

## Grammatical Analysis of Martin Luther's Speech (I have a dream): The Case of the Modal Auxiliaries Will, Shall, Must and Can

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**Abstract:** This present paper is devoted to the analysis of modal auxiliaries in Martin Luther King's speech (I have a dream). This speech was delivered at the march on Washington for jobs and freedom. In this speech King has used modality through modal auxiliaries and there is a wide range of meanings that these words are used to express. The phrase "modal auxiliary" shows that there are two linguistic forms which are under question: the syntactic notion of "auxiliary" and the semantic notion of "modality". Thus, not all modal auxiliaries have been analyzed in this present study; but some of them such as Will, Shall, Must and Can in their predicative and inter-subjective relationships.

**Keywords:** Analysis, auxiliary, grammar, King, modality, predicate, relation, speech, subject.

### INTRODUCTION

Martin Luther King was an American Pastor and scholar. On August 28, 1963, at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, he delivered his speech "I Have a Dream". Many regard it as the greatest speech of the twentieth century and, more than that, one of the greatest speeches in history. Despite he was one of several featured speakers that day his speech became synonymous with the aims of the march and the entire civil rights movement. Referring to the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the Bible, when delivering his address, he spoke with conviction.

This speech interested a lot of writers and scholars so much so that some of them devoted their writings on it mainly in its semantic, literary, sociolinguistic...aspects. Even though, it raises a lot of analyses in several points. Among these points, there is grammar which is the branch of linguistics that deals with the rules which govern the language. Grammar is the basis of any language and no one can make a good speech without focusing on it. It is what King must have understood when he delivered his speech in which there are a lot of grammar points some of which the modal auxiliaries. These latter are part of the modality which is a valid cross-language grammatical category that can be the subject of a typological study. It is a category that is closely associated with tense and aspect in that all three categories are categories of the clause and are generally, but not always, marked within the verbal complex [1].

These English operators referred to as modal auxiliaries present some of the most difficult aspects of the language. From one point of view, their syntax and morphology are relatively simple but their semantics is very complex indeed. All the English modals have more

than one meaning and there is a wide range of meaning that these words are used to express. The phrase "modal auxiliary" shows that there are two linguistic forms which are under question: the syntactic notion of "auxiliary" and the semantic notion of "modality". So, the theoretical framework on which this analysis will be based is the theory of the enunciative operators elaborated by Antoine Culiolie.

Thus, these modal auxiliaries are very important in grammar even if their understanding causes many problems to students or learners of the English language. That being so, this article is devoted to the analysis of these operators in Martin Luther King's speech (I have a dream) in order to shed light on their misunderstanding. Furthermore, we would like to show, through this article, how convicted King was when he used these auxiliaries. In addition, the importance of modal auxiliaries in the speech will be tackled. Thus, this analysis will be focused on their uses and meanings in the predicative and intersubjective relationships.

### Characteristics of Modal Auxiliaries

The analysis of modal auxiliaries, of their roles in the sentence and of their semantics is one of the most important points in English grammar. Studying these operators, as Adamczewski [2] said, is cropping up the problem of English wording in terms of predicative relationship since these grammar instruments are some quantifiers of probability. In addition, studying their functioning is dealing with the relationship between the speaker and the grammatical subject. The speaker shows an attitude, a stand towards a predicative relation. Indeed, he gives his/her point of view on the conditions and/or the possibilities of the realization of the relationship between the grammatical subject and the predicate. This relationship can be regarded as possible, impossible, necessary, desirable, inevitable, logical, acceptable etc [3]. Furthermore, modal auxiliaries constitute the first tools of the modality operation through which the speaker is totally involved.

They are known by their characteristics and particularities in English language. They do not take "S" at the third singular person for there is no direct relationship between modals and the grammatical subject. In other words, they are some properties of the speaker and do depend on him/her. It is this latter who gives his/her point of view or establishes the relationship between the grammatical subject and the predicate.

Modal auxiliaries are not preceded or followed by "TO" because they are in their finite forms. Even though, "TO" plays the role of predication handover in the impersonal proposition as modals do. It is not most of the time a preposition nor a marker of the infinitive, as it is often said. It is an operator which intervenes in a fundamental grammatical operation, meaning the building of the predicative relation. "TO" is also said to set the relationship between the grammatical subject and the predicate; it means that it determines the grammatical functions between the verb notion and the noun. So they have the same role in the proposition. In other words, they are tools (operators) of the same nature, the same status; hence they cannot be used side by side [2].

