

Modality as a Strategy of Solidarity in a Report Entitled “*Why the Pope Is Visiting One of the World’s Oldest Christian Communities*”: A Positive Discourse Analysis.

Huda Muhsin Jebur Al-Obaidy

Prof. Salih Mahdi Adai Al-Mammory (Ph.D.)

Solomonshoopoe@gmail.com

hum.salih.mahdi@uobabylon.edu.iq

University of Babylon\ College of Education for Human Sciences\

English Department Iraq, Babylon

Abstract

Positive discourse analysis attempts to find out one of the syntactic strategies positively used by New York Times in a report entitled “*Why the Pope Is Visiting One of the World’s Oldest Christian Communities*”, through which the ideology of solidarity is used to reflect unity and strengthen bonds among people, the strategy is Modality. PDA is a method that concentrations on how language is utilized to create positive social identities and make social change. It aims to highlight and analyze discourses that encourage solidarity. The present study is intended to find out the following questions: What the modal verbs used in the present data that reflect solidarity and which of them is the most frequently used? The study aims at finding out the modal verbs that are used positively and the most frequent one in the chosen report. It is hypothesized that *will*, *must* and *may* are used positively. *Will* is the most frequent one to reflect the willingness. The methodology of the present study is based on Fairclough (1989) and Quirk et al. (1989). It is concluded that *will*, *would* and *could* are used in the chosen data. The modal verb “*will*” is widely used intentionally to show future intentions and willingness.

Key words: PDA, solidarity, Pope Francis, Modality,

المستخلص:

تحاول دراسة تحليل الخطاب الإيجابي معرفة إحدى الاستراتيجيات النحوية التي استخدمتها صحيفة نيويورك تايمز بشكل إيجابي في تقرير بعنوان "لماذا يزور البابا إحدى أقدم المجتمعات المسيحية في العالم"، والتي من خلالها يتم استخدام أيديولوجية التضامن لتعكس الوحدة وتقوية الروابط بين الناس، الإستراتيجية هي الأفعال الناقصة. يعرف تحليل الخطاب الإيجابي على أنه طريقة تركز على كيفية استخدام اللغة لخلق علاقات اجتماعية إيجابية وإحداث تغيير اجتماعي. وتهدف إلى تسليط الضوء على الخطابات التي تشجع على التضامن وتحليلها. تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى معرفة الأسئلة التالية: ما هي الأفعال الناقصة المستخدمة في العينة الحالية التي تعكس التضامن وأي منها الأكثر استخدامًا؟ تهدف الدراسة إلى معرفة الأفعال الناقصة المستخدمة بشكل إيجابي والأكثر شيوعًا في التقرير المختار. من المفترض أن will و must و may تستخدم بشكل إيجابي. will هي الأكثر شيوعًا لتعكس التضامن. تتضمن منهجية الدراسة الحالية (١) مسحًا نظريًا لتحليل الخطاب الإيجابي، (٢) تحليل البيانات المختارة نوعيًا وكميًا. نستنتج أن will و would و could استخدمت في العينة المختارة. يُستخدم الفعل المساعد "will" على نطاق واسع عمدًا لظهور الرغبة والنوايا المستقبلية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تحليل الخطاب الإيجابي، التضامن، البابا فرنسيس، الأفعال الناقصة

1. Introduction

The first ever historic papal visit to Iraq in March 2021 is an important event not only for the Christian community but the government as well. The pope's visit carries within it a lot of messages and moral lessons that could affect the others positively. Trying to reflect one of these messages the present study deals with one of the reports which is published in New York Times carries within it the theme of solidarity throughout modal verbs.

Modality refers to the way by which speakers express their attitudes, judgments, and degrees of certainty or obligation. It becomes a powerful tool to convey messages of hope, resilience, and interfaith cooperation. The

analysis emphasizes how modal verbs are employed to fluent positive ideologies.

This paper investigates solidarity which is presented in media concerning the papal visit to Iraq a positive discourse analysis, looking at modality as a strategy by which the main concept is manifested. Trying to find out the modal verbs that are used in the report and the one which is widely used is considered as the aim of the present study.

CDA and PDA

Fairclough and Wodak (1997) discuss that discourse is socially constitutive and shaped, with ideological effects and functions that are often invisible and intentionally covert to the audience. This means that the main aim of CDA is to uncover the hidden ideology.

