxiliary verbs can be occurring in declarative, imperative sentences and also can be used to create interrogative sentences. Three modal verbs namely “*can*”, “*Will*” and “*Must*” are used by the speaker in the speech chosen, they frequented many times and the study showed that the speaker in his speech focus on them as a tool to interact with his interlocutors. He uses them into two kinds of sentences, the declarative and interrogative, the study showed that the illocutionary force plays a major role in the speech, the function of the request is the only act which has been dominated the context of the considered speech acts, the aim of two different sentences is contrary to the internal meaning, therefore, the illocutionary forces appeared as a request said in indirect way .Due to the style of the political speech and for the sake of international significance, this indirect speech act which tackled by the speaker has been said in a politeness which always emerge with illocutionary speech acts.

It is important to say herein that the international relations and the events of economical crisis which fall in that time play a major role to understand the present speech especially when the China regarded as an economic and political force in the world ,therefore, these events help as a context to reach to the illocutionary acts of speech.

The significance of political speech in present world lies in keeping the good relations among countries, nations, and also it saves external and internal policies. Political discourse is a tool by politicians’ hands, through political speech the politicians can give warring, advice, or declare to do some things, according to international interest requirements, the politicians are

trying to request from his counterpart to share with them to do something which brings benefits to both nations.

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