Moreover, modal auxiliaries are not used with "ING" form. This latter can be used to show the anaphoric nature of the segment it overcomes. In other words, it indicates the acquired character of the speaker for it is already found or mentally built or expressed or logically predictable. It can also be used as an operator of nominalization through which a verb or a verb phrase or a sentence changes its status in order to become a noun or a noun phrase. Thus, with "ING" form, the speaker marks his/her work of observation, estimation, thought, assessment etc. He/she gives his/her point of view about the relationship between the grammatical

subject and the predicate. With modal auxiliaries, the speaker also gives his/her judgment or opinion about the realization of the predicate by the grammatical subject. Focusing on this analysis, it can be said that modals and "ING" form have the same status towards the speaker; that is why they cannot go together.

Modal auxiliaries do not have past participle and are not used with "DO" in negative and interrogative forms either. "DO" is an operator which is used to form interrogative, negative and emphatic sentences in English language. The fact that this language presents this marker in these operations is very important. It shows that this operator is a sign which bears the predication and more exactly the predication link. It indicates that the speaker talks about "validation". So, his/her point of view is fundamentally grammatical. The action through which it refers is the settlement or the validation of the predicative relationship. Furthermore, "DO" is an auxiliary. However, it cannot be used with modal auxiliaries in so far as, in English language, it is impossible to use two auxiliaries side by side since they have the same nature.

### WILL

WILL is a modal auxiliary which derives from *willan* that comes *wille* in Old English. It functioned as a straightforward catenative and control verb in some of its uses during that period, and now it has become a fully grammaticalized auxiliary. However, there are good reasons for considering the grammaticalization of *willan* to be somewhat atypical with regard to that of the other modal auxiliaries. It is a natural consequence of the notion of volition that it generally has reference to what is to happen in the future; hence the auxiliary Will comes to be used extensively to express first a volition- colored future and finally a future time without such coloring [4].

However, in this speech under study, Martin Luther has used this modal auxiliary many a time. But what did he want to express through this modal? Let's consider the following sentence:

*I am happy to join with you today in what Will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.*

In this sentence, King is predicting the realization of the action through history. He testifies that what is in question is in a good way to happen. The context, the situation or the good characteristics of the grammatical subject show in all likelihood that what he means is going to take place. He is sure or even determined that there will be the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of their nation. This can even be proved by the use of the phrase *happy to join with you*. Thus, it is as if he were motivated by the

compatibility which exists between what happens today and what will go down history (as he says).

In this following sentence, the author has also expressed his conviction about the compatibility between the grammatical subject and the predicate through this operator when he says: *And there Will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt Will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.* In addition, we can say that King, basing on the context or known events, is making a deduction of the situation. Some people would even say that Will in this kind of context is used to express probability.

Indeed the speaker, basing on his knowledge of events and analogous situations, can predict that it is a targeted characteristic. This is also demonstrated by this sentence: "... go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and Will be changed". For him, the Negro should be granted his citizenship rights if American people need rest and tranquility in their country because they (Negro people) are going to keep on revolting. In this sentence, Will (*will continue...*) conveys the operation that the speaker has just made. It assigns the predicate *continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges* to the grammatical subject *the whirlwinds of revolt* in a very precise situational context. It also indicates that a prediction must be expected because the subject possesses an inherent property that inevitably takes off the prediction and the speaker gives his word for the concordance.

However, King has not limited himself to the use of Will to make a deduction as we have seen it above. In some sentences such as *I have a dream that one day this nation Will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."* Will is used to express the future. It is one of the most common uses of this operator; which has even pushed some people to regard it as an auxiliary expressing the future and not as a modal auxiliary even if many grammarians have not agreed with this. In this statement, Will is taken to show that there is a relation that links the subject *this nation* and the predicate *rise up and live out...* In fact, at the moment of the speech, the nation does not rise up and live out of the true meaning of its creed. So, using this operator indicates that the author was predicting something which could happen in the future.