Bloor and Bloor (2007) point out that the aims of CDA include analyzing discourse practices, inspecting ideologies' entanglement in language, and addressing injustice, prejudice, and power abuse. It also highlights the role of language in power relations, context, and individual's purpose in discourse construction.

In fact, there are increasing requests for CDA to shift from its nearly sole focus on the negative aspects to a more progressive and constructive approach (Luke A, 2002). James Martin (2004) suggested PDA as a response to this, and a few scholars have since discussed it. The positive components of discourse analysis have not received enough scholarly attention, despite the prevalence of more positive discourses.

Martin's (2004:7) PDA is proposed as an auxiliary viewpoint to CDA, whose primary goal is to improve the quality of life in the immediate environment. Stated differently, the link between PDA and CDA is complementary rather than contradictory since PDA considers the positive

component of CDA whereas CDA deals with two conflicting social groupings

Concerning the term “positive”, it refers to the steps required to promote changes for making the world a better place to live in; Moreover, he highlights CDA's focus on language and semiosis, emphasizing its role in power dynamics and dominance. He calls PDA a pivotal ideological perspective for DA, as it aims to make successful social changes in society through language use, rather than solely focusing on deconstructive aspects for power relations.

Hughes (2018) pinpoints PDA as a concerned progressive discourse that transforms the current condition into a better condition that is hopeful and healing. This new approach operates to promote hope, inspiration, motivation, strength, being cooperated with the oppressed groups in society

2. Solidarity

Martin (2004) explains that solidarity is a key constituent in positive discourse, where language is used to support individuals or groups with each other, promoting unity and collective action. By analyzing how discourse makes solidarity, PDA exposes the ways in which language can be a powerful tool for social change and cohesion. He explores the ways discourse builds social bonds and community ties and pointing out that linguistic choices, such as inclusive language and shared narratives, are essential in fostering solidarity among speakers.

As a sociological and linguistic concept, Solidarity includes several types that reflect the different ways individuals and groups bond and support one another. Here are the primary types of solidarity

1. Mechanical Solidarity: This type of solidarity is established in traditional and small-scale cultures where people do similar work, leading to common values and beliefs. The social cohesion creates from the sameness of individuals. (Durkheim, 1893).
2. Organic Solidarity: in more complex and modern societies, organic solidarity is found and arises from the interdependence of entities with varied roles and functions. The social unity is based on the requirements individuals take on each other due to the division of work(ibid).
3. Class Solidarity: This type is based on the common benefits and unity among people belonging to the same social or economic class. It often manifests in collective actions such as strikes or protests (Marx & Engels, 1848).
4. Civic Solidarity is centered on the shared identity and principles among peoples of a country or members of a public community. It often includes contribution in democratic processes and community activities (Putnam, 2000).
5. Intergroup Solidarity: it means the cooperation and support between various groups within a society, such as between different traditional or religious groups. It is essential for social harmony and integration. (Allport, 1954)
6. Emotional Solidarity: Empathy and shared emotional involvements serve as the foundation for this type of solidarity. It is often observed in communities and support groups established around shared experiences, like bereavement or illness (Collins, 2004).
7. Linguistic Solidarity: Within the field of linguistics, this kind of solidarity is established by language use, it is defined as the agreement and

cooperation support that speakers convey during communicative acts. It is frequently expressed through linguistic choices that highlight comprehension, shared identity, and social cohesion. This may entail the use terms of endearment, inclusive language, or expressions of shared experience and belonging. Building and sustaining social bonds and group identification is facilitated by solidarity in language exchanges (Holmes, 2001)

Understanding these various forms of solidarity can provide insights into how social bonds are formed and maintained, and how they can be strengthened to foster more cohesive and supportive communities.

Besides, solidarity refers to the unity, support and togetherness that can be fostered through discourse, being solidary means having an attempt to be empathy with others, trying to support them, strengthen bonds and feel belongingness throughout calling for joints and shares the responsibilities with others.

3. Modality

Modality is a linguistic tool used to direct and control people's behavior, representing the speaker's angle on assertions or proposals. This study examines the role of modal verbs in expressing bias in news reports, using the Critical Discourse Analysis framework.

Quirk et al. (1985) explain modality in grammar as the representation of permission, necessity, and possibility. Modal verbs like “can,” “may,” “must,” “shall,” and “will” alter the primary verb to convey the speaker's opinion. Modals are essential for giving fundamental statements additional meaning, allowing speakers to convey various attitudes and social functions.

