

## Tense and Modality in Kwame Nkrumah’s Speech (May 1963)

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**Abstract:** This present article is dedicated to the study of tense and modality in Kwame Nkrumah’s speech delivered in May 1963 at the meeting of African Heads of States and Governments. Indeed, during this historic occasion, Nkrumah has made use of tense and modality to express his point of view related to the validation of the predicative relation, to the assessment of African states situation, to the creation of African unity and to the consequences that might result from this unity. Furthermore, he has expressed his commitment, his determination and made suggestion and given advice to mark a break of the situation they were enduring.

**Keywords:** African, independent, modality, speech, tense, unity.

**INTRODUCTION**

Kwame Nkrumah was a Ghanaian pan African and member of the independence movement. After his studies in England and United States, he took part in the organization of the pan African congress. Just after, he created the Convention People’s Party (CPP) which won the legislative elections in 1956 against the United Kingdom. Thanks to this victory his country became independent in 1957. Thus, he took the dream upon himself to bail the other African countries out of colonial domination. For this, he advocated the formation of the supranational identity: the “United States of Africa” which would allow the African continent to become one of the strongest in the world. In March 1963, he actively participated in the writing of the Organization of African Unity charter.

However, in May 1963 at the meeting of thirty two African Heads of State and Governments in Addis Ababa, Kwame Nkrumah delivered the speech under study in order to call for a strong Union of Independent African States. This speech is of paramount importance even if a lot writings devoted to it have not been published. But as for his other works (novels, books etc.) several studies have literary been done by many thinkers. So, this speech under question is grammatically and semantically rich in so far as the author (Nkrumah) has expressed himself with conviction. In addition, he has used both tense and modality which constitute some of the main focal points of the grammar of a language.

Yet, however important these concepts may be, they are semantically and grammatically different from one another. F.R. Palmer [1] has pointed out this difference for, according to him, modality differs from tense and aspect in that it does not refer directly to any characteristic of the event, but simply to status of the proposition that describes the event. It is concerned with mood and modal operators such as modal auxiliaries and is treated as a single grammatical category found in most of the languages in the world. On the other hand, these two terms can have some similarities in so far as modality is a category that is closely associated with tense and aspect in that all three notions are categories

of the clause and are generally, but not always, marked within the verbal complex.

Thus, the study of these grammar notions raises a lot of questions. From one point of view, the analysis of modality causes many problems to English learners or researchers for it can be divided into two things: modal auxiliaries and the other operators of modality; what brings about a misunderstanding in the linguistic world. The phrase “modal auxiliaries” shows that there are two linguistic forms: the notion of “auxiliary” and the semantic notion of “modality”. They (modal auxiliaries) constitute the first tools of the modality operation through which the speaker is totally involved as J.R. Lapaire says [2]. As far as tense is concerned, much misunderstanding and misuse is also pointed out. Many people make confusion between tense and time or between tense and aspect. That being so this study has been chosen in order to shed light on this misunderstanding and misuse. Furthermore, it is devoted to Nkrumah’s speech considering its semantic and grammatical importance and the role the author has played for the independence of African States. We also aim, as well as, at showing how convicted Nkrumah was, through the use of tense and modality in his speech.

Nevertheless, the theoretical framework on which this analysis will be based is the theory of the enunciative operators elaborated by Antoine Culiolie. Thus, the study of tense, at first, and afterwards, of modality will constitute the main hypothesis. However, the notion of tense shall be firstly tackled and finally the one of modality. As for the latter, not all operators expressing modality shall be dealt with but only modal auxiliaries which are mostly used in the speech.

## TENSE

The concept of tense in grammar is a category that expresses time reference referring to the moment of speaking. Tense is usually manifested by the use of specific forms of verbs, particularly in their conjugation patterns. It is a linguistic concept which denotes the form taken by the verb to locate the situation referred to in time to express the temporal relation between the time of the situation in question and an orientation. In this speech Nkrumah has used a lot tenses some of which the present and the past tenses. Present tense is when the speaker or writer expresses a situation which has relation with the moment of speaking. (s)He can be validating the relation at the moment of speaking or giving his/her point of view or talking about the result of an action or making an assessment of a situation. As for past tense, it is when the speaker or writer is expressing a situation which has happened or might happen in one moment before the time of speaking.