Nevertheless, Luther has used this auxiliary not only in affirmative sentences but also in interrogative and negative sentences. In this case, what does this operator express? In other words, what does

King want to show or express? Let's take into account the following sentence:

*"When Will you be satisfied?"*

The interrogative form, combined with the value of prediction, gives an unobvious to the request of the wording. The speaker is asking a question whose answer seems to be known given that in the following sentence he says: *We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality.* So, King seems not to be interested in the answer but in the situation they were enduring and in the time it would take an end. This time can be proved by the use of the interrogative adverb "when". This latter serves to ask some real questions directed towards a potential answer. The speaker asks for some information regarding a time that he/she does not know. So, *when* possesses a double function due to its two components WH and EN. In relatives and conjunctives, WH shows a type of relation between two segments. But in interrogatives, the semantic deficit due to WH is made up in answers and EN is the marker of a fundamental link in the temporality.

Apart from this interrogative form, this modal auxiliary has also been used in negative sentences in King's speech. The following sentences illustrate it.

*This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent Will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality.*

*No, no, we are not satisfied, and we Will not be satisfied until "justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."*

In these sentences, the author is announcing a lack of compatibility between the grammatical subject and the predicate through a condition. Thus, he is setting out a condition for the realization of the predicate by the subject. In other words, for him, there should be an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality if American people want the sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent to pass. This is well illustrated by the use of the conjunction "until" in both sentences. "Until" is a conjunction or preposition (depending on the context) which extends a state of fact, meaning the validation of the prediction, till a point of reference.

Furthermore, this lack of compatibility can be explained by the use of "not" between the auxiliary Will and the verbs (pass and be). "Not" is an operator which invalidates the relation at the moment of speaking. King, through this operator in these sentences, shows that the relation, meaning the compatibility, is invalid when he is making the speech.

And not only is this relation invalid, but it is also based on a condition. So, in negative form, Will and “not” express an emphasis in the non- realization of the action. The emphasis in this speech is the volition of the speaker but it is only the consequence of the emphasis on the realization of the event. This consequence can have as a departure point a more or less explicit condition mentioned in the context.

All in all, Will is a modal auxiliary which is used to express a predicative relation. It shows the compatibility between the grammatical subject and the predicate. It also refers to the prediction, which pushes some thinkers or people to regard it as an auxiliary of the future. This operator can also be expressed in condition sentences. Moreover, it can be in interrogative and negative sentences. In interrogatives (in the speech), it is used with *when*, composed of two elements: WH that is a semantic deficit made up in answers and EN which is the marker of a fundamental link in temporality. In negative form, it is used with “not” which invalidates the relationship between the auxiliary and the verb at the moment of speaking. However, this auxiliary has been used in the speech many a time, but it is not the only one. There are the other modal auxiliaries one of which is Shall.

#### SHALL

Shall is an operator which comes from *sceal* in Old English and meant “to be obliged to”. It is a “double-faced” word and serves as a modal verb expressing a number of modal meanings, and at the same time it is a tense marking auxiliary. Its meanings always arouse discussions among researchers. It is an expression of a certain semantic relation between the subject and the predicate and not always an auxiliary of the future. The future or more precisely the prediction is an effect of meaning regarding the situational and contextual conditions [2]. Lyons [5] is in full agreement with this statement for, according to him, futurity is never a purely temporal concept; it necessarily includes an element of prediction or some related notion. What is conventionally used as a future tense... is rarely, if ever, used solely for making statements or predictions, or posing or asking factual questions, about the future. It is also used in a wider or narrower range of non-active utterances, involving supposition, inference, wish, intention and desire.

Shall indicates the lack of compatibility, concordance pre-established between the subject and the predicate. It is an operator that permits to link some entities which did not intend to go together. So, through its use, the speaker personally guarantees the prediction because of this lack of natural compatibility between the grammatical subject and the predicate.

In addition, with Shall there is a relationship between the speaker and the whole predicative relation; he/she predicts that the event will take place in the future. There is also a relationship between the subject and the predicate and this relationship always corresponds to the speaker’s commitment or constraint value. He/she says that the grammatical subject is not free or self-sufficient. Thus, in the speech under study, this operator has been used by the author. Let’s deal with these following sentences:

*And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we Shall always march ahead.*

This sentence is very interesting in so far as it has as grammatical subject “we”. This personal pronoun is semantically composed of “I” and “you” or “I” and the “other (s)”. “I” (the first singular personal pronoun) is very outstanding for it constitutes the coalescence of the speaker and the grammatical subject. In other words, it is both the speaker and the grammatical subject. In this case, it shows the commitment or the determination of the speaker. King is so committed that he wants himself and the others to march ahead. But this conviction goes beyond a commitment; it can be regarded as an obligation. That is why Triebel [6] says that Shall is used both to express obligation and imply futurity thus creating ambiguity. Even though, the context indicates that the relation *we* and *always march ahead* is expected and its realization is not problematic. This is strengthened by the use of the adverb “always” between the auxiliary and the verb. This adverb points out a repetitive or habitual action.