Modalities not only express the speaker's opinion but also reveal power dynamics, formality level, and social role relationships, thereby influencing the speaker's perspective on the claim's veracity (Halliday & Mattiessen, 2004: 362).

Modality in critical discourse analysis refers to the writer's or speaker's viewpoint on and confidence in the claim being made. Halliday's theory (2002: 200) suggests that modality is primarily found in the interpersonal component of grammar, with decisions made in this component having no impact on decisions made in other components.

There is a bias through modal verbs by examining news reports from ideologically diverse newspapers that are positively used. Modality is expressed in two ways: central (can, could, may, might, shall, should, will, would, must) and marginal (are, need, ought to, used to), These verbs are less central than the first group but still function as modals in certain contexts, often sharing characteristics with both modal verbs and lexical verbs (Quirk et.al 1985).

Table (1) Modal verbs and their meanings.

No.	Modal verb	Meaning
1.	Can	Ability Permission Possibility
	Could	Past Ability, Polite Permission, Possibility
2.	May	Permission, Possibility, Wish or Hope
	Might	Polite Permission Possibility

3.	Shall	Future Intent, Offer or Suggestion, Obligations
	Should	Advice Obligation Expectation
4.	Will	Future , Prediction ,Willingness
	Would	Polite Request, Future in the Past, Hypothetical
5.	Must	Necessity Logical Conclusion

While the marginal ones are

No.	Modal verb	Meaning
1.	Dare	Negative and Interrogative
2.	Need	Necessity
3.	Ought to	Advice/Obligation
4.	Used to	Past Habit

4. Data and Analysis

Modality is the main strategy found to manifest solidarity. In the present paper the analysis is based on Fairclough (1989) and Quirk et.al (1989) using a qualitative and quantitative analysis.

The idea of being solidary is presented in many sentences. The following examples are taken from the data and being analyzed depending on the table mentioned above to exemplify how actions and speeches presented in New York Times about an effective figures like Pope Francis can encourage publics by authorizing the experiences, encouraging hope , solidarity, and inclusivity.

1. “He could draw large crowds at a moment”.

The possibility to attract large crowds means shared interest and unity among people to see and hear the pope, representing the gathering of a community round a common cause. This proposes Francis’ ability to fascinate and unite people, stress his influence and the hope and inspiration his presence brings.

2. “It would help the country heal after years of strife”.

The statement emphasizes the positive effect of the pope’s visit in developing national unity and healing, presenting solidarity in addressing past conflicts. The visit is showed as a means of curing and recovery, suggesting that the pope's existence can bring about positive change and understanding.

3. “Francis will also meet with Shiite leaders”.

The certainty of the meeting emphasizes a careful effort to bridge divides and encourage interfaith negotiation, fostering solidarity among different religious groups. This specifies an effort to foster interchange and understanding between the religious groups, promoting peace and cooperation.

4. “The pope said he would not be deterred.”

The pope's determination highlights his commitment to solidarity, showing determination to support and unify the people in spite of potential obstacles. This proves determination and flexibility, emphasizing the pope's commitment to his mission despite challenges.

5. “The Vatican insists that the trip will be a safe, socially distanced, and sober visit”.

Guaranteeing safety and social distancing shows a concern for the well-being of all participants, fostering solidarity by arranging collective health.

This assures that being safe and responsible are prioritized, presenting the trip as well-planned and considerate of current health concerns.

6. Francis could justify not delaying the trip.

In this sentence there is possibility of justifying the trip in spite of potential dangers shows a commitment to solidarity by addressing the needs and expectations of the people in a timely manner. This reflects the importance and urgency of the visit, suggesting that the benefits of the trip outweigh potential drawbacks.

7. “He starts in Baghdad and will meet with political officials”.

Concerning the meeting with the political officials as a certain action means a holistic approach to unity, encompassing both religious and political dimensions. This indicates the pope's proactive engagement with political leaders to address and potentially influence national issues positively.

8. “He will meet with Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani”.

The meeting that is planned with the Shiite leader underlines efforts to strengthen interfaith solidarity and mutual understanding.

9. “Another highlight of Francis’s day will be an interreligious meeting at the Plain of Ur.”