### Simple Present

Present tenses are divided into three parts: the simple present, the present continuous and the present perfect. But as far as this study is concerned, only the simple present and the present perfect shall be tackled. The simple present in modern English grammar is mainly marked by "s" (in the third person singular). This morpheme is generally considered a descendant of Old English "þ" which marked present indicative in third person singular and all persons in plural. Its use for all persons and numbers was apparently a dialectical feature of Northern English [3]. Still, in this speech under study, Nkrumah has used this tense many a time. But what does he want to express? Let's take into account these following sentences:

- ✓ *I am happy to be here in Addis Ababa on this most historic occasion. I bring with me the hopes and fraternal greetings of the government and people of Ghana.*
- ✓ *Our objective is African union now. There is no time to waste*

In the first sentence of these examples, Nkrumah is expressing his feelings through the validation of the predicative relation at the moment of speaking. It is all the more important as there is coalescence of the speaker and the grammatical subject. The speaker is presenting the predicate (*happy to be here in Addis Ababa on this most historical occasion*) as

being a real fact. Indeed, the fact of validating this situation when speaking can be explained in so far as the author has been expecting this occasion for years; for he wants all African States to become independent. Years before, he took part in some pan African conferences in which he advocated the independence of African states and Africa Unity. Therefore, participating in this meeting in which there are more than thirty African Heads of States and Governments, Nkrumah can't help showing his happiness when he takes the floor; hence the use of this tense.

In addition, the second sentence of the same example can even highlight it. In this sentence the speaker presents categories as real, by the use of the verb "bring". When this verb is used in the simple present, the speaker shows that the grammatical subject has got or acquired or possessed the predicate. So, being both the speaker and the grammatical subject, Kwame shows that hopes and fraternal greetings of the government of Ghana are with him; he is trusted with them. Besides, in the first sentence of the second example the validation of the predicative relation becomes more useful. This time, not only does the speaker ratify their objective but he also strengthens it through the use of the adverb "now". When they want is African unity. In other words, their objective is to have all African States united. He keeps on stating that "African unity is, above all, a political kingdom which can only be gained by political means".

In addition, in the second sentence of this second example, he uses the simple present that goes along with the operator "no" which invalidates the predicate relation. This means that he insisted on the very time of the unity. For him, African States must be independent and united there and then. The following sentence even shows it.

- ✓ *Independence is only the prelude to a new and more involved struggle for the right to conduct our own economic and social affair to construct our society according to our aspirations, unhampered by crushing and humiliating neo-colonialist controls and interference.*

In this sentence, not only is he recommending the independence and the unity of Africa, but he also regards this independence as the beginning of an involved struggle. Moreover, the use of the adverb "only" indicates that he is convinced in his opinion. So, the use of the simple present in this sentence shows that he purposefully objectivizes the realization of the predicative relation that he is validating. He regards it as a reality, as a truth.

All in all, the simple present tense whose mark is "s" is used in this speech to express different purposes. Indeed, Nkrumah through this tense has expressed himself while validating the relation between

the grammatical subject (himself in some sentences) and the predicate. In other words, he thinks that the relationship between independence and Africa or unity and Africa must be valid. African States must be independent and united; that is why he finds the occasion more historic and very interesting. However, he has not limited himself to the validation of the predicative relation when speaking. He has also talked about the results they have got and tried to make an assessment of the situation through the use of the present perfect; which can also express something else.

### Present Perfect

The present perfect is a tense that the speaker uses to convey a point of view related to the event which is anterior to the moment of speaking and that is in relation with it. This anteriority is expressed by *EN* and the speaker's position in time is expressed by the present tense of the auxiliary (have most of the time). So, let's deal with the following sentences to see what Nkrumah wants to express through the use of this present perfect.

- ✓ *On this continent, it has not taken us long to discover that the struggle against colonialism does not end with the attainment of national independence.*
- ✓ *We have already reached the stage where we must unite or sink into that condition which has made Latin America the unwilling and distressed prey of imperialism after one-and-a-half centuries of political independence.*

The use of the present perfect in these sentences is very outstanding. In the first sentence Nkrumah has used this tense to talk about the results of their (his and the other heads of states) discovery. This discovery is that they should keep on struggling against colonialism even if they have attained national independence; and they early know it. The use of the negative operator "not" does show this. Actually it invalidates the long period that they should have got to discover this situation.