Furthermore, King is not limited to the use of this operator with the first personal pronoun as the subject. He has also taken the third singular person as a subject. But in this case, what does he want to express? Let’s see the sentences below:

*I have a dream that one day every valley Shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain Shall be made low.*

In this sentence, one can say that Shall expresses a prediction. King says that he has a dream; which means that the action has not taken place at the moment of speaking. He is just predicting his vision. Nevertheless, it can also be said that it is not a matter of predicting what will happen, but it is a matter of willing indeed to impose the way every valley and every hill and mountain will or should be exalted and made low.

Just after this, the author keeps on, stating that; *“and the glory of the Lord Shall be revealed and all flesh Shall see it together”*. But here, the use of the modal is different from what is above; it expresses a promise. King is promising that once his dream comes true, the glory of the Lord will be revealed and

everybody will see it together. When Shall is used with the second or third person, the speaker guarantees that the relation (subject/predicate) will take place in some moment in the future. He/she shows his/her determination towards the realization of this relation. The consequences of this functioning are the expression of a promise, a threat or an order... Thus, this promise can be combined with the unexpected. Those to whom King is talking do not expect this day (the day he is talking in the speech) to come.

When all is said and done, we can say that Shall is a modal auxiliary which is used to express predicative and inter-subjective relationships. And these relationships between the subject and the predicate and between the speaker and the grammatical subject can always correspond to the speaker's commitment or constraint value. In other words, with the use of this operator, the speaker can express his/her commitment, determination, through the prediction, the promise, the obligation, the order etc. The expression of this prediction has pushed some thinkers to regard this operator as a future auxiliary and others to deny this futurity for according to them futurity is never a purely temporal concept; it necessarily includes an element of prediction or some related notion. Even so, we have pointed out that this modal has been in this speech to express obligation; but this latter is mainly used with Must which constitutes the mainspring of the following analysis.

### MUST

Must is a modal auxiliary that comes from *moste* which was the past of *motan* in Old English. *Motan* has undergone some significant semantic changes. In earlier Old English, especially, it was used to express a meaning much closer to that of modern May than to that of modern Must. The operator Must explicitly expresses an inter-subjective relationship in which the speaker displays his/her authority. He/she asserts him/herself either to show that (s)he is at the origin of the pressure or to show the obligation (s)he is reporting. With this modal, the speaker targets the grammatical subject and wants to impose the content of the verb phrase on it. But unlike Shall, Must does not indicate that the speaker is not going to do his best to have things done. According to some contexts, it means that the speaker makes things obligatory.

On this other hand, the volition of the speaker occupies a more or less big place in the obligation expressed by Must. It can be the main source of the obligation or a wish or a point of view. It can also be rules or laws that (s)he reports. However, this modal auxiliary is not limited only to the expression of obligation. It can express a probability, a certainty, a necessity etc. Thus, in this speech what does it express? Let's deal with the following sentences:

*But there is something that I Must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice*

This statement is very important in so far the speaker is the grammatical subject. King is expressing a necessity. It is necessary for him, to tell his people about something, which is nothing but a speech. But this Must can express something different from necessity. It can go beyond this. The author is expressing an obligation that he imposes on himself. For him, he is obliged to talk to his people seeing the conditions in which they are living. The context even specifies it, if we focus on the preceding sentence in which he talks about the relationship between *the whirlwinds of revolt* and *the bright day of justice*. However, the obligation expressed by this operator is also found in the following sentences.

*We Must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline*

*Again and again, we Must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.*

In this sentence, as it has been said above, the use of this modal is very interesting since the subject is a coalescence of the speaker and the grammatical subject. King obliges people among whom himself to conduct their struggle. And this obligation is very important for him, given that he, moreover, starts the second sentence by insisting on the phrase *again and again, we must...* He finds it compulsory to use their soul force to meet the physical force of white people, for they can't use their physical force considering that they are in a minority.