The interreligious meeting as a vital event highlights the importance of interfaith dialogue in endorsing solidarity among different religious

communities. "Will be" highlights a significant event aimed at fostering interfaith solidarity and unity.

10. "Francis will deliver a prayer".

Delivering a prayer means a spiritual sign of unity and support, fostering a sense of collective peace and solidarity. "Will deliver" signifies a definite intention to offer prayers, representing spiritual unity and support for the community.

11. "He will celebrate Mass at the Chaldean Church."

Concerning the celebrating Mass occurs at a local church, it highlights the connection with the Christian community, strengthening solidarity through shared religious practices. "Will celebrate" designates a planned religious ceremony, supporting the bond between the pope and the Christians.

12. "Francis will also meet with Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi."

The meeting with the Prime Minister denotes an inclusive method to solidarity, involving management at the highest levels to promote general unity. "Will meet" shows a commitment to engaging with political leaders, promoting solidarity and collaboration between religious and political scopes.

13. "The pope's most highly anticipated official meeting in Iraq will be with Ayatollah Sistani".

The expectation of the meeting with Ayatollah Sistani highlights its importance in fostering interfaith solidarity and reconciliation. "Will be" highlights the importance of this meeting, aimed at bridging divides and fostering interfaith solidarity.

14. The papal meeting will be a private one at the ayatollah's modest home in Najaf.

The private nature of the meeting in a modest setting reflects mutual respect and humility, key aspects of genuine solidarity and understanding. "Will be" again climaxes a planned, significant event, emphasizing the personal and respectful nature of the encounter, which aims to strengthen mutual respect and solidarity.

In the investigated data, modality can be used differently and contextually. The following table presented the sentences and the meaning of the modal verb:

Table (2) Modal verbs meaning in the chosen data.

No.	Sentence	Meaning
1.	" <i>he could draw large crowds at a moment</i> "	Possibility
2.	"it would help the country heal after years of strife."	Hypothetical
3.	" <i>Francis will also meet with Shiite leaders</i> "	Future intention
4.	" <i>the pope said he would not be deterred.</i> "	Future in the past
5.	"The Vatican insists that the trip will be a safe, socially distanced and sober visit"	Future intention
6.	" <i>Francis could justify not delaying the trip</i> "	Possibility
7.	" <i>He starts in Baghdad and will meet with political officials</i> "	Future intention
8.	" <i>he will meet with Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani</i> "	Future intention

9.	“Another highlight of Francis’s day will be an interreligious meeting at the Plain of Ur”	Future intention
10.	“Francis will deliver a prayer”	Future intention
11.	“he will celebrate Mass at the Chaldean Church.”	Future intention
12.	“Francis will also meet with Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi”	Future intention
13.	“The pope’s most highly anticipated official meeting in Iraq will be with Ayatollah Sistani”	Future intention
14.	“The papal meeting will be a private one at the ayatollah’s modest home in Naja”	Future intention

The modal verbs presented in the table are (will, would, could). **Will** is the most common one among the other to predict the willingness and the future intentions. The other two models are presented two times each one as in the following table

Table (3) The modal verbs, their frequencies and percentages.

No.	Modal	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Will	10	71.42%
2.	Would	2	14.28%
3.	Could	2	14.28%
Total		14	100%

The frequency and percentage that are presented in the table show that “will” is the highest frequency in the report which represent (71.42%) out of the total percentage, while for example “might” and “may” that refers to the permissions are not existed, “must” which refers to the necessity is

not find as well. This shows that the report depends on percentages contains future intentions using “will” mostly.

The use of modal verbs such as “will”, “could” and “would” in these sentences highlights varying degrees of certainty and potentiality in actions related to Francis’s visit to Iraq. These actions collectively promote the ideology of solidarity by emphasizing efforts to heal past wounds, bridge religious divides, and foster unity among different communities. The deliberate choice of modal verbs underscores the commitment and determination to achieve these goals.

5. Conclusion

The paper comes up with the followings:

1. Modal verbs are widely used in the chosen data to manifest solidarity. Will, could and would are the only modal verbs used in the chosen data.
2. “Will” is one of the central modal verbs that are used to show willingness and future intentions.
3. “May”, “might”, and “must” are totally avoided. They refer to the permissions, “must” which refers to the necessity is not find as well. In another words, the information presented in the report is intended to have a sense of willingness and future intention. Therefore “will” is widely used.

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