For the second sentence, Nkrumah is making an assessment of the situation. For him, the time of being united is up. He is announcing the facts, the situation of this stage. This is strengthened by the use of the modal auxiliary "must" in the same sentence, showing that there is a subjective obligation between *we* (grammatical subject) and *unite* or *sink* (predicate). Nevertheless, he establishes the obligation or the necessity of being united otherwise of sinking. He keeps even on comparing this condition to the one that distresses Latin America. In this comparison he points the results of the action that Latin America has undergone through the tense of the verb "make" (has made). So, the author does not want African country to undergo this disastrous situation. That is, after assessing this situation he suggests the African unity.

- ✓ *As a continent, we have emerged into independence in a different age, with imperialism grown stronger, more ruthless and experienced, and more dangerous in its international associations.*

What prevails over with the present perfect in this sentence is the time of the speech, the moment when the speaker takes the floor. At first there is an announcement of the occurrence. The speaker is recounting the events; he is not giving his own point of view. The grammatical subject (*we*) has already accomplished the predicate (*have emerged into...*). In other words, the fact of getting independence is already acquired. Africa is (officially) independent. So it is a notion of assessment of the situation; a notion of presenting the results they got in the past in relation to the present moment of speaking. But the author has not confined himself to talking about this result, he has also explained the way and the context they have got independence; stating that *it is in a different age...* Indeed, this statement is real for, not all African States have gained independence at the same year. In addition, this same situation of announcing occurrence is found in this following sentence:

- ✓ *Experts have estimated that the Congo Basin alone can produce enough food crops to satisfy the requirements of nearly half the population of the whole world...*

Nkrumah, in this wording, shows the results that the grammatical subject (*Experts*) has carried on. The use of the present perfect in this sentence indicates that there is a current point of view on an event which is anterior to the moment of speaking. What shows this interval between point of view and event is the fact that the auxiliary "have" is in the present (simple), which indicates here in what time Nkrumah is validating the predicative relation. Thus, Nkrumah adopts a present point of view to consider an anterior event. But the event is not located in a precise point in the past; on the other hand it is linked to the present. He focusses on the direct effects of the action to make a kind of assessment of this action. Even though, the author has used this tense to express something else. Let's deal with this sentence below!

- ✓ *Time and space have been reduced to unimportant abstractions.*

The use of the present perfect in this example is slightly different from the one above. Here Nkrumah's point of view is placed after the conclusion of the action, which is considered in its entirety. He thinks about that the conclusion is well reached. In other words, time and space have become some abstractions which are useless.

In short, Kwame has used the present perfect tense in this speech to express a lot of things. He has

made an assessment of African States situation. He has also, through the use of this tense, talked about the results which might come out of the African unity or disunity. Thus, he announces the results, the action, or the occurrence in a present moment. He adopts a present point of view to consider the anteriority of this event or action. But they are not located in a precise point in the past; on the other hand they are linked to the present. He focusses on the direct effects of the action, as it is said above, to make a kind of assessment of this action. Yet, he is not limited to talking about the results of the action done or undergone by the grammatical subject or making an assessment of an anterior event which is linked to the present. He has also dealt with actions which are located in a precise point in the past; hence the use of past simple tense in his speech.

### Preterit

The preterit is a tense which has mainly two uses; the temporal use and the non – temporal. But regarding this study, only the former will be elaborated. Indeed, it is used in this speech to present the event or occurrence as being part of a situation that has no longer some reality at the moment of speaking. Like the simple present, it expresses a whole vision of the event. These examples below do illustrate it.

- ✓ *Our people supported us in our fight for independence because they believed that African governments could cure the ills of the past in a way which could never be accomplished under colonial rule.*
- ✓ *It was colonialism in the first place that prevented us from accumulating the effective capital...*

In the first sentence of these examples, Nkrumah, through the use of the preterit, is presenting the fact of being supported as something that has taken place before their independence. African people (*our people*) willing to get rid of white domination accepted to join their forces to leaders so as to struggle for independence for they were toiling and moiling under colonial rule. For these people, if they support their leaders (African governments) they will be able to cure the sufferings they have been undergoing before and become totally independent.