*In the process of gaining our rightful place, we Must not be guilty of wrongful deeds*

*We Must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence*

The analysis of Must in these two sentences becomes intricate due to two things: the grammatical subject "we" and the negative operator "not". When Must is combined with "not", the opposition of the subject (most of the time the speaker) to the realization of the predicate becomes obvious. The speaker prohibits the grammatical subject to do the predicate. Here, the speaker is part of the grammatical subject. So, he prohibits himself and the others to be guilty of wrongful deeds (sentence1) and to allow their creative protest... (sentence2). In other words, he refuses the fact of being guilty. But this prohibition or refusal reminds their obligation about conducting their struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline and rising to meet physical force with soul force. Thus if the obligation

and the prohibition are found in the same context, it becomes logic to show the determination of the speaker. To prohibit somebody to do something is nothing but to oblige them to do the contrary. Obligation and prohibition stick, indeed, together. Obligation limits the possible to one that it supports and develops; it supposes the prohibition of the others which are conceivable and vice versa. Must + not nullifies the permission expressed by May; and this nullification runs into a prohibition.

However, the obligation expressed by King in this following sentence is combined with a condition: *And if America is to be a great nation, this Must become true.* Here the author sets down a condition. But what does he mean when he says this? Isn't America a great nation? Focusing on what he says above, the answer is a negative one. For him a great nation is nothing but a nation in which people are able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together... So, given that this hasn't taken place when he utters the speech, he cannot regard America as a great nation; hence he lays this condition. Thus, the realization of this condition depends on the obligation expressed by the speaker on the grammatical subject. This modal can also express a necessity; meaning it is necessary that there be no discrimination, no racism between black and white if America wants to be a great nation.

Must is an operator used to express an inter-subjective relationship. This relationship can be an obligation that the speaker imposes on the grammatical subject or on himself if he is (part of) the grammatical subject. Through this relationship, the speaker can also prohibit the co-speaker to do something. And there is a link between obligation and prohibition in so far as obliging somebody to do something is prohibiting them to do the contrary. However, the speaker can also show the necessity that the grammatical subject has to carry out the predicate. At last but not least, the author has dealt with the operator Can in his speech. But what does he want to express?

## CAN

Can is a modal auxiliary which comes from *cunnan* in Old English. *Cunnan* is the last of all the modals to be fully grammaticalized, and conserves for a long period many of its lexical verb properties. The most overtly modal uses of *cunnan* in Old English tend to concern dynamic modality, knowledge or ability of the subject to do something. Palmer [7] states that Can is used both for epistemic modality (but only when negated) and for deontic modality. It can thus be seen as expressing a third type of modality, one that is internal to the subject of the sentence. Thus, Can is used to refer to physical and mental powers, to express ability, capacity, permission and to include the circumstances

that might affect the person involved. However, King has used this modal in his speech.

*Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation Can and will be changed. (p3)*

Can, in this sentence refers to a logical possibility relative to a future event. This possibility consists in attributing to the event a degree of probability. This value is not, according to some thinkers, a pure one. It is always derived from the physical possibility value. So, the author shows the possibility of the content of the predicative relationship. He notices the possibility between the grammatical subject (*this situation*) and the predicate (*be changed*). But this possibility is objective in so far as the speaker has focused on the context, on the reality of events to refer to it. This is demonstrated by the preceding phrase *knowing that somehow*, which shows that he has already got an idea about it. Thus, this possibility is combined with the prediction expressed by Will. Nevertheless, King does not limit himself to the use of this operator to express possibility; he has used it to refer to a lot of things some of which are found in the following sentences.

*We Cannot walk alone*

*We Cannot turn back*

Here the modal is combined with the negative operator "not". The author has used it to refer to the impossibility. He wants to notice that it is impossible for the grammatical subject *we* (meaning himself and the others) to realize the predicates *walk alone and turn back*. And as Palmer says, the most important relationship between modality and negation is the one that involves possibility and necessity. In these sentences, the speaker aptitude is denied either for some independent reasons or for some reasons which depend on him. The fact of not being able to turn back depends on the context or on what is said in the previous sentences (*And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead*). King does not calculate the chances of the event token. He invalidates the realization of the predicate by the grammatical subject. This latter is not in a position to accomplish the predicate. Either it is impossible for the subject to do it or they are unable to realize it. The impossibility of the subject to do the predicate is also pointed out in the sentences below in which King expresses an impossibility based on the condition.