So, the author is showing this past situation when he is speaking. But he indicates that there is braking of location with the moment of speaking. The use of this tense in the sentence consists in moving forward the validity of the wording in relation to the time of speech. In other words, the fact of supporting governments is shifted forward in relation to Nkrumah's speech.

As for the second sentence, the use of the preterit shows that the author is evoking some events located in the past, therefore before the moment of

speaking. It is about a chronological time-lag. Nevertheless, he is telling the harmful outcomes of colonialism; stating that it is due to this white politics that they have not accumulated the effective capital. But the fact of using *was* "be in the preterit" shows that the speaker may be commenting or judging the action of the predicative relation. The same idea is pointed in this following example:

- ✓ *It was colonialism's purpose that left us with our border irredentism that rejected our ethnic and cultural fusion.*

In this statement, not only is Nkrumah talking about events located in the past, but he is also telling the consequences of colonialism in the African continent. For him this white system has brought about some problems that African States are still facing. But was this western action a purpose, as he said? Did they set themselves this as a purpose? We would never tell.

In a nutshell, Nkrumah has used the preterit tense in this speech to bring some information about some elements or events. What matters in this analysis is firstly the event itself in its factual moments. The speaker shows that there is a chronological time-lag. He is telling some situation or actions which are anterior to the moment of speaking. In addition, the use of this tense consists in moving forward the validity of the wording in relation to the time of speech.

Thus, the use of tenses (simple present, present perfect and preterit) in Nkrumah's speech is very outstanding in so far as the author has resorted to them in order to express a lot of opinions. In some sentences, he has validated the predicative relation when he is speaking. Through this, he even behaves as if he were talking about concepts which are as real as general or scientific truths. Even though, he does not confine himself to this validation. He has also made an assessment of the African states situation. Furthermore, through the use of tenses, he has talked about the results which might come out of the African unity or disunity. Thus, he announces the results, the action, or the occurrence in a present moment. He adopts a present point of view to consider the anteriority of this event or action. But he has also dealt with events which are located in the past by moving forward the validity of the wording in relation to the time of speaking. However, being convicted and very determined when he is speaking, Nkrumah has also made use modality through which he has expressed himself in intersubjective and predicative relations.

### Modality

Modality is, as Palmer [1] says, 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. Thus there are a lot of operators used to deal with modality. But, as far as this study is concerned, not all operators of modality will be tackled, but some of modal auxiliaries which are mostly used in the speech under question. Thus, the analysis of modal auxiliaries, of their roles in the sentence and of their semantics is one of the most important points out in English grammar. Studying these operators, as Adamczewski [4] says, 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 [2]. Furthermore, modal auxiliaries constitute the first tools of the modality operation through which the speaker is totally involved. Therefore, in this study these operators are going to be tackled one by one.

## 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. It is an operator that explicitly expresses an inter-subjective relationship in which the speaker displays his/her authority. (s)He 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 [5]. But unlike Shall, Must does not indicate that the speaker is not going to do his best to have the action done. According to some contexts, it means that the speaker makes the relation obligatory.

On the 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 an 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. But what does Nkrumah wants to express through the use of this operator? Let's deal with the following sentences:

- ✓ *We **must** unite now or perish*
- ✓ *We have already reached the stage where we **must** unite or sink into that condition which has made*

*Latin America the unwilling and distressed prey of imperialism...*

The more striking element in these examples is the grammatical subject "we". The latter is a coalescence of "I" and "you" or "I" and "the others" or the speaker and the co-speaker(s). Here, given that Nkrumah is talking to his African counterparts, this "we" must refer to both Nkrumah and his counterparts. So, he establishes a subjective obligation in the intersubjective relation. In other words, focusing on the context or conditions in which they are living, he obliges African heads of states to unite. And this obligation is based on a condition. That is, either they unite or they perish or sink. Actually, he finds it compulsory to unite. But this operator can go beyond that. It can express a necessity. The author may be expressing the necessity of uniting for he does not want Africa to disunite or/and undergo the same situation as Latina America does. For this, he calls for unity. In addition, this same situation is found in these examples above:

- ✓ *We **must** unite in order to achieve the full liberation of our continent.*
- ✓ *So many blessings flow from our unity; so many disasters **must** follow on our continued disunity.*

In these sentences mainly in the first one, the author is expressing an obligation that he imposes on the grammatical subject (African heads of states). Through this obligation, he targets at achieving the full liberation of the continent. For him, this whole liberation depends on their unity. So it is necessary or obligatory or compulsory for them to unite.

Yet, the use of Must in the second sentence is slightly different from the first one. Here the modal auxiliary is used as expressing a condition or choice. Some can even say that it is in its epistemic use or predicative relation in so far as Nkrumah is expressing the chances that the grammatical subject (*so many disasters*) has to realize the predicate (*follow on our continued disunity*). He is comparing the outcomes of unity (*blessings*) and the ones of disunity (*disasters*). Through this comparison he establishes the probability in the realization of the predicate by the grammatical subject. The modality focuses on the whole propositional content of the sentence. Thanks to this operator of modality the speaker is assessing the chances of the validation of the predicative relation; what shows the epistemic value of this modal. Indeed, Must in its epistemic use is inferential. From this observation, Nkrumah deduces that many disasters might flow if they keep on disuniting.

Nevertheless, this study of Must shows that the speaker has tackled the two values of this operator, meaning the deontic and the epistemic values. These values, as Georges Garnier [6] says, come from the

context and the co-text. In the epistemic use, Must revolves around the propositional content of the wording to which it belongs. Nkrumah presents actually the validation of the predicative relation in terms of a calculation on the degree of the occurrence probability. With the deontic value, this operator turns on the predicate referred to the subject. The speaker states that the realization of the predicate is necessary or the grammatical subject is obliged to do the predicate. Thus, in his speech the author has also expressed himself in terms of modality through the use of other modal auxiliaries to give utterance to his commitment, suggestion or prediction; hence the use of the operator Shall which constitutes the central issue of the following analysis.

### SHALL

The modal auxiliary Shall comes from *sceal* in Old English and was a verb used to express obligation. Its nature allows it to serve as a modal verb expressing a lot of modal meanings and at the same time it is a tense marking auxiliary. A lot of researchers have done many works and many debates around its meanings. Adamczewski [4] regards it as an expression of a certain semantic relation between the subject and the predicate and not always as an auxiliary of the future. The future or more precisely the prediction is an effect of meaning regarding the situational and contextual conditions.

J. Lyons [7] is in full agreement with this statement for, according to him, futurity is never a purely temporal concept; it necessary 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. It is what Nkrumah must have understood when he uses this operator in his speech. But let's deal with the following examples.

- ✓ *I am confident that by our concerted effort and determination, we shall lay here the foundations for a continental Union of African States.*
- ✓ *We shall accumulate machinery and establish steel works, iron foundries and factories.*

In these sentences and in almost all the sentences in which Shall is used, we have pointed out that the grammatical subject is "we". This personal pronoun, as it has already been said, is coalescence of the speaker and the co-speaker or of the speaker and the others. The fact that Nkrumah has used it in the speech is not surprising considering that he is calling for unity. Thus, the use of this operator in these sentences shows that he is so committed or determined that he wants all of them to lay the foundations of the African unity (sentence 1) and accumulate machinery...(sentence 2).

The first part of the sentence can demonstrate it; when he talks about *concerted effort* and *determination*. This proves that there is a lack of compatibility, concordance pre-established between the grammatical "we" and the predicates (*lay the foundations...* and *accumulate machinery...*) Shall is an operator that allows Nkrumah to link some entities which did not intend to go together. So, through its use, he personally guarantees the prediction because of this lack of natural compatibility between the grammatical subject and the predicate.

On the other hand, he can even be said to be obliging his counterparts to realize the predicates due to his strong commitment. That is why Shall is said to express both obligation and imply futurity thus creating ambiguity. That being so this obligation can turn into prohibition when it is used with a negative operator, as Nkrumah does in these sentences below.