*We Can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality.*

*We Can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities*

*We Can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their self-hood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating: "For Whites Only".*

In these statements, the impossibility is expressed at this time, by the use of the adverb "never". And all of them share the same main clause. (*we can never be satisfied*). The subordinate clauses are some conditional ones. These latter show whether the speaker or the writer thinks that either the stated condition is possible at present, or hypothetical. This adverb shows the insistence of the speaker on the fact of not being ever satisfied. But this lack of satisfaction is based on a condition that is possible to be realized. It just depends on the realization of the predicate by the grammatical subject of the conditional clauses. King and his fellow countrymen will be satisfied if there are justice, equity, freedom... In the second sentence of these examples, there is an interdependence of possibility. That is, the possibility of their being *satisfied* depends on the possibility of their *bodies* to lodge in the hotels of the highways...

The operator Can is a modal auxiliary that King has also used in his speech to express the possibility of the realization of the predicative relationship, basing on the context. Furthermore, he has used this auxiliary combined with a negative operator (either with "not" or with "never") to express the impossibility or inability of the grammatical subject to do the predicate. This impossibility is based on a condition. For him the main clause will be possible if the grammatical subject of the conditional one manages to realize the predicate. And most of the time, the speaker is part of the grammatical subject. For, he has mainly used "we" which includes "I" and the "other (s)" as a subject.

## CONCLUSION

Martin Luther King's speech (I have a dream) is a speech which is grammatically important for he has used both modality and tenses. These two notions are syntactically, morphologically, and semantically different in so far as the former does not refer directly to any characteristic of the event, but simply to the status of the proposition. So, this present analysis of the speech has been focused on modality and more specifically on modal auxiliaries some of which Will, Shall, Must and Can. These operators have been analyzed one by one in their semantic aspects. And this analysis has shown the following results:

Will is a modal auxiliary which is used in the speech to express a predicative relation. King has used

to show the compatibility between the grammatical subject and the predicate. It has also been used to refer to the prediction and the condition. Moreover, the author has employed it in interrogative and negative sentences. In interrogatives, it is used with "when" composed of two elements: WH that is a semantic deficit made up in answers and EN which is the marker of a fundamental link in the temporality. In negative form, it is used with "not" which invalidates the relationship between the auxiliary and the verb at the moment of speaking. However, this auxiliary has been used in the speech many a time, but it is not the only one. There are the other modal auxiliaries one of which is Shall.

Shall is a modal auxiliary which is used to express predicative and inter-subjective relationships. And these relationships between the subject and the predicate and between the speaker and the grammatical subject can always correspond to King's commitment or constraint value. In other words, with the use of this operator, he has expressed his commitment, determination, through the prediction, obligation... Even so, we have pointed out that this modal has been in this speech to express obligation, which is mainly used with Must.

Must is an operator also used to express an inter-subjective relationship. In this speech this relationship is an obligation that the author imposes on the grammatical subject; on himself given that he is (part of) the grammatical subject. Through this relationship, he has also prohibited his fellow countrymen not to be guilty of wrongful deeds. And there is a link between obligation and prohibition in so far as obliging somebody to do something is prohibiting them to do the contrary. In addition, he has also shown the necessity that they have to carry out their volition.

Finally King has used in his speech the operator Can to express the possibility of the realization of the predicative relationship, basing on the context. He has also used this auxiliary combined with a negative operator (either with "not" or with "never") to express their impossibility or inability to be ever satisfied. This impossibility is based on a condition. For him, their being satisfied will be possible if there are justice, freedom and equity between white and black people in America. However, the importance of grammar in this speech is not only limited to modality, there are some other points some of which the articles and the quantifiers.

CORPUS

"I HAVE A DREAM ..."

(Copyright 1963, MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.)

Speech by the Rev. MARTIN LUTHER KING At the

"March on Washington"

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the "unalienable Rights" of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds."

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift

our nation from the quick sands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. And there will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice: In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom.

We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead.

We cannot turn back.

There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their self-hood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating: "For Whites Only." We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until



"justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. And some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive. Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed.

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends.

And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a *dream* today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition" and "nullification" one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a *dream* today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."

This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with.

With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

And this will be the day -- this will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning:

*My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrim's pride, From every mountainside, let freedom ring!*

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

And so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire.

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado.

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California.

But not only that:

Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi.

From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, and when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when *all* of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual:

*Free at last! Free at last!*

*Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!*

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