- ✓ *We shall no longer be dependent upon aid from restricted sources.*
- ✓ *I am sure therefore that we shall not fail them.*

The author, in these examples, has chosen the negative operator "no (t)" with the modal auxiliary Shall. Indeed, when this modal is combined with "not", the opposition of the speaker to the realization of the predicate becomes obvious. Here, Nkrumah prohibits the grammatical subject "we" meaning African heads of states to be dependent or fail. He is committed that there is a break of dependence upon aid; which means that there was dependence. But in the second sentence, it is about a referral to the prediction in which he invalidates the relation. In other words, the action has not taken place yet and he is enough committed so that there should not be compatibility between the grammatical subject "we" and the predicate "*fail them*". He guarantees this lack of compatibility in the realization of the predicative relation.

Therefore, Nkrumah has chosen this modal auxiliary to express his commitment or determination for the foundation of African unity. This volition has sometimes pushed him to behave as if he were obliging his counterparts, African heads of states, to unite and get rid of any dependence in order to have full liberation and not to fail popular and progressive forces and movements within Africa. However, the author has also used other operators some of which "Should" that is regarded by some grammarians as the preterit of Shall.

### SHOULD

Should is a modal auxiliary which has its own characteristics even if it is regarded by some linguists as the preterit of Shall. But this can be understood in so far as it has phonologically one of the preterit ending sounds /d/. As for Adamczewski [4], Should equals to Shall+ ed. The least that can be said is that the

predicative purpose of Shall is opposed to the past and presupposition morpheme “ed”. In so doing, Should loses the referral to the prediction but keeps the conflictual and discordance value of Shall. In addition, it conserves from Shall the notion of non- inherence; which permits to link and understand the uses of Should as J. P. Gabilan [8] says. Still, Nkrumah has focused many a time on this operator. But what does he want to convey? Let’s consider the following sentences:

- ✓ *If we succeed in establishing a new set of principles as the basis of a new charter for the establishment of a continental unity of Africa, and the creation of social and political progress for our people, then in my view, this conference **should** mark the end of our various groupings and regional blocs.*

The use of Should in this example is very important and meaningful for Nkrumah has started the sentence with a condition. For him, if African heads states manage to establish an African unity, there should be peace, progress, liberation and development in the continent. So the use of this modal in the sentence proves that the author wants that there is a break between what used to be done and the outcomes of the meeting. In other words, through the conference, he wants that there is a break of the various groupings and regional blocs. Furthermore, he has employed this operator to suggest a lot of things as the following sentences illustrate it.

- ✓ *[...] a United Africa **should** be in a more favorable position to attract assistance from foreign sources.*
- ✓ *[...] For the realization of the unification of Africa, an All-Africa Committee of Foreign Ministers **should** be set up now. The Committee **should** establish on behalf of the heads of our governments, a permanent.*

In these examples, Nkrumah has used the modal auxiliary Should to give some advice and/or suggestions. What must really be understood here is that the context and the situation have somehow facilitated the speaker to make these recommendations under question. He demonstrates that behind this *United Africa* (sentence1) what follows the modal (*be in a more favorable position to attract...*) seems to be imperative. Thus, here what Should conserves from Shall is the notion that Nkrumah has in imposing his law, but this law is more or less dictated by the context. In the second example, the intervention of Nkrumah is linked to the non- inherent character of the predicate; hence the discordance effect of the operator. In addition, he is expressing a soften obligation regarding the grammatical subject (*Committee*). So, the realization of *being set up* or of *establishing on behalf of the heads of governments* depends on Nkrumah and on the *Committee* or *Committee of foreign Ministers*.

When all is said and done, we have pointed out that Nkrumah has made use of Should in order to

suggest his counterparts heads of states to unite. He has also used this operator to mark a break between the grammatical subject and the predicate and to try to give some advice about what might result from African unity. This suggestion and/or advice has made him to behave as if he were smoothly obliging them to be together and lay the foundations for a continental African unity. However, we can even say that it is about a context which contains the idea of volition conducted towards the accomplishment of an action through the expression of a suggestion, an order, a request, an obligation, a piece of advice... Thus, apart from this idea of volition, he has expressed the capacity and the possibility of succeeding this unity through the use of the modal auxiliary Can.

### 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 [5]. Palmer [9] states that Can is used both for epistemic modality (but only when negated) and for deontic modality. 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 subject involved. In this speech under study, the author has used it many a time. But what does he want to express? Let’s take into consideration the examples above:

- ✓ *African unity is, above all, a political kingdom which **can** only be gained by political means*
- ✓ *Experts have estimated that the Congo Basin alone **can** produce enough food crops to satisfy the requirements of nearly half the population of the whole world*

In the first sentence of these examples, Nkrumah is giving his opinion about a situation. Focusing on the context, he indicates that the predicative relation is possible. It is possible for African heads of states to gain African unity, provided that they have political means. 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 (*a political kingdom which*) and the predicate (*only be gained by political means*). This contextual or objective or logical (as it is often said) possibility is strengthened by the use of the adverb “only”.

So, unlike the first sentence, the use of this operator in the second example is devoted to the expression of the capacity. Nkrumah, basing on the

works of experts, points the ability, the capacity of the grammatical subject (*The Congo Basin*) to realize the predicate (*produce enough food...*). In other words, the Congo Basin is able to produce enough food, not only for Africa but also for nearly half of the population of the whole world. However, the use of Can in this second sentence can even express the possibility that the subject has to realize the predicate. But this possibility is objective in so far as the speaker has focused on the reality of events, meaning, on the works of experts to refer to it. He is making a kind of inference on the situation of African productivity; which may lead the continent to be autonomous and independent.

Kwame Nkrumah has made use of the operator Can to talk about the possibility of creating African unity; what can bring about this unity and what can result from this unity. He has also, through this modal, expressed the capacity, the ability and the possibility of African resources to satisfy not only the African continent, but also half of the world wide population.

### CONCLUSION

Kwame Nkrumah was a pan African and member of the independence movement. Participating in the meeting of African Heads of States and Governments in May 1963, he delivered this speech under study in which he has used tense and modality. The analysis of this speech has shown the following results:

Nkrumah has made use of tenses (simple present, present perfect and preterit among others) in his speech to express a lot of things. In some sentences (in the simple present), he has validated the predicative relation when he is speaking. Through this validation he even behaves as if he were talking about things which are as real as general or scientific truths. Even though, he does not confine himself to this validation. He has also made an assessment of the African states situation. Furthermore, through the use of tenses, he has talked about the results which might come out of the African unity or disunity. Thus, he announces the results, the action, or the occurrence in a present moment. He adopts a present point of view to consider the anteriority of events or actions. But he has also dealt with events which are located in the past by moving forward the validity of the wording in relation to the time of speaking.

In addition, being convinced and very determined when he is speaking, Nkrumah has also made use modality through which he has expressed himself in intersubjective and predicative relations. Thus, as far as this study is concerned, not all operators of modality have been tackled, but some of modal auxiliaries which are mostly used in the speech under question. Thus, the analysis of modal auxiliaries, of their roles in the sentence and of their semantics is one

of the most important points in Kwame's speech. Therefore, we have pointed out that, through their uses, the author has expressed an obligation that he has imposed on the African heads of states. Through this obligation, he targets at achieving the full liberation of the continent. For him, this whole liberation depends on their unity. So it is necessary or obligatory or compulsory for them to unite.

Nkrumah ha also presented the validation of the predicative relation in terms of a calculation on the degree of the occurrence probability. Moreover, he has expressed himself in terms of modality to give utterance to his commitment, suggestion, prediction or determination in the foundation of African unity. This volition has sometimes pushed him to behave as if he were obliging his counterparts, African heads of states, to unite and get rid of any dependence in order to have full liberation and not to fail popular and progressive forces and movements within Africa. But this obligation has been regarded as a weak obligation or even a suggestion that he has given to his counterparts, African heads of states. Even though, he has tried through the modality to mark a break of the situation they were enduring and give some advice about what might result from African unity. This suggestion and/or advice has made him to behave as if he were smoothly obliging them to be together and lay the foundations for a continental African unity. But, it can even been said that it is about a context which contains the idea of volition conducted towards the accomplishment of an action through the expression of a suggestion, an order, a request, an obligation, a piece of advice.

Still, the study has also shown that he has presented through some operators the capacity and the possibility that they have to create an African unity and what this latter can have brought and the results which may have come from it. He has also expressed the capacity, the ability and the possibility of African resources to satisfy not only the African continent, but also half of the world wide population. Thus, even if it has not been broached in this present study, Nkrumah has also expressed the compatibility which might exist between African unity and the development or African unity and its consequences.

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